

## PADBURY BROOK SOLAR FARM

### Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)



Padbury Brook Solar Farm  
Written by Robin Johnson  
(PIEMA, ACIEEM)  
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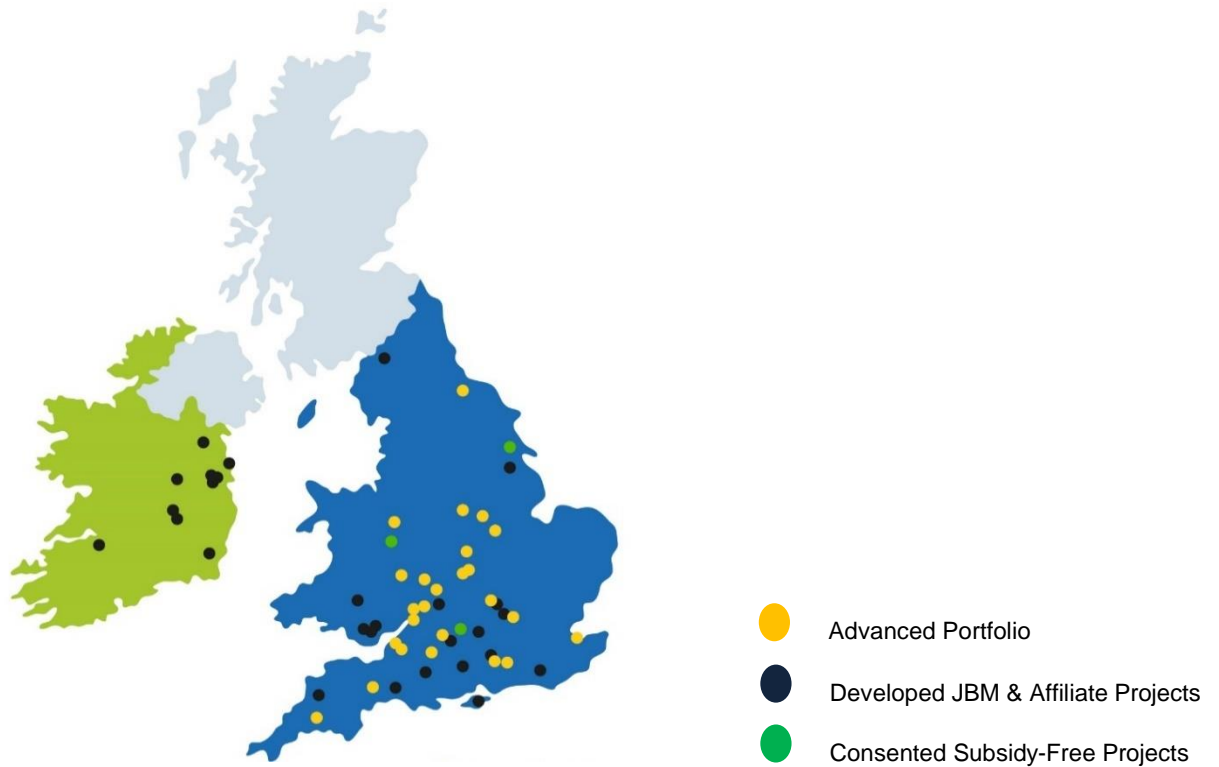
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This *Statement of Community Involvement* (SCI) has been prepared by JBM Solar Projects 8 Ltd. (JBM), in support of a planning application made by JBM for the development of a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Farm and Battery Storage Facility on *Land to the West of Godington, Stratton Audley, OX27 9AF* ('the Site').
- 1.2** The planning application seeks full planning permission for the following (the 'Proposed Development'):
- Installation and operation of a renewable energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with switchgear, inverter/transformer units, site access, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.
- 1.3** The community engagement process, as detailed in this report, was managed by JBM Solar.
- 1.4** An innovative interactive website was created, alongside a virtual consultation space, to allow participants to learn about the project and provide feedback, 24/7, from the safety and comfort of their homes. Likewise, a community day was undertaken, followed up by a community meeting in the St. Mary and St. Edburga Church in Stratton Audley.
- 1.5** This SCI provides details of the methodology used to conduct a robust community consultation, a summary of the consultation responses received, responses to stakeholder inputs, and a series of appendices to display some of the informative consultation materials used during the process.

## JBM Solar

- 1.6** Since 2012 the JBM Solar team has secured consent for over 1GW of solar PV projects across the UK and Ireland. As an experienced and established developer, JBM is focused on providing renewable energy schemes to help decarbonise the UK and Ireland's electricity generation, and combat the current climate crisis.



- 1.7** Community consultation has always formed a key part of JBM's approach to planning applications. Whilst there is no specific national legislation requiring solar developers to undertake pre-application community engagement (in contrast to other renewable energy technologies like onshore wind), JBM see public participation as an integral part of any prospective planning application, and seek to engage with local communities in an open and receptive way.

## 2 PLANNING ACTS AND POLICY

- 2.1** The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 2015 (as amended) sets out minimum standards of publicity and notification relating to planning applications, depending on the nature of the application.
- 2.2** The Localism Act (2011) implemented changes to the planning system which included an emphasis on neighbourhood planning to empower communities to influence the form and manner of local development in their area. With or without a formal Neighbourhood Plan, community engagement is an important part of the development process.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021)

- 2.3** With regard to pre-application consultation, the NPPF paragraph 39 advises,
- ‘Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.’
- 2.4** At paragraph 40 the NPPF also sets out that,
- ‘Local planning authorities...should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.’
- 2.5** National and local policy that encourages pre-application consultation and local community involvement, along with the benefits to the quality of development proposals that have been informed by local knowledge, provide the foundation for the extensive community engagement efforts undertaken in advance of a planning application for the Proposed Development of the Padbury Brook Solar Farm.

### Cherwell District Council

- 2.6** The community consultation associated with the development paid close attention to the strategy set out within the ‘Cherwell District Council: Statement of Community Involvement (Adopted October 2021)’. This plan helped to inform the approach taken in conducting the community engagement exercise.

## 3 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND METHODS

- 3.1** The aim and objective of the engagement programme was to interact with, and seek input from the local community, in order to improve the proposals put forward based on local knowledge and expertise. JBM considered it important to ensure that those most likely to be impacted by development were made aware of, and had the opportunity to engage to discuss the proposal.

### COVID-19 Limitations

- 3.2** In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the UK Government enacted a lockdown on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, to try and slow the spread of the virus. Ministers determined that all non-essential travel should be avoided, families should isolate and that gatherings of more than two people were not allowed. Further to this, there have been subsequent lockdowns, and legislation to address the pandemic. These have changed the way consultations and public engagement exercises are undertaken, moving to a more online based, accessible form of consultation. This approach has been adopted industry wide post-pandemic, and alongside more traditional in-person consultation methods, such as public exhibitions and in-person parish meetings, forms a key element of the consultation process.
- 3.3** Whilst the above-mentioned restrictions have subsequently been lifted following the widespread roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine, COVID-19 still remains a concern to some within the UK, and a potential risk to consider when organising events. Against this backdrop, JBM decided to create an accessible and interactive virtual consultation space and website, in addition to a more traditional in-person exhibit. This was supplemented by a number of 1:1, outdoor site meetings between the project manager of the scheme and interested local members of the community who may have had concern over risk of COVID-19. A range of measures were implemented to engage with stakeholders and encourage participation in the consultation exercise, including those with accessibility issues. This included publishing an advertorial in Oxfordshire Live, in addition to social media adverts, publicising the event. Likewise, JBM sent leaflets out via Royal Mail first class post to all local residents within 2km of the site and sent letters/messages to public representatives/council members. An overview of consultation and publicity methods is set out below.

### Stakeholder Engagement

- 3.4** In advance of the formal public consultation JBM commissioned Instinctif Partners, a specialist public engagement consultant, to identify key stakeholders and facilitate outreach. In July 2022, Instinctif Partners reached out to local political stakeholders, including Ward Members, and the relevant County Councillor, to make them aware of the proposals.
- 3.5** This outreach also included an invitation to meet and discuss the project in greater detail alongside the launch of the community consultation website.

## Direct Engagement with Immediate Neighbours

**3.6** As part of the consultation, in addition to the public exhibition, residents were offered a site meeting, or in-person meeting with the project manager to further discuss the scheme and ask any questions. Eleven local residents took up the offer for a 1:1 meeting with JBM. These took place throughout July, August, September, and December. Robin Johnson met with interested neighbours separately, either in their homes or on-site, to discuss the scheme in greater detail and understand any concerns they may have had. The letter sent out to direct neighbours (living within 500m of the development) is shown in **Appendix A**.

**3.7** Points raised in these discussions included the potential for impact on views from the PRoW running through the north of the site, noise impacts, wildlife enhancements, the grading of the land, details of the proposed improvement and expansion of the Public Right of Way ('PRoW'), the potential impact to guests of the local Stratton Court Barn wedding venue. These 1:1 meetings helped to inform the final proposals. Adaptations that reflect JBM's responsiveness to neighbours include:

- Working closely with the local wedding business to ensure impacts are minimised on activities in the area, including avoiding any construction work on weekends, ensuring a robust planting plan is in place, and removing the southwest field from the scheme. Likewise, ensuring that where perceived impacts cannot be avoided, they are mitigated against.
- Included an increased buffer in from the northern and western boundaries of the site, which are to be planted with wildflower.
- Moved benches/informational boards in line with resident comments.
- Created a robust landscaping and planting plan, which includes the planting of over 230 mature trees, and 2.4km of new hedgerow in areas that were considered to have more sensitive views, such as the footpath to the northeast of the site.
- Increased the biodiversity net gain of the site from 50% to 200%, 20x the statutory minimum.
- At the request of some residents, an independent assessment of the ALC report was undertaken, which re-affirmed its findings.
- Moving batteries/inverter units more centrally within the site, further away from any residential properties.
- Creation of a community fund to support local projects, including the provision of rooftop solar and energy saving initiatives for residents around the site, in addition to funding for projects in the wider Stratton Audley/Godington community.
- This engagement offered an opportunity for the most proximate local residents to meet the project manager from JBM, and to engage in a constructive way. These meetings have been a great benefit to the design of the solar farm and the content of the planning application's supporting information.

## Parish Council Consultation

### Stratton Audley Parish Council

**3.8** The project manager, Robin Johnson, initially contacted the parish council to invite members to the consultation exhibit. This was followed by a special parish session being held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at the St. Mary & St. Edburga Church in Stratton Audley. The session provided

an opportunity for resident to discuss the scheme in more detail with the project manager in the format of a presentation followed by an open Q&A session.

### **Godington Parish Meeting**

- 3.9** A meeting with Godington PM was organised in September 2022 to discuss Godington specific concerns. Discussions related to views of the development, the potential for additional traffic, and the potential for a community benefit fund to support local rooftop solar/energy saving initiatives.

## **Newspaper Notices**

- 3.10** An advertorial was placed on OxfordshireLive, a popular news site used in Oxfordshire, publicising the consultation which was additionally boosted by a facebook ad campaign. This article was subsequently viewed over 3,500 times. Additionally, JBM set up a site specific facebook page, and ran ads which were limited to users within an 8-mile radius from the development, for the consultation event, drawing over 10,800 user views of promoted posts.
- 3.11** The aim of online advertising was to raise awareness of the proposal online. Published notifications included details of the Padbury Brook Solar Farm website domain and JBM's contact details to encourage participation in the consultation process.
- 3.12** The image of the notice that appeared in both papers is provided in **Appendix B**.

## **Public Leaflet Distribution**

- 3.13** To encourage local participation an informative leaflet was produced and distributed to all address within 2km of the Proposed Development.
- 3.14** The leaflet directed people to the consultation website. It included an annotated site masterplan with headline project details, visual aids, FAQ's, and information about JBM Solar as well as contact details for the JBM project manager.
- 3.15** FAQs on the leaflet included questions that reflect JBM's extensive experience with community engagement on potential solar farm projects including:
- Why have you chosen this location?
  - Are solar farms noisy?
  - How long will construction take?
  - How much traffic will there be?
  - What is the lifetime of the project?
- 3.16** The leaflet was designed to be as informative as possible. It was written in plain English to avoid being excessively technical. It directed recipients to the website which included more information. The leaflet was intended to provide outline information about the scheme and to encourage further participation via the website and/or direct communication with JBM.
- 3.17** This leaflet is shown in **Appendix C**.



## Public Consultation Website

- 3.18** In a context of hesitation around attending events for some due to COVID-19, whilst traditional consultation methods were used, including an in-person public exhibition, it was important to JBM to ensure the website was accessible, and easy to understand. The website also contained a virtual exhibition room.
- 3.19** The purpose of the website was to inform the public of the Proposed Development and to offer a forum for enquires and feedback that would inform JBM's final designs and the content of the planning application's supporting documentation.
- 3.20** A website was launched 20<sup>th</sup> July. It included the following details:
- An introduction to JBM Solar as an experienced and well-established solar farm developer;
  - General information about the proposal including Site location and context, the proposed development area, and the renewable energy output that would be delivered by the Padbury Brook Solar Farm.
  - An annotated masterplan to give a visual overview of the Proposed Development and locations of specific elements within the site;
  - An interactive Site Location Plan map;
  - Details on the components including solar panels, mounting frames, inverters, substation, grid connection, and site security measures. This included images of solar farm elements from some of JBM's completed projects so people could get an idea of what things look like in-situ, compared to the technical drawings that would be submitted with a planning application;
  - Outline insight into solar farm decommissioning so people would be reassured that the land could be easily restored at the end of the Proposed Development's temporary consent;
  - Information pertaining to the multifunctional green infrastructure and biodiversity benefits of Solar Farms. This included details of the biodiversity enhancement measures that would be implemented, such as the creation of wildflower meadows and installation of beehives and bird boxes around the site;
  - Viewpoint photography taken from publicly accessible locations around the proposed site and corresponding Viewpoint Maps to show these locations;
  - Photomontages based on viewpoint photography to give the public an idea of how the development could look in-situ. Montages deliberately reflected a "worst case" scenario that only relied on existing planting, as opposed to the potential measures in JBM's masterplan which have been expanded on in the application's Landscape Planting Plan. This was intentional because JBM considered that offering insight into the worst-case visual impact would enable more effective feedback to inform a final landscape enhancement strategy;
  - A 'Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)' page;
  - An online form giving people the opportunity to ask questions and make representations; and
  - The Project Manager's contact details (phone number, email address and physical postal address) for direct inquiries.
- 3.21** Although JBM's consultation period for the 'virtual exhibition' website would typically mirror a three-week period for a planning application, in order to maximise public participation, JBM decided to leave the website live up to the point of submission and to take on board any comments received, no matter how late on. This aligns with the manner in which LPAs enable

public involvement in the full planning process where local inputs are considered even if received after the close of statutory consultation. In this way, JBM have endeavoured to demonstrate openness and receptiveness to public feedback.

**3.22** JBM made every effort to engage with the public despite the limitations of COVID-19 restrictions. Where respondents asked questions or expressed concerns during the consultation period JBM made direct email responses. Where issues were raised that could inform planning considerations, these were relayed to relevant experts for consideration in their supporting assessments.

**3.23** A screenshot of the virtual consultation room is shown in **Appendix E**.

### Web Consultation Accessibility

**3.24** Although not under the same legal obligation as public sector bodies, measures were taken to ensure the website would be inclusive and accessible to users with different abilities and preferences. In as much as possible efforts followed best practice guidance on understanding accessibility and promoting inclusivity. (e.g. [Understanding accessibility requirements for public sector bodies - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-bodies)). As per the guidance,

‘Accessibility means more than putting things online. It means making your content and design clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things.’

**3.25** For the Padbury Brook Solar website measures to promote inclusive consultation include:

- Text-based sections, such as information boards, were accessibility checked to ensure the colours of the text and background would not have an excluding effect on a person with dyslexia or colour blindness.
- All the virtual consultation room “boards”, which included the majority of the information, were ‘zoomable’ so users with visual impairments would be able to read the text at a size that was best for their needs. Zooming could be done using a mouse or a keyboard to accommodate impairments/preferences.
- A number of plans and supporting images were included to accommodate users who may prefer visual information to text based information.
- The website front page featured a video, in which the project is described, to support participants who may prefer or require audible sources of information.
- Recognising that not every user has access to the same time of device, the website was also designed to be responsive and size to the different sorts of devices from which it might be accessed, be it desktop, laptop, tablet, or mobile.

### Public Consultation Event

**3.26** A public exhibition took place at The Red Lion Pub in Stratton Audley on Thursday 28 July between 3.00pm and 7.00pm. The event was attended by the project manager, Robin Johnson, and a representative from Instinctif Partners, Harry Gilham. The exhibition had consultation boards detailing the proposals, in addition to site plans, and photomontages of the development. Likewise, feedback forms were provided, and attendees were encouraged to leave feedback, and share their thoughts on the proposals.

## STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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- 3.27** Overall, 53 people attended, with 10 filling in a feedback form on the day. Out of just those who have filled in feedback forms on the day, 25% were for the application with 75% against. The key themes that people discussed at the exhibition, in terms of concerns over the development, these mainly revolved around the developments potential visual impact, and the need for food security.
- 3.28** The feedback forms filled in at the event by people who were in favour of the proposal centred on the need to address climate change and ensure long-term energy security.

## 4 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

4.1 The consultation benefitted from good engagement from the public, with 30 comment forms submitted in total. These forms returned 13 support comments (43.3%), 14 negative comments (46.7%) and 3 neutral comments (10%).

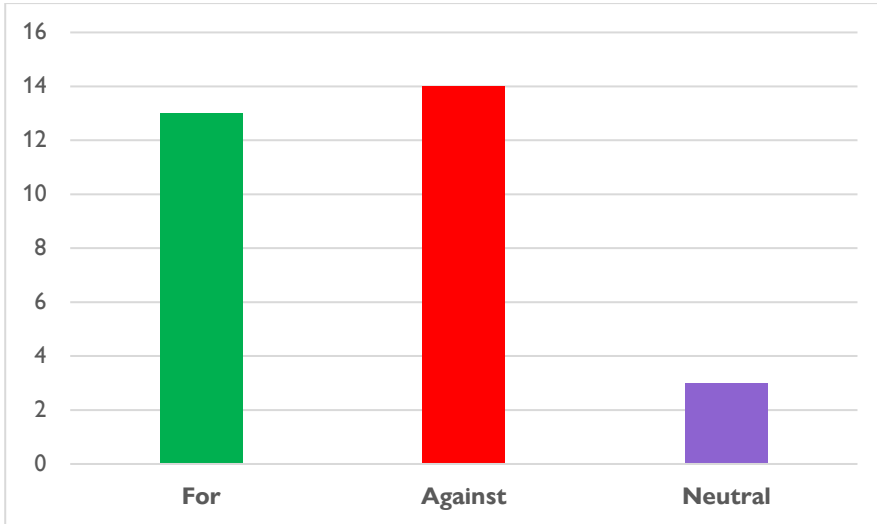


Figure 1 - Chart showing supportive, negative, and neutral comments.

4.2 Additionally, as part of the feedback form, visitors were asked if they agreed with the statement 'Climate Change is an issue that should be addressed.' Out of the 17 respondents who answered this particular question 11 'Strongly Agreed' (64%), 4 'Agreed' (24%), 1 was 'Unsure' (6%), 1 and 'Disagreed' (6%). No-one 'Strongly Disagreed'.

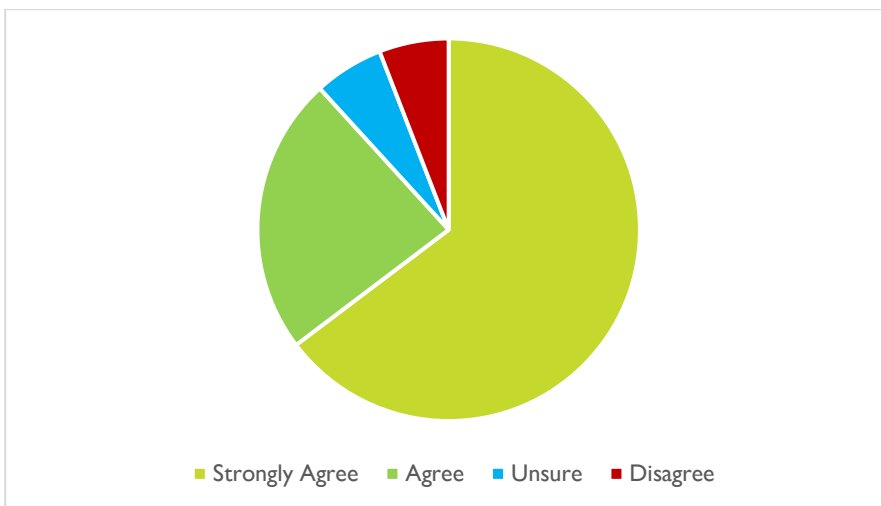


Figure 2 - Chart showing those who strongly agreed, agreed, or disagreed with the statement 'climate change is an issue that should be addressed'.

### Supportive

**4.3** Feedback in the “comments” box from those who identified as supportive includes:

- Acknowledgment that the scheme would have considerable benefits for the surrounding area.
- Support for the need secure our energy supply and to produce energy from sources other than fossil fuels.
- Support of the fact that the site would remain greenfield land.
- The maintenance and enhancement of Public Rights of Way.
- Urgent need to address the climate emergency.
- Considerable wildlife benefits of the scheme.
- The prevention of other forms of development on the land.

### Undecided

**4.4** Feedback in the “comments” box from those who identified as undecided included:

- Questions over whether the scheme would benefit wildlife, and how this could be proven.
- Request for further details to be provided on the wildlife improvements.

### Unsupportive

**4.5** ‘Unsupportive’ comments raised concerns such as;

- The loss of views from homes.
- Potential impact to the local wedding business.
- The loss of land that could be otherwise used for farming.
- Potential impacts to wildlife.
- The solar farm being in the wrong place.
- Potential impacts on the village of Stratton Audley due to the proposed cable run.

## 5 RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK

- 5.1** The overall purpose of the public consultation process is to engage with and understand residents' views, utilise local knowledge to improve the prospective scheme's design.
- 5.2** Feedback received via the consultation website and written forms indicated some support, and some opposition for the Padbury Brook Solar Farm. Despite the fact that those with negative views or concerns are much more likely to make comments during a consultation, 'supportive' comments were still registered at a good level. However, JBM always strive to improve upon their schemes, and aim to earn the trust and support of local communities in which they work. As such, a number of resident meetings were undertaken with those who had initially submitted unsupportive comments. The aim was to better understand these concerns, and try to alleviate these where possible.
- 5.3** The feedback received shows support for the substantial environmental, economic, and social benefits of the scheme. The provision of clean, cheap renewable energy and tackle the climate and cost of living crises, and the need to secure our energy supply were recurring themes within the responses. Additionally, notice was paid to the substantial biodiversity net gains of the site, the proposed widening and enhancement of the PRoWs, and an ability for agricultural use to continue alongside the solar farm, un-interrupted (through sheep grazing).
- 5.4** Following an extended consultation, newspaper/magazine adverts, leafleting, two in-person events, and social media advertising, a high level of engagement was achieved. The site is well screened from settlements, main roads and key views, with opportunity for effective screening enhancement, and offers significant wildlife and PRoW enhancements. This culminated in support for the scheme being registered.
- 5.5** Considerable efforts were made to widely publicise and encourage participation via the website, newspaper/magazine notices and leaflet distribution. It is noted that there may be further public participation insights to be gained through the full planning application process which can help to inform the granular details that will be required by Condition.
- 5.6** For JBM obtaining community support is always a priority, and JBM has sought to encourage and engage in participation with the local community. Feedback received via the online form and written forms, in addition to the follow up meetings held have helped to inform and improve the Proposed Development.

### Principle Issues Raised

- 5.7** Direct engagement with neighbours gave rise to questions and concerns that JBM sought to address. Questions over how the wildlife enhancements would work and be carried out were raised, and discussed in depth. Following these discussions, residents expressed their support for these efforts, and looked forward to seeing them implemented. Concerns related to the type of amenity effects most likely to be experienced by those in close proximity to the Proposed Development including noise, construction traffic, and visual impact were raised. This resulted in a number of changes to the scheme.

- 5.8** Another key concern was the potential impact to a local wedding venue, located to the west of the site. Extensive conversations were had with the owners of the venue, and an acceptable outcome for all parties was reached.

## Development Responses to Consultation

- 5.9** JBM has endeavoured to be responsive to public feedback. Public consultation has led to a number of measures that have increased the public interest benefits and improved the quality of the final design. Actions taken included;

- Working closely with the local wedding business to ensure impacts are minimised on activities in the area, including avoiding any construction work on weekends, ensuring a robust planting plan is in place, and removing the southwest field from the scheme. Likewise, ensuring that where perceived impacts cannot be avoided, they are mitigated against.
- Including an increased buffer in from the northern and western boundaries of the site, which are to be planted with wildflower.
- Moving benches/informational boards in line with resident comments.
- Creating a robust landscaping and planting plan, which includes the planting of over 230 mature trees, and 2.4km of new hedgerow in areas that were considered to have more sensitive views, such as the footpath to the northeast of the site.
- Increasing the biodiversity net gain of the site from 50% to 200%, 20x the statutory minimum.
- At the request of some residents, an independent assessment of the ALC report was undertaken, which re-affirmed its findings.
- Moving batteries/inverter units more centrally within the site, further away from any residential properties.
- Creating a community fund to support local projects, including the provision of rooftop solar and energy saving initiatives for residents around the site, in addition to funding for projects in the wider Stratton Audley/Godington community.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1** JBM has tried to implement innovative and effective ways to engage with the community. This SCI details JBM's extensive programme of pre-application engagement with local residents, Parish Councils, and other key stakeholders using both traditional and innovative methods to try to proactively seek local feedback.
- 6.2** To advertise the accessible interactive website, an advertorial was placed in OxfordshireLive, boosted by a facebook ad campaign, leaflets were sent out to all properties within 2km of the site along with letters sent to the closest residents, and details of consultation were advertised extensively through local social media channels (including those of OxfordshireLive).
- 6.3** JBM took extra steps to notify neighbours close to the scheme and the JBM project manager made himself available for 1:1 meetings with anyone who expressed an interest. Alongside this direct engagement, JBM sought the insights of key stakeholder groups, and has relied on the feedback of local representatives to improve the scheme and maximise the social and environmental public interest benefits of the project.
- 6.4** The well-advertised public consultation website suggests some local support exists for the project, and whilst some initially objected, following changes to the scheme, JBM understands that many of these objections have now been satisfactorily resolved. Where concerns were raised, JBM sought to address these directly or to ensure that the planning application information would do so. This meant incorporating mitigation measures, where appropriate, and including matters of interest within the scope of supporting assessments or reports. JBM have also built on all aspects of the scheme that have had a positive response, particularly with respect to PRoW and solar farm's considerable contribution to biodiversity net gain of the area, expected to be in excess of a considerable 200%+ gain.
- 6.5** This SCI provides an overview of JBM's public consultation which has been conducted in accordance with national and local policy and industry best practice. As an established solar farm developer JBM are committed to public engagement and rely on local inputs to help them deliver high quality solar projects. Further to submission JBM will continue to work with local residents, the Parish Council, and community groups, throughout the application process.



Neighbour Consultation Letter



6<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Dear 

**JBM Solar – Application for a Solar Park adjacent to the Mill Road / Padbury Brook**

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Robin and I work as a Project Manager for JBM Solar, who are looking to put forward a planning application for a solar park adjacent to the Mill Road and Padbury Brook, in the parish of Stratton Audley. Prior to our initial public announcement, I wanted to extend an invitation to discuss the proposals with myself as I am keen to hear your thoughts.

The design would use land to the south of Oldfields Copse, and east of the Mill Road, to connect a solar park that will generate 44MW of clean energy for the National Grid. Our proposed site boundary can be seen on the attached plan. The site would largely be hidden from view from the surrounding area, due to the presence of a tall, mature, well-maintained hedgerow that surrounds it. Further vegetation planting will be proposed in areas where views may be accessible (with hedges and trees allowed to grow to over 3m, screening all views of panels at their highest extent). To be clear, all existing trees, hedgerows and ditches will be preserved and protected. The existing farm entrance would be used, and existing farm tracks would also be used for the development, which would be protected as greenfield land before, during and after the site's life.

Furthermore, we will be creating ~10 acres of wildflower meadow throughout the site, and will implement an array of biodiversity and wildlife improvement measures such as the installation of bird boxes, butterfly and insect hotels, log piles and bee-hives. This will result in a gain to biodiversity on-site of over 50% (5x the standard). We will also be enhancing and protecting the small section of footpath which runs along the northern border of the site by excluding any panels from this area, and in their place installing educational boards, benches, and wildflower meadow, in addition to planting a new hedgerow and native trees along this short strip of the route to complement the existing Oldfields Copse features experienced on this short stretch of the path, screening views of the solar farm in the process.

As one of the closest neighbours to the proposed site, I wanted to make sure your views have been taken into consideration and give you a chance to discuss the plans with myself in detail to improve the design of the project. If you would like to have this conversation, I would be happy to set up a call or arrange a site meeting at a suitable time for yourself.

Hope to speak soon.

Yours sincerely,



Robin Johnson, PIEMA, ACIEEM  
Project Manager at JBM Solar

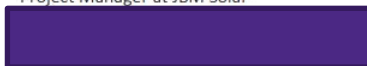




Figure 3 Sponsored editorial in Oxfordshire Live, which ran from 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022.

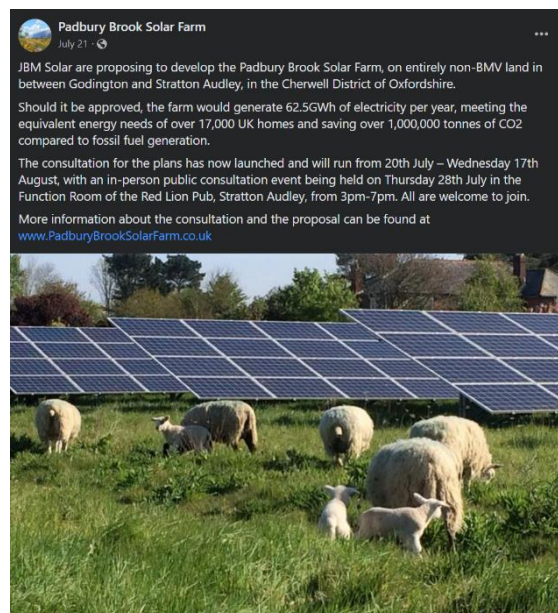


Figure 4 - Facebook ads publicising the consultation were run on Oxfordshire Live and the Padbury Brook Facebook pages. The ads were targeted at those living nearby the site.

Community Consultation Leaflet

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Why have you chosen this location and why don't you just put it on rooftops/brownfield?**  
We fully support rooftop solar, which is why we fund installations on all communal buildings as part of the development. However, if rooftop solar was on every available roof in the UK, it will only cover 14% of our domestic needs. We also assessed all available brownfield land around the grid connection point, but could not fund any site that either wasn't being used, or was the size needed to build a viable subsidy free solar farm. Agricultural land quality, and distance from existing grid infrastructure are also key parameters.

**How long will construction take?**  
Construction is estimated to take approximately 6 months. The later stages of the construction focus on implementing site beautification and wildlife enhancements strategies.

**Are solar farms noisy?**  
No. Certain elements such as the inverters and batteries generate a barely perceptible hum, however to ensure there are no adverse impacts to local residents we carry out a background noise assessment to accompany the planning application and ensure these levels remain. Noise generating equipment will be located towards the centre of the site, away from sensitive receptors as to further mitigate any impact.

**How much traffic will there be?**  
During construction there will be an average of 6-10 two-way HGV movements per day. These movements will be conducted following a strict management protocol, and undertaken at sociable hours to avoid unacceptable impacts. When the site is operational, traffic in and out of the site will actually greatly reduce.

**What is the lifetime of the project?**  
The solar farm will be operational for up to 40 years, after which it will be decommissioned, deconstructed and the site will return to its previous use. 99% of the materials can be recycled.

**Will the project impact wildlife?**  
Thanks to the carefully designed layout and incorporation of ecological improvement areas, there will be a substantial overall biodiversity net gain at this site. All existing trees and hedgerows will be preserved and over 10 acres of wildflower / woodland grass meadows and up to 1 km of new hedgerow will be planted. 2-4 beehives will be installed alongside bird, bat & barn owl boxes, insect hotels, great crested newt hibernacula and log piles increasing pollinators and biodiversity throughout the site.

**Where will it be visible from?**  
Some examples of how the scheme might look from local viewpoints can be seen on the website home page. These were taken from publicly accessible areas within a Zone of Theoretical Visibility. Due to the extensive tall hedges and trees around the site, views will be well screened from almost all viewpoints. Where views do exist we have proposed a substantial planting scheme (overleaf) to limit any potential visual impact.

**Will the development make the site 'brownfield' and be converted to housing?**  
No, absolutely not. The proposed solar farm will be a temporary development, so the land will retain its original greenfield status after it is decommissioned. The land will also remain a greenfield site throughout the development's life, and after it is decommissioned. Furthermore, 99% of the site can still be used for sheep grazing during operation in and around the panels. A long term break from arable farming will also greatly improve the soil quality and leave the land nutrient rich for the next generation.

## JBM SOLAR

**THE COMPANY**

Established in 2012, the JBM Solar team has a proven track record of securing consent for over 1GW of clean, green solar energy schemes in the UK and Ireland. JBM is focused on helping deliver the UK's net zero target of 2050, which can only be achieved with the adoption and rollout of reliable, affordable, clean energy sources. We are driven by our collective ambition to help meet the environmental challenges posed by the climate crisis. We firmly believe that our response to the climate crisis must have solar energy at its forefront.

## PADBURY BROOK SOLAR FARM


**THE PROJECT**

The Proposed Solar Farm would provide power for the equivalent of over 17,000 homes every year and would comprise of:


- Ground mounted solar panels, with co-located battery storage to supply energy when it is a dull day
- Up to 1km of new hedgerow and trees, with over 10 acres of new wildflower / woodland grass meadow and 130 acres of new grassland
- Communal beehives, bird, bat & barn owl boxes, insect hotels, great crested newt hibernacula and log piles increasing pollinators and biodiversity
- Picnic benches along the short stretch of footpath in the north, an outdoor educational space, educational boards around the site, and communal green spaces.

**THE PROPOSAL / LOCATION**


JBM Solar intends to apply for planning permission for a solar farm on c. 147 acres of non-BMV land adjacent to the Mill Road, in between Stratton Audley and Godington, to the west of the Padbury Brook watercourse. The land will be preserved as Greenfield.




Over 10 acres of Wildflower Meadows



Bird boxes and shelters across the site



Clean and renewable energy source



Implementation of Bee Hives

CONSULTATION INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

At JBM Solar working in partnership with local communities to unlock a project's full potential is at the heart of what we do. We work with local people to shape our developments and take on board community voices and accommodate change where appropriate. We care what local people say and we would like to hear from you either via our virtual consultation website below or in person at our community consultation day (details below).

Website Link: [www.PadburyBrookSolarFarm.co.uk](http://www.PadburyBrookSolarFarm.co.uk) Contact: Robin Johnson  
Email: [Info@PadburyBrookSolarFarm](mailto:Info@PadburyBrookSolarFarm) Phone: 07901270413

Community Consultation Exhibition:  
When: Thursday 28th July from 10am to 5pm  
Where: The Red Lion Pub Function Room, Stratton Audley, OX27 9AQ



- KEY BENEFITS**
- Considerable positive contribution to UK and international target for net carbon neutrality, displacing the equivalent of 1,000,000 tonnes of CO2 from fossil fuel sources
  - Battery storage will allow the site to export clean renewable energy to the grid 24/7, not just during the daylight hours, making the grid more stable
  - Over £7m in local business rates, directly supporting local council services
  - Farm to continue to produce food for the UK market through pastoral farming, with a secured income.

- Improvement in the biodiversity of the site by 50% through the conversion from arable land to a 'greenfield' site, including the creation of over 10 acres of wildflower/woodland meadows, up to 1km of hedgerow and trees and 130 acres of new grassland.
- Significant investment in green infrastructure for the local community including a green corridor route and new blue corridor permissive path circular walk opening up access between the surrounding villages and improving links with the Millennium Way.
- A Community Benefits Fund to support local projects and initiatives, free installation of rooftop solar on local community buildings.

**ENHANCEMENTS KEY**

- Beehives
- Outdoor Classroom
- Bird Box
- Tree Planting
- Educational Boards
- Wildflower Meadow
- Log Piles / Insect Hotels

**PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

The small section of footpath to the north will be protected and enhanced. It will be widened to 30m with wildflower planted on either side, and information boards will be installed along the path to explain how the solar farm works and detail local wildlife.

**BATTERY STORAGE**

This allows electricity that is generated by the solar panels during daylight hours to be stored and then used at a later time when needed. The containers will be located with the inverter stations which are evenly distributed across the site.

**LANDSCAPING**

Existing hedgerows and vegetation will be protected and enhanced across the site. In addition new hedgerows and trees will be planted to aid in screening the proposed development from nearby viewpoints and local residents.

**ACCESS**

The existing farm entrance will be used to access the site. This would be used during construction, and then very infrequently to maintain the site and it's ecological enhancements. Large farm machinery and deliveries required to run the farm such as fertilizer and herbicide shipments would no longer be needed at the site, reducing overall movements in and out in the long term.

**BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN**


The site will boast a biodiversity net gain of over 50%, above and beyond that which is considered the 'standard' level (10%). Dedicated spaces for wildflower meadow, new hedgerow planting, log piles and beehives will be implemented to ensure wildlife is able to thrive at the site.

Godington

Stratton Audley

Substation

Public Consultation Website - Welcome Page Extract



**JBM SOLAR** | Padbury Brook Solar Farm

Home | Proposals | Benefits | Exhibition | FAQs | About JBM Solar

## Padbury Brook Solar Farm

The farm, located in between Godington and Stratton Audley, would generate enough energy to meet the equivalent needs of over 17,000 UK homes.

Have your say

### Benefits

Solar farms **generate sustainable, renewable energy** and are helping the UK to accelerate the reduction of its carbon emissions and over reliance on fossil fuel generated electricity from both domestic and international markets.

At JBM, we place a **special focus on creating the greenest schemes possible** and deliver industry leading biodiversity net gains on all of our sites. We actively encourage the improvement of wildlife habitats and plant new trees, hedgerows and wildflower areas wherever we can.

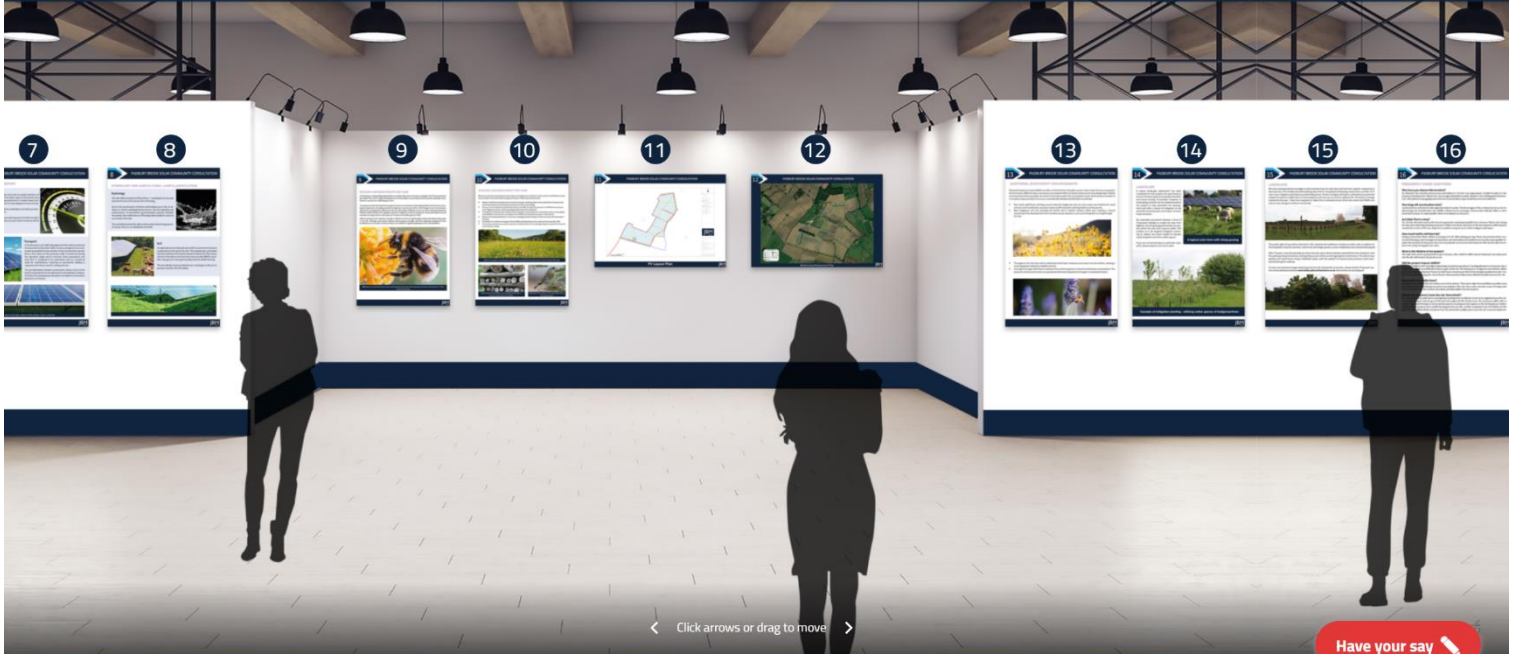
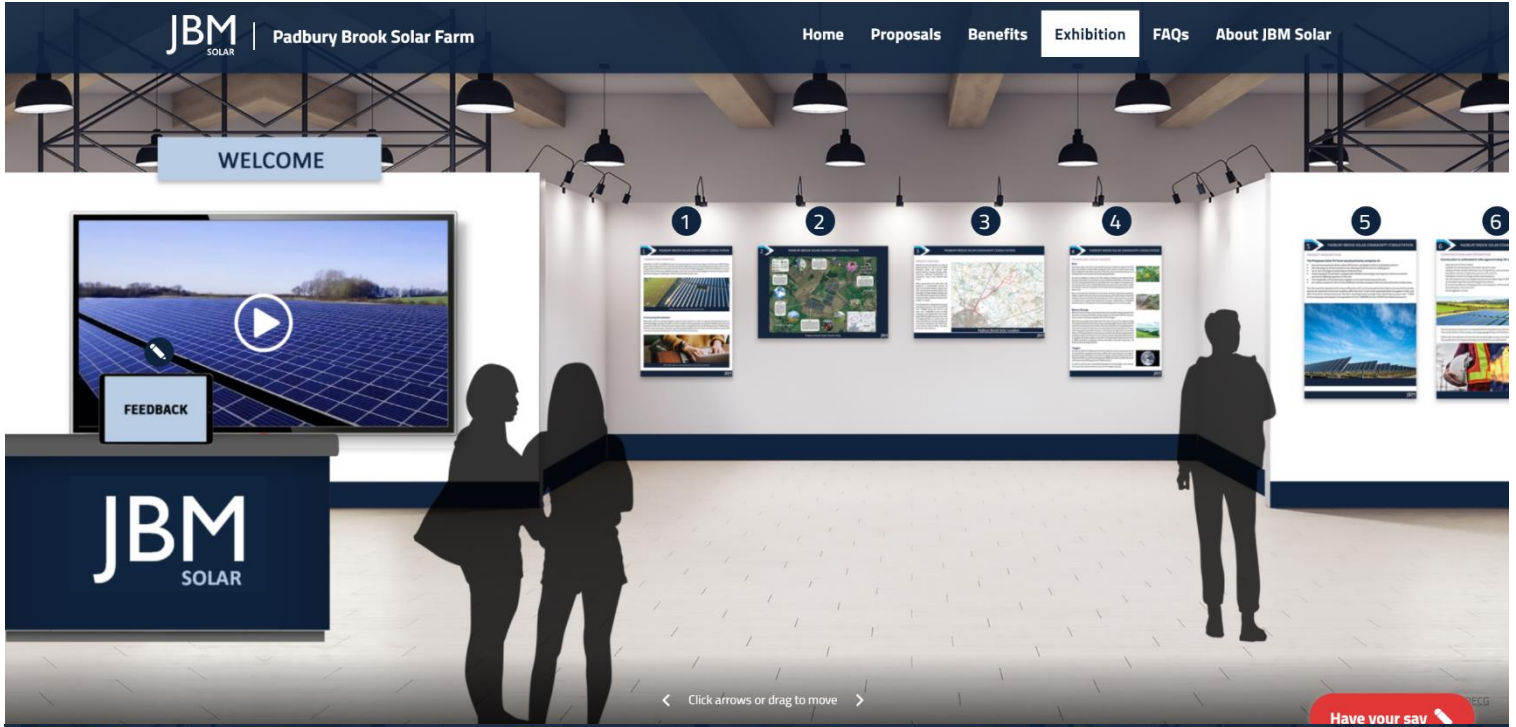
Our projects also **create local job and supply contract opportunities** during the construction, operation and maintenance phase of our sites.



Read more

Appendix E

Virtual Public Exhibition



# JBM SOLAR

Prepared on behalf of

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**London**

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