

Cell Energy: Diddington

Buckden and Diddington Parish Council and Southoe and Midloe Parish Council Questions and Answers December 2021

Project timescales

What is the time scale for the project?

- Public consultation Autumn 2021 Application submission Early 2022
- Installation starts if Planning Permission Granted Late 2022/early 2023
- Clean energy could be generated from Autumn 2023
- Solar Farm Planning Permission expires circa 2062

Location (map)

What is the hatched boundary which appears to show much of Diddington and Perry Road?
This signifies the 1km study area for the landscape and visual assessment.

What are the orange dots at various points on the map?
These pin point Grade II Listed Buildings.

Why are two areas coloured purple?
This signifies the Ouse Valley Landscape Character Area.

Does the proposed site cover part of the possible proposed new A1 to the west of the current A1?
The landowner has not been approached by the local authority about acquiring the land for any proposed new A1 route.

Flood Risk (in the light of future climate change)

Will the constructions with their concrete bases affect flood risks, and if so, where?

All solar panels will be fixed on piles, so no concrete associated with the installation of the actual solar panels. Concrete will only be used to provide a base for the sub-stations and invertors associated with the solar farm. These make up a fraction of the overall site so the impact is negligible.

Where will the run-off from the solar field drain to?

The surface water will run off into Diddington Brook. As a note, in the last 50 years of managing the land, the landowner has not experienced any flooding at the site.

How will the surface and ground water impact of concrete as part of the fixing of the PV panels be managed?

As very little concrete will be used to install the solar farm and associated infrastructure, there will be very little intrusion to the ground.

What steps will be taken to manage surface water flows e.g., when there is heavy rain?

The proposal to improve biodiversity goes hand in hand with the drainage strategy. The planting of wildflowers, new trees and hedgerow enhancements will support the soil to hold water.

A full drainage strategy devised in conjunction with the LLFA will be submitted alongside the final planning application for the site.

Will the run off potentially affect Diddington Brook?

Please see the answers to previous questions on drainage.

If so, what steps would be taken as part of planning/construction to manage the risk to structures downstream from the solar field? For example, where Diddington Brook goes under the 'Waterboard Road' – route to Anglian Water operations on River Great Ouse and a public footpath.

Please see the answers to previous questions on drainage.

Orientation of PV panels

How high will the structures be? Will they be visible from Perry Road houses?

The structures will be 2.8 metres high.

The solar farm will be partially visible from Perry Road. However, as they will have a southerly orientation there will be no glare as only the back of the panels will be seen.

How will the panels be oriented?

The panels will be orientated in a southerly direction.

Will they face South, and so have less impact on Diddington property's amenity?

Yes. As a result of the topography of the site and the natural screening, the solar panels will not be visible from Diddington or Southoe.

Will they face Southoe? Depending on the topography, the impact on Southoe could be greater, and therefore potentially greater adverse impact on amenity of Southoe residents.

Please see the answer to the previous question.

Screening

Can you please provide more information on how screening will be created?

Existing mature screening will be maintained. Where necessary, existing screening will be enhanced and new planting introduced to mitigate and landscape or visual impact. This also forms part of Cell Energy's approach to improve biodiversity and support local wildlife.

Cell Energy will work with planning officers at Huntingdonshire District Council to ensure any landscape or visual impact is effectively mitigated.

How will screening be maintained in the medium to longer term to maintain its effectiveness whilst also promoting biodiversity and assisting with mitigating the effects of climate change?

The whole site will be carefully maintained once the solar farm is in operation. Screening will be continually maintained in the medium and long term through good hedgerow and land management.

Construction access

How will they go from the end of that road (Common Barn Wind Farm Access) across to the site?

The existing farm track will be used.

Will they be constructing a new road across the farm land to Vicarage Lane via Lodge Farm?

This is not proposed.

Construction traffic management

The bridle path from the windfarm access road from the A1 to the point where there is a gate onto Thornhill land is quite narrow. How will traffic be managed?

All traffic flows will be set out within a construction management plan. The construction management plan will be prepared and agreed with the local authority before any construction work begins.

It is not anticipated that any widening is required. If so, this will be done in conjunction with the landowner.

Will vehicular traffic be limited to daylight hours only?

Vehicular traffic will be strictly limited to business hours. This will be stated in the construction management plan.

How will traffic be controlled for vehicles slowing down on northbound A1?

Traffic management will be set by the transport management plan that will be prepared and agreed with the local authority prior to construction. The transport management plan will be prepared in consultation with National Highways.

Will vehicles be monitored to prevent "U turns" at the Bell Lane and Lees Lane turns?

Yes, U-turns will be strictly prohibited. All access and egress to the site will be in a northbound direction only.

Is there any possibility that a slip road from the Bell Lane junction into the windfarm entrance could be constructed as part of the scheme?

Cell Energy will work with National Highways to assess and agree the optimum route for construction. The final access route agreed will ensure it is practical and safe.

Operation of the solar farm

What is the expected working life of the proposed solar field in Diddington?

The expected lifespan of the solar farm is 40 years. Cell Energy are seeking planning permission for this period of time.

What guarantee is there that at the end of the solar farm's life the panels won't simply be replaced and continue to generate power?

At the end of the lifetime of the solar farm, the land will automatically revert back to its existing arable use. A new planning permission would be required for a solar farm to remain at the site.

Community benefit fund

Who or where will benefit from the proposed Community Benefit Fund?

The Community Benefit Fund would be available for the local community to allocate funding for green initiatives. The local parish council for the site can oversee the allocation of the benefit fund if it wishes.

As part of the Community Benefit Fund, Cell Energy are also keen to work with local schools to install screens that can display a real time feed of data from the solar farm to act as an educational tool.

Who will be represented on the committee/trustees/working group that will co-ordinate the use of the fund?

This can be determined by Buckden Parish Council, as the local parish council for the site.

What is the likely value of the fund?

Cell Energy will provide £500 per MW of power that the solar farm produces. As such, the emerging proposal would provide a Community Benefit Fund worth £17,500 for the parish council to administer for local initiatives.