



LIGHTSOURCE
RENEWABLE ENERGY LIMITED

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



LAND TO THE WEST OF DELPH ROAD,
PEN-Y-CAE, WREXHAM, LL14 1TU

DOC REFERENCE: Land to the west of
Delph Road

DATE: 06 February 2015

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London
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Company Number 7129343

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Statement of Community Involvement summarises the pre-application engagement and consultation Lightsource has undertaken with the local community and stakeholders for the proposed solar farm at Land to the West of Delph Road, Pen-y-Cae, Wrexham, LL14 1TU.

Details of our engagement with Wrexham Borough Council (Screening Opinion) are provided in Section 2 of the Design and Access Statement.

2 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND METHODS

The aim and objectives of the engagement programme have been to inform and engage with the local community and stakeholders, in order to ensure local people are aware of the proposal and have the chance to find out more and express their views.

A range of methods have been employed to engage with stakeholders and the local community.

2.1 INFORMATION LEAFLET

A four page leaflet providing information on the proposal was mailed to 1155 local residents and businesses in the area on Monday 20 October 2014. Copies and personal invitations to our drop-in event were also sent to the Ward Members Cllr Derek Wright, Cllr David Taylor, Cllr Joan Lowe, and to Cefn Community Council and Pen-y-Cae Community Council.

This leaflet provided an introduction to the proposal, publicised the upcoming community engagement event, and included details for accessing the project website. The leaflet also provided details on how to contact the Lightsource team for further information.

A copy of the information leaflet is included in **Appendix A**.

The leaflet included details for accessing our online feedback form, hard copies of which were available at the community engagement event. A second information leaflet will be sent to all those who provided either an address or email contact with their feedback form, this will provide an update on amendments made to the project, as well as advising that the proposal has now been submitted to Wrexham Borough Council.

2.2 PROJECT WEBSITE

A Project Website was created through Lightsource's online Community Portal. The website was launched prior to the leaflet being sent out, and details on how to access it were provided in the leaflet. The website includes:

- Downloadable information packs;
- Site specific information;
- General solar PV information;
- Videos of existing operational solar farms; and
- An electronic feedback form.

The website will continue to be updated with relevant information as the project progresses.

2.3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT

In order to engage with the local community, to inform them of our intended plans and gain feedback on our proposal, Lightsource organised a community information drop-in event. This was held Tuesday 28th October 2014 at Flexys Community Hall between 5:00 – 8:00pm.

In addition to the leaflet mail out detailed above, an advertisement was placed in the Wrexham Leader Weekly Edition on 20th October 2014 and the Wrexham Leader Daily Edition on 24th October 2014 advising of the event (see **Appendix B**), and a press release sent to all newspapers covering the local area (see **Appendix C**).

At the information event the following information was available:

- Display boards provided information about the proposal and solar technology, these included an indicative layout;
- Information packs and leaflets covering solar PV, the biodiversity enhancements seen at existing solar farms, and agricultural co-use options;
- Multimedia in the form of videos on various aspects of solar PV and solar farms; and
- Feedback forms.

Representatives from Lightsource were available throughout the drop-in event to provide information and answer questions, as well as take note of any concerns raised.

Approximately 30 people attended the drop-in event.

2.4 BRIEFINGS FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS AND WARD MEMBERS

Prior to the community engagement event, Lightsource made contact with Cefn Community Council and Pen-y-Cae Community Council and the Ward Members Cllr Derek Wright, Cllr David Taylor and Cllr Joan Lowe, providing information regarding the proposal and offering to meet and discuss the proposals prior to the community engagement event.

Lightsource staff met with Cllr Derek Wright at the proposed solar farm site, Tuesday 28th October prior to the community consultation evening, to show him around the site and discuss the proposal. This meeting presented an opportunity to provide a thorough context to the proposal. Cllr Wright later attended the Community Consultation event.

The Community Councils and Ward Members were also invited to attend the community engagement event, and will be sent 'project update' leaflets in conjunction with the submission of the planning application. Engagement with the Ward Members and Community Councils will continue during the planning process.

2.5 MEDIA

As noted above, Lightsource sent out a press release in advance of the community engagement event in order to maximise awareness of the proposal and details for the drop-in event.

A copy of the Press Release is provided in **Appendix C**. Articles were published in the following publications:

- BBC Online, 'Wrexham solar farm plans between Acrefair and Pen-y-Cae', 24th October 2014
- Daily Post, 'Plan for solar farm to power 1,350 home in Wrexham', 24th October
- Wrexham Leader, 'Plans for Wrexham Solar Farm to be unveiled', 30th October

2.6 SERVICE PROVIDER REGISTER

As part of the community engagement, Lightsource has specifically sought contact with local suppliers and contractors who could provide services during the construction and post-construction maintenance of the solar farm. For example, local accommodation providers, landscapers, and tradesmen.

These details have been compiled in a local Service Provider Register, and Lightsource will seek to utilise these services where appropriate.

3 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Following the leaflet mail out, website launch and community engagement event, 7 completed feedback forms were received. Lightsource representatives at the community engagement event also took note of matters and concerns raised during conversations with attendees.

All those who completed feedback forms were supportive of the proposal.

The following matters were raised in the feedback forms.

Matter of Interest or Concern	# of Respondents
<i>'Much better than fracking'</i>	1
<i>'We have no objection to the proposed development. We are next door neighbours to site'</i>	1
<i>'Excellent idea. Good use of land previously used for open cast mining'</i>	2

Additional matters raised at the drop-in community event included:

- Introducing flower producing species within the planting scheme;

- introducing beekeeper facilities onsite;
- offering educational opportunities for local schools, and;
- Reducing disruption to residents during the construction phase of the solar farm.

4 RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK

The community engagement process has allowed Lightsource to inform the local community of our proposal, and to gain feedback, thus enabling due consideration to be given to matters of importance to the local community.

Lightsource has responded to the feedback received in a number of ways including: provision of additional information and addressing issues raised through the Design and Access Statement and accompanying technical assessments.

4.1 PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A number of community members requested additional information at the community consultation events and via the Lightsource email address included on the press releases and information packs. The in-house Planner responded promptly to all requests for information and questions after consulting with appropriate experts in-house.

4.2 ISSUES ADDRESSED THROUGH PLANNING APPLICATION

Concerns raised relating to visual impact have been addressed in the LVIA. It is considered that the undulating nature of the surrounding landscape, low profile nature of the site and proposed new planting makes this site suitable for the development of the solar farm. The site benefits from existing mature vegetation and new tree and hedgerow planting will bring about positive landscape and biodiversity change.

Concerns raised in relation to disruption during the construction phase have been addressed in the Transport Statement accompanying the Planning, Design and Access Statement. To lessen the traffic impact of construction deliveries will be undertaken using a one-way system. Vehicles will approach the site from the north and depart in a southerly direction on Delph Road. This will effectively halve the number of construction vehicles past any given point and also remove the incidence of construction vehicles meeting along the narrow roads in the vicinity of the site.

5 CONCLUSION

Lightsource has undertaken a comprehensive pre-application engagement programme in order to proactively inform and engage with the local community and key stakeholders. Over 1300 households were directly informed of the proposal, and many more were made aware through media articles as a result of our press release.

Overall the feedback at the community consultation was positive. Correspondence with the Parish Councils and Ward Members is continuous in order to respond to any concerns or questions. The concerns raised at the community consultation in relation to construction

traffic and visual impact are addressed above and within the Planning, Design and Access Statement and accompanying assessments.

APPENDIX A – LEAFLET

Community Information Pack...

PROPOSED SOLAR FARM AT Land to the West of Delph Road



Benefits

1,350 homes powered by clean, locally produced electricity

Sheep will graze throughout the solar farm

Biodiversity enhancements will enrich wildlife habitats around the site

Opportunities for local residents, students and wildlife groups to get involved in our plans

Solar farms provide great opportunities for biodiversity enhancement



Lightsource Renewable Energy is working on a proposal for a solar farm on a field to the north of the Acrefair village.

Wide gaps between the rows of solar modules leave the majority of a solar farm (about 70%) open grassland, making them ideal for grazing small livestock. Once in place, the solar farm will provide a potential grazing area for sheep enabling the field to produce locally generated energy and food simultaneously.

The field margins around the solar farm's perimeter can also be used to enrich habitats for local wildlife. Our Planning team are currently working with ecologists to establish a 'Biodiversity Management Plan' which will ensure that any planting, seeding or habitats we introduce best benefit the ecosystems and wildlife already present in the surrounding area.

If you are interested in learning about how these plans develop, or have any ideas to feed-in, please get in touch with our team or come and meet us in person at Flexys Community Hall on the 28th October.

Get involved!

COMMUNITY INFORMATION EVENING

Tuesday 28th October 2014

Flexys Community Hall
The Clubhouse
Abernant
Wrexham
LL14 3SN

Drop in any time between 5:00 - 8:00 pm

GET INVOLVED!

You can send us your feedback, comments or support via our online Planning Portal.

GOTO
www.lightsource-re.co.uk

In House Planning

Planning Portal

TYPE
Delph Road

The Planning Team
Lightsource Renewable Energy Limited
Level 5, 20 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AN
www.lightsource-re.co.uk

You can also contact us by phone or email. If you would prefer to write to us the traditional way please get in touch and we will happily send you a pre-paid envelope.

WHY SOLAR?

Stabilising energy bills long term
Once the equipment is installed, the sun's energy is free – this makes solar power a vital long term player in protecting us from the volatile costs of raw materials, such as oil and gas. Generating energy locally also means the UK can take more control over its electricity supply and costs, without relying on foreign supplies.

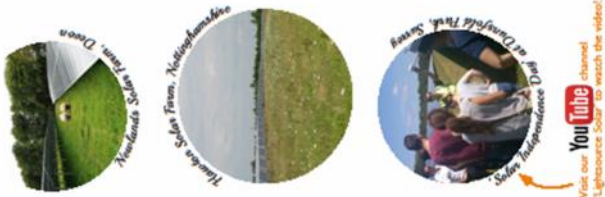
Championing the local economy
Renting a small portion of land to Lightsource for the generation of renewable energy can provide rural businesses with a predictable, steady income stream which can support the rest of the farming business. We also try to incorporate as many local contractors and service providers into our plans as possible. If you'd like to work with us, please get in touch.

Meeting our targets
The UK is legally committed to meeting 15% of its energy demand from renewable sources by 2020. Solar power is one of the most passive technologies to implement in order to help meet these targets and fight climate change whilst protecting our native wildlife.

Boosting biodiversity
The UK's wildlife is declining in species and number, largely due to intensive crop farming. Solar farms provide pockets of diversified land which allow wildlife habitats to flourish undisturbed and biodiversity levels to increase.

A local educational resource
Solar farms offer a safe opportunity to get up close to the technology whilst it is generating. We often host tours for local school groups on our operational sites, guided by a Lightsource expert. Having a tangible example of renewable energy generation in the community can be a great supplement to learning about electricity, local ecosystems and climate change.

Solar farms do not harm the ground they sit on
Solar farms produce no harmful waste products and the steel, pile driven foundations can simply be pulled out of the ground with no lasting damage. At the end of the working life of a solar farm all infrastructure is removed easily and the land fully restored to the way it was. Not many other 'power stations' can say that.



Lightsource Renewable Energy Limited
Level 5, 20 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AN
www.lightsource-re.co.uk

T: 0333 200 0755
E: info@lightsource-re.co.uk
www.lightsource-re.co.uk

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I get involved?

We welcome as much feedback as possible on our initial designs. If you have a question, would like to help shape our proposal, or belong to a local wildlife group, school or youth group and would like to see how you could get involved, we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch with our planning team via our online Planning Portal:

www.lightsource-re.co.uk
(Full instructions overleaf)

Are solar farms irreversible development?

No - solar farms are a temporary use of land and do not necessarily lead to further development. At the end of our lease period (usually about 25-30 years) the framework will be removed without harming the land.

Are solar farms noisy?

No - you would not expect to hear any noise at all beyond the site boundary.

Why harvest energy instead of food?

It isn't a choice - solar farms can do both. The solar farm near Sessay is being designed for the grazing of small livestock, enabling us to generate energy whilst continuing the land's agricultural use.

Will the solar farm cause traffic disruption?

Whilst the solar farm is being installed, a traffic management plan will be in place to avoid disruption, including organising off-peak daytime deliveries. It would take about 2 months to install the solar farm, averaging about 6 deliveries per day. Once the solar farm is in place it requires very little maintenance and the occasional visits in regular cars or 4x4s would cause no traffic disruption at all.

Where will the electricity go?

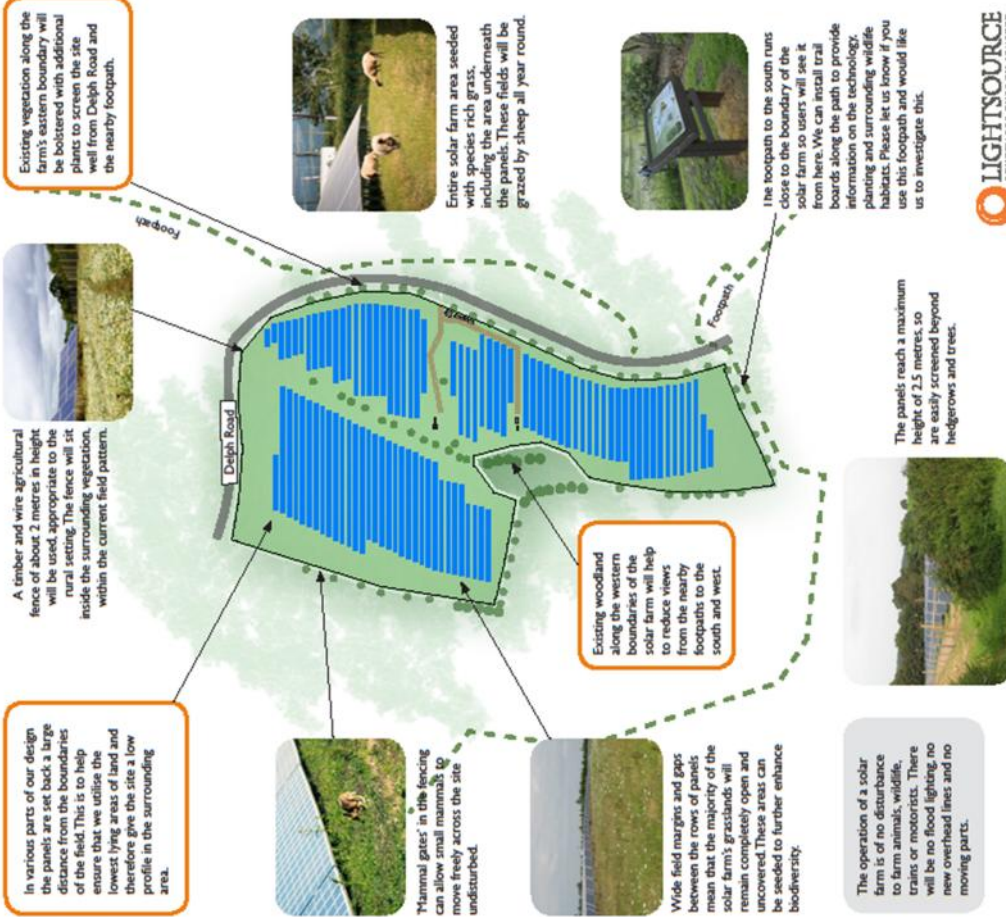
The solar farm will connect to the Local Distribution Network. At its current design the solar farm would be expected to generate 4,275 Megawatt Hours (MWh) of electricity over the course of a year - this is equivalent to the annual consumption of about 1,290 households. Local energy take-off will consume some, if not the majority, of the energy generated.

Is there an increased risk of flooding around solar farm sites?

No - no mass concrete surface is required and the majority of the solar farm remains open grassland, so the infrastructure on a solar farm does not affect run-off volumes. The panels are raised on a framework which rests on pile-driven legs, so less than 5% of the ground surface is actually disturbed.

OUR INITIAL THOUGHTS... Proposed solar farm at Land to the West of Delph Road, Penycae, Wrexham, LL14 1TU

Our plans are in early stages and will evolve as we gather local input and the results of our ecological, topographical and landscape assessments. These are our current thoughts...



Location:



How much energy?

Generation capacity:
5 MWP
Capable of powering
1,350 households
2,310 tonnes of
carbon emissions saved,
every year
...Equivalent to the annual
emissions of **513**
family cars

To find out how we make our calculations, please take a look at our planning portal at: www.lightsource-re.co.uk

Case study: MARLEYTHATCH SOLAR FARM



This solar farm in the South Devon hillsides is home to a number of sheep who graze the land around the panels. The landowner tells us all about how this works on our youtube channel.

Find out more...

YouTube Search for
'Marley Thatch'

www.lightsource-re.co.uk/operational-asets/case-studies/

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APPENDIX B – NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT

COMMUNITY INFORMATION EVENING



Proposed Solar Farm Location:

'Land to the West of Delph Road', Penrycae, Wrexham, LL14 1TU

Tuesday 28th October 5:00pm - 8:00pm

Come and visit us at:

Flexsys Community Hall
The Clubhouse
Abernant
Wrexham

LL14 3SN



Get Involved!

A solar farm does not only
provide green energy...

If you're a local biodiversity
specialist, fencing expert,
accommodation provider,
wildlife enthusiast... Get
involved with us and let's
champion the local economy!

Information packs will be sent out in
the area. If you haven't received one and
would like to, please contact us:

T: 0333 200 0755

E: info@lightsource-re.co.uk

W: www.lightsource-re.co.uk



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APPENDIX C – PRESS RELEASE



Lightsource Renewable Energy seeks local knowledge to help shape Wrexham solar farm proposal

Plans for a new solar farm near Acrefair, in Wrexham, will be unveiled by the UK's leading solar energy generator at a community information evening at Flexsys Community Hall, The Clubhouse, Abernant, in Wrexham. Lightsource Renewable Energy is inviting residents to discuss the proposals to install a solar farm on land to the west of Delph Road. The initial plans for the site will be on display on Tuesday 28th October, from 5.00pm until 8pm.

Lightsource is seeking local opinion in order to help refine the plans for the solar farm, which would provide enough renewable energy to power 1,350 homes, before an application is submitted to the Wrexham County Borough Council. The proposed site is currently used for sheep grazing and the project is being planned in collaboration with the landowner to allow grazing to continue after the solar farm has been installed. The design of the solar farm, with wide gaps between the rows of solar modules, leaves around 70 percent of the land used as open grassland, making an ideal home for a flock of sheep.

Conor McGuigan, Planning and Development Director at Lightsource, said: "The passive nature of solar energy makes it ideal for farmland diversification. The solar farm near Acrefair is being designed to accommodate the grazing of sheep, which means that the site will be able to produce both clean energy and food simultaneously. Solar farms have a very small installation footprint and a typical development takes up less than 30 per cent of the allocated area, so as well as sheep grazing there are plenty of opportunities to put the rest to good use as well."

Lightsource's planning team works closely with ecologists throughout the initial design phase to create a bespoke Biodiversity Management Plan, which will be put in place to ensure that native species benefit from planting, seeding and habitat creation. The company is also keen to hear from wildlife enthusiasts and local schools who may be interested in getting involved with the on-going monitoring of wildlife on the site.

Lightsource is looking for the following regional expertise to get involved in the shaping the plans:-

- Local residents to provide input into the initial design and planning
- Wildlife enthusiasts – solar farms provide excellent opportunities to enhance biodiversity and support local initiatives
- Residents with local knowledge which will help inform the route of daytime deliveries whilst the solar farms are being installed
- Security personnel
- Civil roadways experts
- Storage and logistics businesses
- Fencing experts
- Accommodation & food and beverage providers
- Landscapers specialising in local/native species
- Schools and youth groups who may be interested in educational opportunities once the solar farm is up and running

The panels on the proposed site have been positioned on the lowest-lying areas of the proposed fields and reach a maximum height of 2.5 metres, subsequently making it easier to screen behind hedgerows and trees. Existing vegetation along the eastern boundary would provide strong natural screening to reduce potential views from Delph Road and the nearby footpath, whilst woodland along the western boundaries of the solar farm will help to reduce views from the nearby footpaths to the south and west. Existing vegetation will be bolstered with new planting to improve screening of the site and will also serve to strengthen wildlife habitats around the site. A footpath to the south runs close to the boundary of the solar farm, which will be visible from there, and the possibility of installing trail boards along the path to provide information on the technology, planting and surrounding wildlife habitats is currently being explored.

The operation of a solar farm is of no disturbance to farm animals, wildlife or other activities nearby. No flood lighting is needed, there are no moving parts and, as the solar panels are designed specifically to absorb daylight, an anti-reflective surface ensures any reflection of light is minimal. A timber and wire agricultural fence of about 2 metres in height would be used around the perimeters of both sites and would feature "mammal gates" to allow small animals to move across the solar farm undisturbed.

Conor added: "If we are to move away from our reliance on importing expensive fossil fuels we must look towards renewable alternatives. The ability to generate clean, safe electricity whilst maintaining a respect for rural traditions is what makes solar power such a viable renewable energy source. Once installed, a solar farm is remarkably passive in nature which allows plenty of scope for diversification. It's still early days for the plans, but there are many ways people can get involved. We hope that people in the local area will come along to our events to share their knowledge to help shape these plans as they evolve. We would also encourage anyone who can't attend the community event to visit our website where the plans can be viewed and suggestions for the proposals can be put forward."

Residents wishing to view the initial proposal in more detail or make suggestions to the Lightsource Planning team can visit the Planning Portal at: www.lightsource-re.co.uk, click 'In-House Planning' and type the site name "Delph Road" into the search box. An online feedback form is also available on the page.

-ends-

Notes to editor/frequently asked questions:

How much energy will the solar farm produce?

The design will evolve with the results of our assessments and community feedback. The statistics of the current design are:

Land to the West of Delph Road, Penrycae, Wrexham, LL14 1TU

Generation Capacity: 5MWp

Capable of powering: 1,350 homes

Carbon emissions saved annually: 2,310

The equivalent carbon savings of taking 513 cars off the road for the life of the solar farm

Why harvest energy instead of food?

It isn't a choice - solar farms can do both. The solar farm off Delph Road is being designed for the grazing of small livestock, enabling us to generate energy whilst continuing the land's agricultural use.

Are solar farms irreversible development?

No - The panels, which reach a maximum height of 2.5m, are mounted on an aluminium framework with steel legs which are pile driven into the soil. At the end of our lease period (usually about 25-30 years) the framework will be dismantled, removed and recycled or reused, and the land fully restored.

How effective is solar technology in the UK?

Generating electricity with solar technology works well in the UK. The panels do not need direct sunlight to produce energy, only daylight, and the technology actually runs more efficiently at cooler temperatures. Lightsource Renewable Energy now has a capacity of over 600 megawatts peak (MWp) installed through solar in the UK. Together, the installations produce enough electricity to supply the annual needs of about 170,000 homes, all without damage to the environment.

How efficient are solar panels?

The conversion efficiency of light to electricity depends on the particular solar modules that are installed. We operate our solar farms for 25-30 years, so it is in our interests to use high quality materials which will give us an efficient return on our investment. Our systems are designed and maintained to run at a minimum of 81% of their maximum capability. All of our existing large scale solar farms exceed this limit when they are online, usually exceeding 85% and therefore exceeding our predictions for the number of homes powered.

Will construction cause disruption?

It would take about two months to install the solar farm, with the site averaging about six deliveries per day during daylight hours. Once the solar farm is in place it would require very little maintenance with access only needed occasionally using regular cars, vans and 4x4s.

Is there a danger to motorists or aircraft as a result of reflection from the panels?

No - solar panels are designed to absorb light rather than reflect it so any reflection is dull and minimal. We have carried out numerous glint and glare assessments as part of our planning process, but it is generally accepted that solar farms are not dangerous to aircraft – many airports have solar installations on their premises.

Are solar farms noisy?

No - you would not expect to hear any noise at all beyond the site boundary.

How will the equipment be protected?

The solar farm would be enclosed by timber and wire agricultural fencing of about two metres in height, appropriate for the rural setting. This would be positioned inside the current field pattern and surrounding vegetation. No flood lighting is required.

How can people find out more?

For more information about Lightsource Renewable Energy and its proposals, contact 0333 200 0755 or email: info@lightsource-re.co.uk quoting 'Delph Road'.

Residents wishing to view the initial proposal in more detail or make suggestions to the Lightsource Planning team can visit the Planning Portal at: www.lightsource-re.co.uk, click 'In-House Planning' and type the relevant site name into the search box. An online feedback form is also available on the page.