

# Scheme Update Newsletter

January 2026

**This newsletter provides an overview of the comments we received during our Phase Two Consultation and Targeted Consultation.**

**It describes how these are being considered ahead of submitting our application early this year. It also provides updates on next steps after submission and how you can stay involved.**








# Introduction

## About East Pye Solar

East Pye Solar Limited is proposing plans for a utility-scale solar and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project on land in South Norfolk. Known as East Pye Solar, the development would comprise the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and a BESS, with infrastructure that connects the Scheme to the existing 400kv overhead line that runs north to south between Norwich Main and Bramford substations.

Due to the Scheme’s size, it is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). This means that we will submit our application for consent to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on behalf of the Secretary of State, who will ultimately decide whether to grant the Scheme a Development Consent Order (DCO).

## East Pye Solar will:

-  Generate up to 500 megawatts (MW) of clean, affordable and dependable electricity
-  Contribute to energy security, enabling homegrown clean energy
-  Enhance local wildlife by delivering a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain
-  Protect existing ecological features such as woodlands, wildlife corridors and ponds
-  Support and deliver benefits to the local community

# Where we are now

**Last year we held two rounds of consultation – our Phase Two statutory consultation, which ran for seven weeks from 18 June to 6 August 2025, and a targeted consultation on a series of specific changes, which ran from 22 October to 26 November 2025. This newsletter provides a summary of these consultations and the work we have carried out since then.**

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate and share their views with us. We have read and reviewed all the feedback received. For feedback about the design of the Scheme, we have made a number of changes to address concerns. For feedback about our environmental assessments, we are considering topics raised as we finalise our assessments.

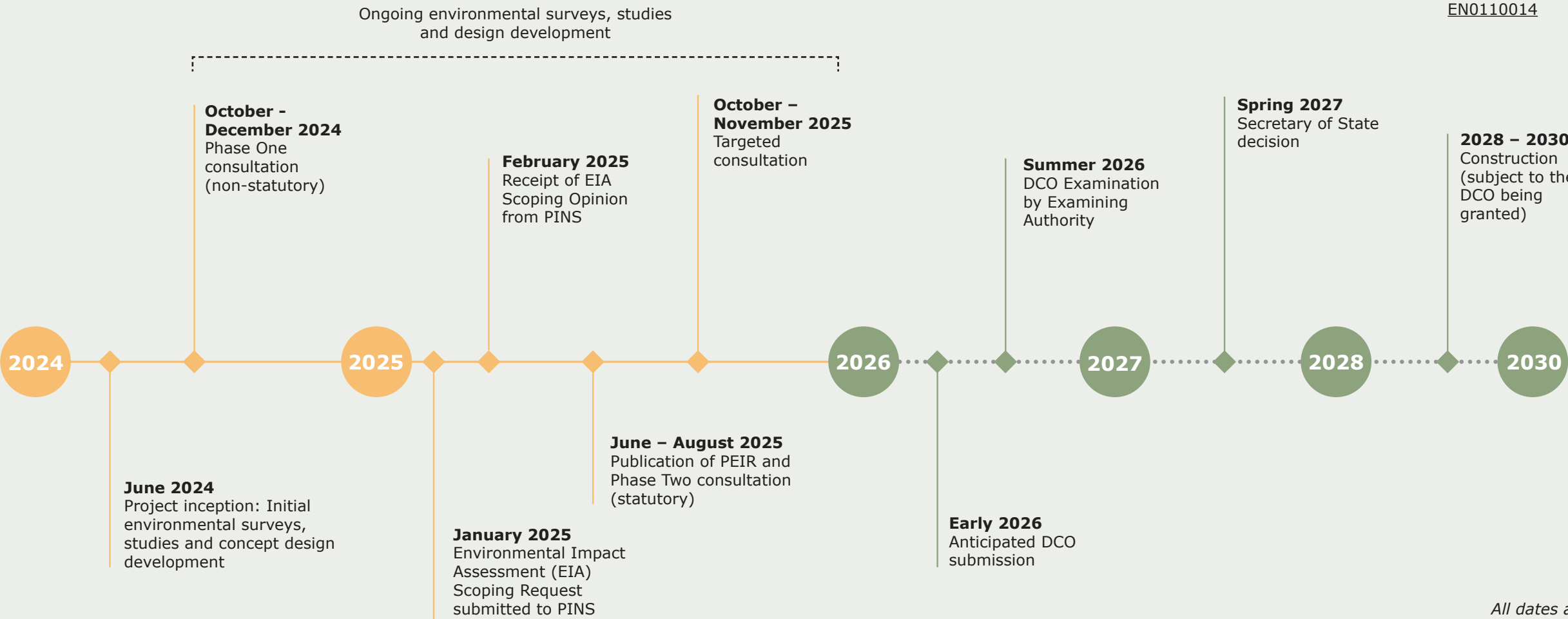
## Application submission

We plan to submit our application in early 2026. PINS then has 28 days to decide whether to accept it and allow it to proceed to the Examination stage. If accepted, PINS will publish all the application documents on its website. This will be the first opportunity to view our final documents.

Our final application will include a Consultation Report summarising responses submitted during all consultation phases and an explanation of how we have taken these into account in our final proposals.

For full details regarding the Examination stage, the wider DCO process, and how you will be able to have your say, please visit the PINS website: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/decision-making-process-guide/examination-of-the-application>

To be part of the Examination process, register for updates on the Planning Inspectorate’s East Pye Solar webpage: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0110014>



All dates are indicative and subject to change.

# Our Phase Two consultation

**Our Phase Two consultation ran from 18 June to 6 August 2025, welcoming feedback on more detailed proposals for the Scheme.**

Community feedback plays a crucial role in this process, and we are grateful for the comments we've received. Your comments have helped shape our understanding of what to prioritise as we finalise our proposals for East Pye Solar.

During our Phase Two consultation, we received **869** pieces of feedback:

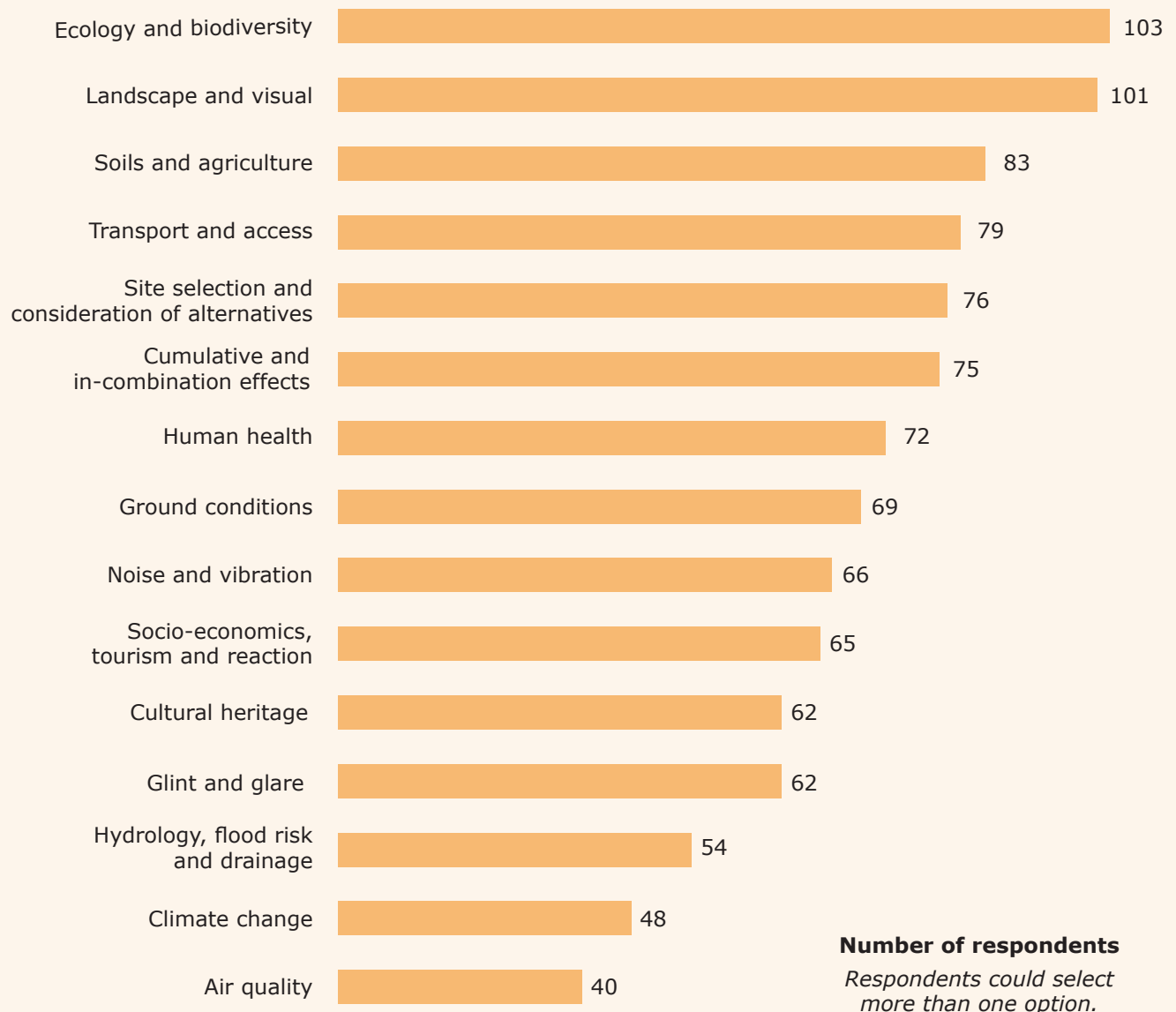


**131 feedback forms**



**738 written responses  
through emails and letters**

## The aspects most important to you?





In our Phase Two consultation feedback form, we asked which aspects of the proposals matter to you most. We then provided the option to 'tick' from a list of environment topics, so you could let us know which aspects are most important to you.

The top three were:

- Landscape and visual, and how we can screen the Scheme effectively.
- Ecology and biodiversity, including the potential impacts to wildlife and vegetation, as well as the impact to the natural environment.
- Agricultural land and soils, including concerns regarding food security, loss of agricultural land and how we can mitigate any impacts on soil quality.





# Targeted consultation

**Following our second phase of consultation we held a targeted consultation, which ran for five weeks from 22 October to 26 November 2025. During this consultation we welcomed feedback on a series of specific changes to the Scheme, as well as providing an update on proposed design changes to the Site. The feedback we received during this consultation is currently being evaluated and considered.**

The main themes of the targeted consultation feedback include:

- **Vegetation management on the additional areas needed for transport access:** This would involve the potential trimming or removal of vegetation, such as overhanging branches or overgrown hedges, to facilitate the localised changes. For any vegetation that is removed, replacement planting as close to the location and species of vegetation as possible will be undertaken. Overall, the Scheme will ensure that local wildlife habitats are left in a measurably better state than before.
- **Preferred location of the new National Grid Substation:** During the Targeted Consultation, we confirmed the preferred siting of the new National Grid Substation in Site 1B near Great Moulton. The Environmental Statement, which will be submitted as part of the DCO Application, will include further information on the potential effects and mitigation measures taken in this area.



# How we're listening to consultation feedback

**Summarised across the next few pages are the key themes from the comments we've received at Phase Two consultation and how we're considering them as we approach the submission of the DCO application.**

As the Environmental Statement (ES) is a more developed version of the PEIR, it will contain more environmental information, assessment data and proposed mitigation measures. This includes aspects such as traffic and access routes, ecology and biodiversity, recreational amenity and noise.

## Landscape and visual

### Your comments

You had concerns about the scale of the Scheme and the potential visual amenity impacts on properties and public rights of way (PRoWs), with many noting the height and look of the solar PV panels and substations.

### How we're listening

The design of East Pye Solar identifies many opportunities for landscape restoration and enhancement, by introducing planting which repairs, or reinforces, existing vegetation patterns and contributes to biodiversity net gain.

An extensive planting scheme is being proposed across the Site. This includes planting new hedges, trees and shrubs, and will be set out in an outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) which will be included in the final application.

Photography of the existing site conditions (baseline) has been obtained and will be included in the DCO application. This will help to demonstrate the nature of views towards the site, including the extent of existing screening, without the development. The ES will also include a number of photomontages to help understand how the Scheme could look at different points once it is operational, for example, at year 1 and year 15.

## Ecology and biodiversity

### Your comments

You had concerns regarding the potential impact of the Scheme on ecology, including on local deer, newts, birds and hedgehog populations, as well as wildlife corridors and fencing.

### How we're listening

We can confirm that the final design will include habitat creation and enhancement. Ecological assessments included in the ES will show how survey results have shaped mitigation measures, including maintaining habitat for skylark, providing buffers around existing vegetation, and planting new hedgerows and trees.

Research demonstrates that solar farms deliver habitat enhancements and higher levels of biodiversity gain than other developments. This is because solar farms create pesticide-free zones that support pollinators, birds, and small mammals. Solar farms support a healthier natural ecosystem by creating additional shelter for birds and small mammals and support plant life to flourish around the solar panels with minimal disturbance.

We recognise the need to protect bird species. Buffer zones and other undeveloped areas of the Scheme will be enhanced, including a substantial dedicated non-breeding bird mitigation area in Site 6. Full details regarding bird mitigation and enhancement measures will be set out in the ES.

## Agriculture and soils

### Your comments

You had concerns about the use of agricultural land, potential impact on the UK's food security and the effect on soil quality.

### How we're listening

We acknowledge concerns about the use of agricultural land and our application will need to demonstrate we have sought to utilise lower quality agricultural land where possible.

The 2024 Food Security Report<sup>1</sup> identifies climate change, not solar development, as the greatest threat to UK agriculture and food security.

Solar farms allow heavily farmed soils to rest and recover, improving water retention and soil biodiversity for future agricultural use, according to studies by Keele University (2022)<sup>2</sup> and Lancaster University (2024)<sup>3</sup>.

We are committed to avoiding fragmentation of remaining agricultural land and to carefully manage soils throughout all project phases. An Outline Soil Resources Management Plan will guide the protection of soils at all stages of the project.

## Transport and access

### Your comments

You had concerns about the potential increased traffic and congestion during the Scheme's construction phase. Others told us that the construction traffic vehicles could cause damage to roads and verges due to the narrow nature of rural roads.

You let us know where you thought narrow, rural roads are unsuitable, for example, near Saxlingham and Brooke.

### How we're listening

A Transport Assessment has been prepared. This reviews current road network capacity, identifies any needed mitigation, and factors in committed but unbuilt developments as part of the cumulative assessment.

An outline Construction Traffic Management Plan is being prepared to identify suitable construction traffic routes, based on the existing capacity of each highway. Furthermore, the ES will also consider potential cumulative impacts of other projects in the area that may have not yet received planning permission, but are in close proximity to the Scheme.

These documents will be available as part of the final DCO application.

## Cumulative impacts

### Your comments

You had concerns about cumulative impacts or wanted us to consider other developments in our assessments.

### How we're listening

We will work with other nearby infrastructure projects, including energy and housing developments, where appropriate. In our application, for each relevant topic, we will include a cumulative impact assessment that considers existing developments and all publicly-known proposals. This will cover traffic, landscape, ecology, and other key environmental topics. The list of developments included is regularly updated.

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/united-kingdom-food-security-report-2024>

2. <https://www.theconversation.com/solar-farms-a-blight-on-the-landscape-research-shows-they-can-benefit-wildlife-191222>

3. <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/2516-1083/adc9f5>

## BESS safety

### Your comments

Many respondents noted that the risk of fire from the BESS has not been assessed adequately, and that the Scheme's BESS poses dangers such as toxic gas fumes. In the event of a fire, many commented on the availability of water supplies.

### How we're listening

An Outline Fire Safety Management Plan will form part of the DCO application. This will be developed and agreed with Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service.

The battery enclosures will be separated from each other, and surrounding infrastructure, by a minimum distance that complies with any relevant National Fire Chiefs Council and / or the National Fire Protection Association guidelines at the time of detailed design.

## Noise and vibration

### Your comments

You told us about your concerns regarding the potential for increased noise and vibration from substations, invertors and tracker panels. Some also noted the increased noise during construction of the Scheme.

### How we're listening

As part of our application, an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan will set out the noise mitigation.

The Scheme will be designed to ensure increased separation from infrastructure, such as invertors and substations, that are away from residential properties. Screening measures will also be used to reduce any potential noise near properties, and the equipment will only function during specific hours to minimise disruption.

## Site selection

### Your comments

You had concerns about the site selection process and suggested alternative sites or a preference for rooftop solar.

### How we're listening

Our assessment process found no reasonable alternative sites within the wider area that could accommodate a project of this scale.

Local brownfield sites are typically too small, fragmented, or poorly connected to meet the project's requirements. We fully support rooftop solar but meeting the nation's 2030 targets will require both rooftop and ground-mounted solar, as rooftops alone cannot deliver the scale or pace needed.

## Community benefits

We received a number of suggestions for what community benefits would be most appropriate for the local area. This included energy efficiency measures for schools, free or discounted electricity, and upgrades to local buildings such as village halls and community areas.


We are considering a range of 'on-site' initiatives, including measures that would form part of the Scheme's design. This could include environmental mitigation and enhancement measures, such as the creation of permissive paths. We may also support 'off-site' initiatives which contribute to community welfare more broadly, such as investment for local community groups.





# Contact us

**Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to find out more about East Pye Solar.**

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