Camp Farm Solar Frequently Asked Questions

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OVERVIEW

Who is AMPYR Solar Europe?

Ampyr Solar Europe is a limited partnership registered in the UK and is the developer of this project. It was created in 2021 through the merger of NaGa Solar with the existing Ampyr Energy UK joint venture between AGP Group and Hartree Partners.

How big is Camp Farm Solar?

The solar panels would cover 62 hectares within a 73-hectare (ha) site and the solar farm has an expected export capacity of up to 49.9 megawatts (MW), with a 50MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).

The layout of the site has been designed, where possible, to consider the continued use of public footpaths, protect local views and minimise impacts on the local community.

What will Camp Farm Solar consist of?

The solar farm

The solar farm will consist of:

- Fixed-tilt solar photovoltaic panels. This means that they are fixed in position facing south and do not move during the day.
- Around 125,000 panels within 2,100 units with a power export capacity of up to 49.9 megawatts (MW).
- Solar panels set on lightweight frames in rows spaced 2.5m apart with a minimum ground clearance of 0.6m and a maximum panel height of up to 3m.
- Power will be converted from Direct Current to Alternating Current, and the voltage stepped up suitable for the UK national electricity network (“the grid”) via onsite inverters and transformers.
- An on-site substation and site facility, which includes a control room and components storage.
- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) which includes commercial-scale batteries and transformers.
- A security fence up to 2.4m high, and CCTV cameras and a thermal imaging detection system located on 3m high poles, set at approximately 100m intervals on average around the site perimeter.
- Internal access tracks through the field to enable operation and maintenance.
- Hedgerows planted around the site, with existing hedgerows maintained, to screen it from external views, and also provide biodiversity benefits. Where there are existing gaps in the hedgerow, additional infill planting with native hedgerow species would be considered to improve screening and enhanced biodiversity benefit. Any further landscaping requirements would be proposed by a project landscape architect following completion of a landscape and visual appraisal.
- Ecology mitigation and enhancement areas to protect the ecology and habitats of the site, including the creation of a wetland area.

Why have you chosen this location for Camp Farm Solar?

We have carefully considered the best location for the solar farm, both operationally and in terms of minimising impacts on the community and environment. The steps we have followed are set out below.

1. Securing connection agreement. A 49.9MW connection agreement was secured with National Grid at the nearby Lea Mars-ton Substation. This will be the point of connection with the grid and a separate application will be made at a later date by AMPYR or the District Network Operator for a buried cable route between the National Grid Substation and the solar panel (PV) site. The default position is a connection fully within the highway via Section 50 License application, which would be viable for the site. At this stage, the route is assumed to be entirely within highway / roads.

2. Conduct a desktop assessment. Desktop assessments have been carried out to find suitable areas for the solar panels. This considered a number of things including national and local designations, heritage, ecology, flood risk, agricultural land grading, neighbouring land uses, visual impacts, and proximity to homes and other committed developments.

3. Identify land options in the search area. Based on the search area identified during the desktop assessment, we then engaged with landowners to find suitable sites.

4. Carry out a detailed assessment on suitability of the land. Once we had identified a site in the right area, we conducted a detailed assessment of its suitability, including environmental surveys. A solar farm can be developed on Green Belt under special circumstances, and we believe this project meets the relevant criteria for this. There is also no interaction with other committed developments at the site, minimal flood risk and the site is not within an ecologically significant area.

Why is Camp Farm Solar needed?

The UK is transitioning to zero and low carbon sources of power. All coal-fired power stations have to close by 2025, meaning the amount of energy generated from renewable sources needs to increase. The UK's climate change ambitions are amongst the highest in Europe and the aim to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 is set in law.

By 2050 the UK is expected by National Grid to be using double the amount of electricity than we do today. For example, the growth in electric vehicle ownership has grown thirty-fold and is set to rise with the abolition of new diesel and petrol cars by 2035.

Currently the UK's electricity price is among the highest in Europe, meaning that we need to find ways of generating more affordable, renewable and clean electricity. Energy security for the country is also of paramount importance.

What are the timescales for Camp Farm Solar?

We are currently doing surveys and assessments to inform our proposal, as well as consulting the local community and stakeholders. All this work will inform our final proposal, which will be submitted in a planning application to North Warwickshire Borough Council later this year.

Should planning permission be granted, we would look to begin construction in 2029. We anticipate that construction (following some enabling works) will then take approximately 16 to 20 weeks. Enabling works would start 6-12 months prior to construction, although some landscaping works (e.g. any tree planting) could occur sooner if required or beneficial.

Will there be a lot of construction traffic?

All construction materials will be delivered by Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) lorries with no abnormal indivisible loads (AILs). The average daily number of delivery vehicles throughout the construction period would be expected to be low, with approximately 45 deliveries per day at its peak.

How long will construction take?

The construction period is expected to last between 16-20 weeks, and it is proposed that construction working hours would be as follows:

- 08:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday; and
- 08:00 – 13:00 on Saturday.

Should work be required to be undertaken outside of these times, this would be agreed in advance and in writing with the local planning authority.

Will solar really work in this location?

Solar panels need daylight and sunshine, not high temperatures, so solar panels can and do work well in England.

What will happen when the solar farm is no longer needed?

The Camp Farm Solar development will be reversible, with an operational period of approximately 40 years. At the end of the development's lifespan, the site will be decommissioned, with the land returned to the landowner ready for agricultural use and with improved soil quality.

On decommissioning of the solar farm, the majority of materials removed from the site will be either re-used or recycled. It is anticipated that few waste materials would be generated during the operational period – transformers and inverters will be the most frequently replaced components of the solar farm, and these would also be either re-used (e.g. reconditioned) or recycled.

Traffic during decommissioning is expected to be similar to the levels during construction.

How will Camp Farm Solar be constructed?

During the construction period, initial site setup works would take place followed by construction of the internal access route(s), ground works, and the installation of the solar panels and other associated infrastructure including the battery storage.

Facilities would be provided on-site for construction workers, including provision of a site office and welfare facilities. Fencing would be installed around the perimeter of the site, and temporary parking would be provided for the construction workers.

The components for the construction phase are largely prefabricated and therefore any construction waste generated would be reduced to a minimum. Site waste management will be in accordance with appropriate licenses.

How will Camp Farm Solar be operated?

During operation, the solar aspect of the site will be remotely operated and would only be visited for maintenance and inspection purposes. There will also be some management of the habitats on-site, e.g. wildflower meadow and hedgerows, which could involve activities such as surveys and additional or replacement planting.

ENVIRONMENT

Have you considered the impact of Camp Farm Solar on the environment?

We are working hard to be mindful of the environment at the site. Surveys are being carried out to assess Camp Farm Solar's likely effects on the environment, landscape, heritage and local community. We are also looking at ways to enhance local ecology and biodiversity through the project.

Have you considered the impact of Camp Farm Solar on ecology and biodiversity?

Conserving and enhancing the biodiversity around Camp Farm Solar is important to us. We are undertaking surveys to understand if there are any protected wildlife and habitats at the site, as well as to identify any mitigation required to minimise impacts on them. These surveys have concluded that the solar farm will not have a significant impact on the local ecology, wildlife or habitats of the area.

The site will have a combination of solar panels and areas of ecological mitigation to protect the ecology of the site and its ecological value to the wider area.

We are required to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain through habitat enhancement onsite, and it is currently expected that this can be substantially bettered through hedge and tree planting, bird mitigation and enhancement areas, and the planting of species rich grassland under the solar PV areas.

How will local wildlife and habitat benefit?

We will be working to enhance the natural environment through our work at Camp Farm Solar. Some options we are considering include:

- Wetland creation
- Ecology mitigation area
- Maintenance and planting of hedgerows

Will there be more traffic in the area because of Camp Farm Solar?

During construction, there is likely to be more traffic due to materials being delivered to the site but, when the solar farm is operational, additional traffic would be limited to maintenance vehicles less than once a week on average.

During the construction phase, access to the site will be directly from Knowle Hill (road) south of the site. This access point will be 300m east of the existing field access for road safety reasons. A secondary operational access point will use an existing field access off of a side road further northeast, adjacent to Camp Farm farmhouse – given the narrow road, Public Right of Way footpath, and close proximity to residential properties, this is proposed as a backup access to be infrequently used, and would be less used than its current use for farming.

Site traffic is expected to arrive from the west along Knowle Hill, from the B4098 (Coventry Road), which in turn would come generally from the north from the Kingsbury Roundabout. From the national highway network, traffic would generally use the M6 or M42 to Junction 9 of the M42, and the A4097.

Site traffic will consist of HGVs, light goods vehicles and cars. Movements during the construction phase are expected to have a minimal impact on local network. Traffic

management measures may be implemented for cable installation works, however these will be short-term and are not likely to cause significant disruption. We will also consider any cumulative impacts from other nearby works.

Will Camp Farm Solar create a glint/glare issue?

Glint and glare are visual effects that can sometimes affect nearby motorists or homes. Solar panels are designed to maximise the absorbency of the sun's rays, and this means that glint and glare levels will be lower compared to surfaces such as window glass, water, or snow.

We are also undertaking a Glint and Glare assessment, which will consider the visual effects within a 1km radius of the site. In general, the panels are designed to absorb the sunlight and are proven to reflect less light than waterbodies or glass, and therefore do not normally create issues.

Will there be any noise/ buzz from the panels?

Solar panels themselves do not make any noise and there are no known health issues associated with being near solar developments. When the solar farm is operational, low levels of noise can be generated by the electrical system, such as from the Battery Energy Storage Site (BESS), transformers and inverters, which can sound like a quiet buzz or fan noise, which decreases rapidly with distance from this infrastructure. We proposed to use Medium Voltage Stations (MVS) which combine the transformers and inverters into these units, and minimise the number of inverters needed on-site. The BESS and MVS will be located away from the PRoW and nearby properties, at a distance confirmed by acoustic specialists and/or assessment as required, to minimise noise impacts. Detailed noise modelling will confirm any likely noise impacts on surrounding communities.

The construction of the solar farm will take place quickly, as minimal digging is required. The potential effects of noise and vibration during construction will be limited to specific locations within the site and only for short periods. We will make the community aware when works are likely to take place and details of our limited working hours will be set out in our planning application.

Is there a risk of flooding at the site?

Drains and watercourses near the development will not be impacted by the solar farm's development. Maintaining the grass below the site itself wherever possible will ensure that the land will remain permeable, meaning surface water can pass through easily.

As part of our planning application, we will submit a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, which will demonstrate that the site will not be affected by flood risk, nor affect flood risk elsewhere. It will also demonstrate how any residual risk of flooding will be managed.

Will there be any impacts on local heritage from the works?

There will be no direct impacts on the heritage of the area. The planning application will include a Heritage Assessment that assesses any potential impacts on the setting and character of heritage sites, and the potential for undiscovered archaeological remains.

How high will the infrastructure be?

The solar development will range from 0.6m in height at the lowest point, rising to no more than 3m at the highest point. This means that the visual effects of the solar farm will be limited for the communities surrounding the site.

The BESS containers will be a maximum 3m height, and the inverters and transformers are expected to be around 2.5m high. The onsite substation will include a regular brick and tiled-roof building with a pitched roof, maximum 5m in height at its peak.

How will the solar panels be screened?

The site lacks in existing hedgerows around its boundary, and it is therefore proposed to plant around 3km of new hedgerow to help screen the development from external views and also provide biodiversity benefits, including adjacent Public Rights of Way (PRoW). Within this, existing hedgerow and trees around the site would be maintained, Existing gaps in hedgerows will be filled where appropriate, and all planting will use native hedgerow species .

We will also look at other ways to introduce planting, such as wildflower meadows. This will all be considered as part of our Landscape and Visual Assessment, which will be submitted with our planning application.

Will there be any impacts on food security and agricultural land?

AMPYR welcomes sheep grazing on its solar farms to manage the grassland under the solar panels; new companies have established in the UK that match sheep farmers with solar farms. Should the grass need to be cut mechanically, AMPYR will investigate whether the cuttings can be shared with farmers to ensure an end use for the grass/hay.

Following decommissioning, the land will be restored back to a state ready for its return to arable farming.

We know that food security is important. The National Food Strategy, which is an independent review for Government, notes that the next big shock to our food supply will almost certainly be caused by climate change in the form of extreme weather events and catastrophic harvest failures. It follows that addressing climate change, including by using solar energy, will improve the security of our food supply.

In addition, Solar Energy UK published a paper about the Facts About Solar Energy – in it, they note that to meet the government's net zero target, the 75 to 90 GW of solar required by 2050 would at most account for approximately 0.4 – 0.6% of UK land, or less than the amount currently used for golf courses.

During the solar farm's life span, which is approximately 40 years, the ground beneath the solar panels will be used by wildflower meadow or similar, allowing the soil to rest and become more fertile. After its operational period, the solar farm will be decommissioned and the land returned to full agricultural use.

COMMUNITY

Will local communities be able to have their say on your proposal?

Yes – this consultation is your opportunity to fully understand the scheme, ask us questions, and share your feedback. We will consider all feedback received and use it to inform our proposal. We would also like to hear suggestions on how we can deliver community benefits through the scheme.

This consultation is running from **29 May to 23:59 on 30 June 2024**. Views can be shared on the project in one of the following ways.

- Online: by completing the online feedback form at www.campfarmsolar.co.uk

- Email: by sending your feedback to the scheme email address – **contact@ampyrsolareurope.com**
- Post: by posting your feedback to the scheme Freepost address (no stamp required) – **Freepost ASE**
- At one of our consultation events: by filling in a hard copy feedback form and submitting it to a member of the project team.

How are we involving the community?

We are now consulting the local community on our proposal, in advance of submitting a planning application to North Warwickshire Borough Council later this year. This consultation is your opportunity to fully understand the scheme, ask us questions, and share your feedback. We will consider all feedback received and use it to inform our proposal.

Once the planning application is submitted, North Warwickshire Borough Council will host a statutory consultation, where you will be able to comment further, directly to the council. At this point, we will also share an update with the local community on how your feedback has influenced our proposal.

We will stay in touch through the development of the scheme, including through our scheme website: www.campfarmsolar.co.uk

What benefits will Camp Farm Solar bring?

- Supply energy needs of approximately 25,000 homes per year*
- Help to decarbonise the local area saving c. 21,000 tonnes of CO_2 per year and over 800,000 tonnes of CO_2 over 40 years
- Biodiversity net gain / habitat creation
- Local farm diversification
- Supports UK transition to zero and low carbon power sources

We are also looking at ways to help ensure the local community directly benefits from the development of the solar farm. This could include:

- A Community Benefit Fund to support local projects, initiatives, or community cooperative electricity
- Creating opportunities for local business in the supply chain

We would also like to hear your ideas on what benefits you would like to see delivered. Any ideas or suggestions can be shared with us using our consultation feedback form.

Will Camp Farm Solar impact any public rights of way (PRoW)?

One PRoW (WK|200|T56/1) passes through the middle of the proposed site.

We are proposing to divert this PRoW around the southern edge of the site. The diverted route would be 10m wide and new species rich hedgerow would be planted between it and the solar farm.

Have you considered the impact of Camp Farm Solar on Hurley Recreation Ground?

Hurley Recreation Ground is within approximately 100m of our site, and so in order to avoid visual impacts on users of this public open space, we are leaving 5.4ha of land as an ecological and landscape buffer. The nearest fence will therefore by over 230m away from the recreation ground, and we propose a new hedgerow in front of the fence to help screen the development.

OTHER

Are there any risks associated with the battery energy storage system (BESS)?

AMPYR will liaise with the local Fire and Rescue Service and Council on battery safety and will produce a Battery Safety Management Plan and Emergency Response Plan following consent. An Outline Battery Safety Management Plan will be included as part of the planning application and will demonstrate adherence with the National Fire Chief's safety guidelines.

Does the UK risk being covered with solar farms?

The Government's 'Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener' commits the UK to be powered entirely by clean electricity by 2035, subject to security of supply. To deliver the strategy, overall electricity demand is expected to increase 40-60% by 2035, all met from low carbon sources. This means that the number of solar farms in the UK will increase. However, solar farms in the UK currently account for around only 0.1% of total land use.