



SIRIUS PLANNING  
PILFREY SOLAR FARM  
STATEMENT OF  
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

 December  
2024

Private and confidential

The ideas and information contained within this report and any other associated documents are of a confidential nature and must not be passed on to any third party without the prior written consent of Thirty4/7 Communications Ltd

## Contents

---

1	Introduction .....	3
2	Pre-application consultation policy .....	5
	The Localism Act 2011 .....	5
	National Planning Policy Framework (2023).....	5
	National Planning Practice Guidelines .....	6
	North Lincolnshire Council Statement of Community Involvement.....	6
3	Engagement Strategy and Methods .....	8
	Approach to Engagement .....	8
	Timeframes .....	8
	Pre-Application Advice and Engagement with Consultees.....	8
	Consultation Website and Online Information Hub .....	9
4	Feedback and next steps.....	12

# 1 Introduction

---

- 1.1** This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared by Thirty 4/7 Communications Ltd. (Thirty 4/7) on behalf of Sirius Group ('the Applicant') and is submitted in support of a planning application to North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) for the development of a 49.9MW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Farm on land east of Ealand (1.7km), west of the Keadby Substation (c1.2km), and to the west of Keadby power station (c1.8km).
- 1.2** Planning consent is being sought for the following Description of Development ('the Proposed Development'):
- Photovoltaic (PV) panels;
  - Mounting frames – matt finished small section metal structure;
  - Scheme of landscaping and biodiversity enhancement;
  - Inverters and transformers and associated cabling (largely below ground);
  - Distribution Network Operation (DNO) substation, customer substation and system;
  - Deer fencing, sympathetic to the area, and infra-red CCTV (CCTV cameras would operate using motion sensors and would be positioned inward only to ensure privacy to neighbouring land and property);
  - Temporary set down area;
  - Internal service roads; and
  - Site Access for the construction and operational phases.
- 1.3** The Proposed Development would have an export capacity of 49.9MW, enough to power approximately 16,800 homes and displace 21,507 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per annum compared to electricity from fossil fuels, which will contribute towards tackling the climate emergency. Furthermore it is the equivalent to taking 17,923 cars off the road each year.
- 1.4** At a local level, a key aim of the proposal is to contribute towards tackling the climate emergency, helping the United Kingdom to move closer to achieving the targets for renewable energy generation and security supply as set out in the UK Government's October 2021 Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener.
- 1.5** This SCI provides details of the methodology used to conduct a consultation, the Applicant's response to stakeholder inputs, and a series of appendices to display some of the consultation materials used during the process.

- 1.6** This document has been produced with the aim of clearly and concisely highlighting the consultation undertaken by the Applicant in respect of their proposal for the Site. The SCI will provide a chronological account of the consultation activity that has been undertaken within the pre-application stages of the planning application. All feedback received has been accounted for within this document.

## 2 Pre-application consultation 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 an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), community engagement is an important part of the development process.

### The Localism Act 2011

- 2.3 Section 122 of the Localism Act 2011 outlines that a person intending to make a planning application in England should carry out pre-application consultation. This should include publicity considered likely to bring details of the potential application to the attention of a majority of the persons who live at, or otherwise occupy, premises in the vicinity of the land to which the application relates.
- 2.4 Thereafter, regulations defining the requirements of consultation have not been laid before Parliament. As such, section 122 does not yet apply to any planning applications made under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). In this context the Applicant has undertaken consultation voluntarily and in the spirit of good practice to ensure communities of interest and communities of place are informed and have opportunities to provide feedback.

### National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- 2.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's policies for England and outlines how these policies should be applied. 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.'*

- 2.6 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.'*

- 2.7 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.

### **National Planning Practice Guidelines**

- 2.8** National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was launched by the Government in 2014. It is a web-based resource which is actively managed to ensure that it remains up to date. Guidance under the section 'Before Submitting an Application' outlines the benefits of pre-application engagement with the Local Planning Authority as a means of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system and of improving the quality of planning applications and their likelihood of success.
- 2.9** Under the heading 'Is pre-application community consultation compulsory' the guidance suggests that *"Pre-application engagement with the community is encouraged where it will add value to the process and the outcome."*

### **North Lincolnshire Council Statement of Community Involvement**

- 2.10** The NLC adopted a Statement of Community Involvement in 2018. The SCI sets out how NLC will involve local communities, businesses, and organisations in preparing the Local Plan and the planning application process. The importance of such engagement for developers is set out in the adopted statement:

*"4.20 Development proposals can, depending on their scale and nature have significant impact on local communities. Therefore, it is advisable that applicants putting forward major proposals should carry out their own pre-application consultation with local people. We expect local communities to be offered the chance to influence proposals in their areas at an early stage through these consultation exercises."*

*"4.24 Consultations should be carried out at an early stage in the design process and allow sufficient time for consideration of the consultation outcomes before drawing up and submission of the application."*

- 2.11** The SCI sets out expectations for developers to undertake consultation prior to submitting planning applications. The Applicant has aligned its consultation approach with the Council's SCI requirements.

### **Data Security**

- 2.12** The Applicant and Thirty 4/7 Communications take data security very seriously and have ensured that their arrangements, and those of any sub-contractors, for data handling comply in full with the UK-General Data Protection Regulations (UK-GDPR). Information that has been collected in relation to the consultation process for the Project has been securely, clearly and logically stored and reviewed to ensure it is up

to date and that any details not required for the purpose of the pre-application consultation process are deleted.

## 3 Engagement Strategy and Methods

---

### Approach to Engagement

- 3.1** The aim and objective of the engagement programme was to disseminate information and seek feedback from local communities in order to improve quality and maximise the public benefits that could be delivered as part of a sustainable development scheme. The Applicant considered it important to ensure that those most likely to be impacted by development were aware of the proposal, had an opportunity to find out more information, and had a means by which to express their views and help shape the final design.
- 3.2** An initial outreach with local community stakeholders and neighbours closest to the site took place across the summer of 2023. A letter was issued with details of the proposals as well as details of the project website, where further information on the proposals could be found, and a range of contact methods to be able to provide feedback.

### Timeframes

- 3.3** The key stages of pre-application engagement are set out below and then discussed in detail to follow:
- **November 2022:** Initial Pre-Application Advice from North Lincolnshire Council as Local Planning Authority
  - **Spring/Summer 2024:** Outreach with near neighbours and local stakeholders place with information on proposals and launch of project website
  - **Summer 2023-Summer 2024** Consideration of feedback and design refinement.
  - **Autumn/Winter 2024:** An email issued to community stakeholders with an update on the proposals and the site layout

### Pre-Application Advice and Engagement with Consultees

- 3.4** In September 2022 the Applicant made a request for NLC's formal Pre-Application Advice on a 49.9MW solar farm. The submission was supported by a detailed letter which set out the proposals as well as a red-line Location Plan and Constraints Plan.
- 3.5** A NLC Pre-Application Response was received on the 16 November 2022. The Response included specific relevant local policy, advice on the likely key issues that may arise when seeking planning permission, as well as helpful recommendations for further consultation. The advice related to a previous red line boundary than the

version which forms this planning submission. The reasons for the change in Site boundary are detailed within the Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement which accompanies this application.

The Applicant remains committed to engage with these key stakeholders as the development progresses through the next stages.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

**3.6** To inform stakeholders of the proposals, an email was issued to key stakeholders and to raise awareness of the proposals for near neighbours they were also contacted and provided with information. The introductory letter provided details of the Applicant's intentions for the Pilfrey Solar Farm, offered a meeting and how to provide feedback. This letter and information were issued in May 2024.

**3.7** The letter was sent to the following stakeholders:

- Leader, Deputy Leader, Mayor, and Cabinet Members of North Lincolnshire Council
- Local Ward Members at North Lincolnshire Council (Axholme North ward)
- Local Member of Parliament, Lee Pitcher MP
- Local and neighbouring parish councils, (Keadby with Althorpe Parish Council, Crowle & Ealand Town Council, Amcotts Parish Council, Luddington & Haldenby Parish Council, Eastoft Parish Council)

## **Consultation Website and Online Information Hub**

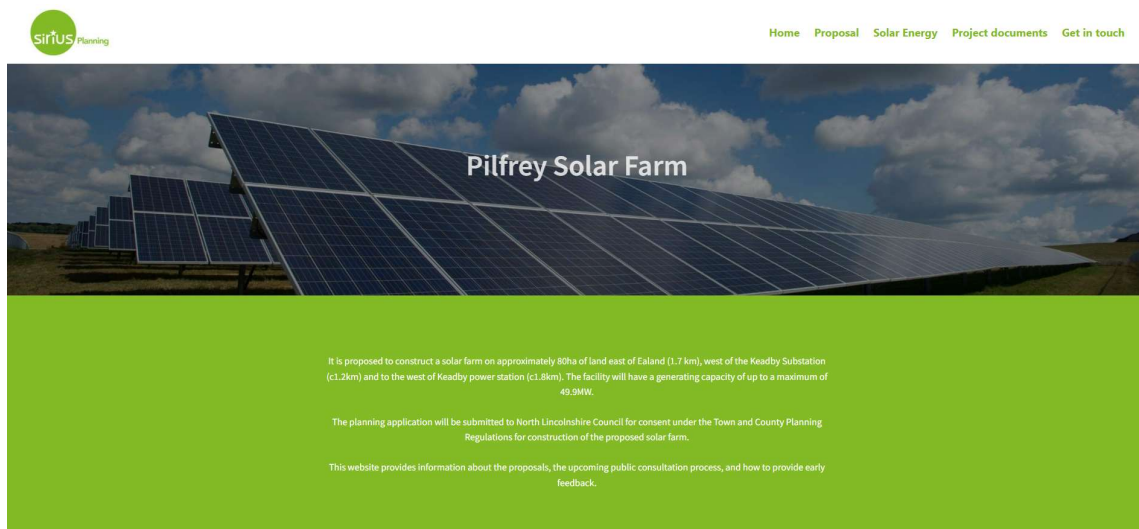
**3.8** The purpose of the website was to inform the public of the Proposed Development and to offer a forum for enquires and feedback that would inform the Applicant's final designs and the content of the planning application's supporting documentation.

**3.9** 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 the Applicant's final designs and the content of the planning application's supporting documentation.

**3.10** The website, hosted at [pilfeysolarfarm.co.uk](http://pilfeysolarfarm.co.uk) was first launched in May 2024 prior to the launch of the consultation. The website included the following:

- An introduction to Pilfrey Solar Farm, its location, council involved with the application, and overview of the scheme.
- General information about the proposal including Site location and context, the proposed development area, and the renewable energy output that would be delivered by Pilfrey Solar Farm.
- An aerial image Location Plan to provide a recognisable visual illustration of the Site location for local residents.

- An overview of key components including solar panels, mounting frames, inverters, substation, grid connection, access, and Site security measures.
  - A frequently asked questions tab that provided questions on the connection
  - An overview of the benefits of solar farms including landscape and biodiversity enhancement opportunities and the contribution to Net Zero emissions targets.
  - Information on the planning application process and associated timeframes.
  - An online form giving people the opportunity to ask questions and make representations.
- 3.11** Visitors to the website were able to download copies of relevant materials and request further information as required.
- 3.12** Those with an interest in the proposals were able to contact the project team via the online form to ask questions or provide feedback. A screenshot of the home screen can be found below:



**Website home page screenshot**

- 3.13** The website details were advertised on the letters distributed to the local community stakeholders.
- 3.14** Although the consultation period has ended, the consultation documents remain available to view, and the contact form active for individuals to contact the project team with questions remains active. No further responses were received after the closing date.

### **Website Accessibility**

- 3.15** 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. Website design followed best practice guidance on understanding accessibility and promoting inclusivity, (e.g., Understanding accessibility requirements for public sector bodies - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))). 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.'*

- 3.16** The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are the industry standard of web accessibility around the globe. They specify how to make website content more inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities. To meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA conformance, a website is usable and understandable for the majority of people with or without disabilities. Accessibility checks were undertaken on the Pilfrey Solar Farm website to ensure that it met WCAG 2.1 AA standards.

## 4 Feedback and next steps

---

- 4.1 This section of the SCI discusses the feedback received across the community consultation programme and how consultation helped to improve the Proposed Development proposals. It begins with an overview of the methods of feedback available to residents and stakeholders and then reviews the feedback by type.
- 4.2 The Applicant provided several ways of providing feedback on the proposals, including via:
- **Email** – [planningconsultations@thesiriusgroup.com](mailto:planningconsultations@thesiriusgroup.com)
  - **Freepost** – FREEPOST TC CONSULTATION (no further address or stamp required)
  - **Freephone** – 0800 699 0081 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm excluding public holidays or leave a message at any time)
  - **Online web form** – On the project website ([www.pilfreysolarfarm.co.uk](http://www.pilfreysolarfarm.co.uk))
- 4.3 The Applicant received a response from a resident close to the site who requested further information on the proposals and clarification on the timeline of the proposals. The Applicant agreed to provide further information on the proposals as further updates become available.
- 4.4 The Applicant issued a letter to stakeholders listed in Chapter 3.7 and nearby neighbours in December 2024 with an update on the proposals and outlining the next steps.
- 4.5 As an established solar farm developer, the Applicant is committed to accessible and inclusive engagement and relies on local input to help it deliver high quality solar projects. Further to engagement carried out prior to the submission of an applicant the Applicant is committed to continuing to work with local residents, Parish Councils, and community groups, throughout the application and determination process.