Swallett Energy Park

Statement of Community Engagement

Exagen Development Limited

November 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Exagen Development Limited (the Applicant) has prepared this Statement of Community Engagement ("the SCE") to accompany a planning application for a proposed solar farm and associated infrastructure (the Development, known as Swallett Energy Park).

- The Site, proposed to accommodate the ground mounted solar array, is located on land between the M4 motorway and the railway line between Chippenham and Swindon, west of Dauntsey Lock and northeast of Christian Malford ('the Site').
- The Development will connect via a buried cable into the local grid at the existing Lyneham substation, located just to the east of the Site.

Further detail on the Development is included in the Planning Design and Access Statement, Site Layout Plans and Elevations and associated technical reports which are submitted as part of the planning application. The Site is wholly within the administrative area of Wiltshire Council (The Council).

This report sets out the background and details of the extensive pre-application consultation carried out by Exagen in the preparation of the planning application. Issues that were raised during the course of the consultation by local stakeholders or residents have been recorded in this report, along with the Applicant's response to how the issue has been considered.

Where possible, suggestions made by residents or stakeholders have been incorporated in the amended final plans as the design for the Development has progressed.

1.2 The Applicant

Exagen is fully committed to public involvement and engagement and believes it is important to give local people an opportunity to view proposals and discuss the Development with members of the Project Team at an early stage. As a result, a comprehensive programme of consultation involving public exhibitions, webinars and individual meetings was undertaken prior to the final design and submission of the planning application.

1.3 Purpose of the SCE

It is the intention of this report to demonstrate that in respect of the Development, the Applicant has complied fully with the spirit and letter of the National Planning Policy Framework ("the NPPF") and the Council's approach to community involvement, to engage the public fully with the proposals prior to submitting a planning application.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Central Government Advice

The Government updated the NPPF in September 2023. The aim of the NPPF is to simplify planning policy with a clear and simple 75-page document.

In paragraph 40 of the NPPF, it states:

"Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage…They 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."

The Government have set clear expectations that developers should wherever possible engage with local communities about planning proposals in advance of submitting a planning application.

2.2 Wiltshire Council Approach to Statement of Community Involvement

Wiltshire Council published its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in 2020[1] which sets out the format for community involvement in planning applications.

The SCI sets out how the Council will involve local residents, businesses and community groups in the preparation of planning documents and the consideration of planning applications. The SCI strongly encourages applicants to undertake pre-application public consultation that is tailored to reflect specific local needs and experiences and provides the statutory minimum requirements for advertising planning applications.

2.3 Planning Application for the Development

The Development is the subject of a planning application to the Council, which is supported by a Planning, Design and Access Statement, suite of planning drawings and the following technical reports:

- Landscape and Visual Appraisal with Landscape Masterplan;
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, including Geophysical survey;
- Heritage Statement;
- Ecological Impact Assessment, including protected species surveys and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment;
- Noise Assessment;
- Agricultural Land Classification Report;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment;
- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Outline Surface Water Drainage Strategy;
- Transport Statement;
- Construction Traffic Management Plan; and
- Glint and Glare Assessment.

These demonstrate how any potential environmental impacts of the Development, including cumulative impacts, have been considered and, to the fullest extent possible, mitigated through the design process.

[1] https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/4622/Wiltshire-Statement-of-Community-Involvement-2020/pdf/DM20_535_-_Statement_of_Community_Involvement_part_1_online6.pdf?m=637938111241970000

3 PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

3.1 Pre-Application Consultation with the Council

The Applicant submitted a pre-application consultation request to the Council on the 10th March 2023. The pre application submission included the following documentation:

- Site Location Plan;
- Pre-application Report; and
- ALC Report

The Applicant received a written response from the Council on the 3rd May 2023 which contained the majority of comments with additional delayed technical responses received afterwards, including landscape, ecology and environmental health.

Further correspondence was carried out with the Council throughout the pre-application period to discuss the scope and requirements for some of the technical assessments that form part of the planning application, including specifically the viewpoints for inclusion within the LVA, the noise assessment, heritage and ecology.

3.2 Consultation with Local Councillors

Just prior to the public consultation being initiated in May 2023, contact was made with Sutton Benger, Christian Malford and Dauntsey Lock, Bradenstoke Parishes, ward councillors and local MPs to advise them of the project, introduce Exagen and provide a contact for any ongoing queries.

Following the public exhibition, Exagen attended one of the Christian Malford Parish Council meetings to present the proposal as well as undertake a Q&A session.

3.3 EIA Screening

An EIA Screening Opinion request was submitted to the Council on the 24th May 2023 and the Council's EIA Screening Opinion were received on the 16th June 2023 confirming that the Development did not constitute EIA development and the planning application did not require an Environmental Statement. The detailed responses on environmental matters included in the Council's screening opinion were considered in the preparation of the technical assessments undertaken as part of the planning application.

3.4 Visits to Closest Properties

In advance of public letters being sent out (see section 3.5) the Project Team identified the key properties in close vicinity to the Site and visited these properties in person with the intention of introducing the project, providing an ongoing contact and an opportunity to have any questions answered.

In total 12 addresses were visited, residents were present in 5 of the addresses and 7 addresses did not have anybody present, therefore a letter was left with the offer to come back to discuss the project further.

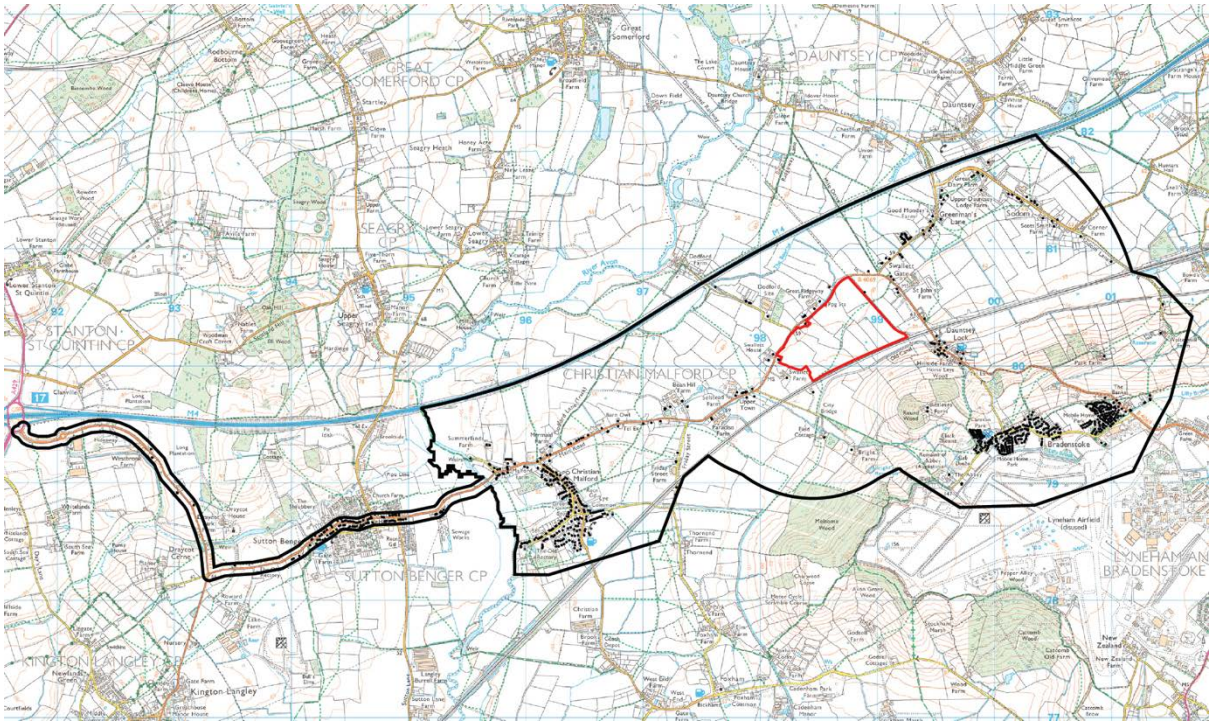
Photomontages were offered to local residents and where these were requested they were produced. These were presented to illustrate the potential visual effects of the development when considering the final design and landscaping proposals. These were not required within the LVA however copies are enclosed in Appendix D.

3.5 Public Exhibition Events

In April 2023, Exagen sent out consultation event invitation leaflets to 990 households. The search area for the leaflet drop included all residential addresses within Bradenstoke, Christian Malford and Dauntsey Lock and all addresses within 50 m of the access road to Site (once exiting off the M4). Other addresses were also captured 2 km east and 1 km southwest with the M4 serving as a cut-off barrier as it was decided that this provided a

divide in the landscape between the Site and properties to the north of this road. This search area was set as it was considered to be the maximum distance to which any material effects arising from the Development would extend. Given the rural location of the Site, this search captured the majority of isolated farmsteads and small rural settlements in the vicinity of the Development. Plate 1 illustrates the consultation area.

Plate 1 – Consultation Area



Address data was obtained using GIS from Ordnance Survey AL2 data (Address Layer). Address Layer 2 data provides precise coordinates for more than 27 million residential and commercial properties in Great Britain and provides a georeference for all Great Britain delivery points in Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF). As such it is considered to be a comprehensive method for not only identifying residential properties, but also obtaining address details.

In addition, telephone calls and emails were also sent to Sutton Benger, Christian Malford and Dauntsey Lock and Bradenstoke Parishes, the ward councillors, Howard Greenman and Elizabeth Threlfall and the local Members of Parliament.

The leaflets that were posted out included basic information on the project, including where it was located, the infrastructure that was proposed and some of the benefits of the Development. It also included information on the Applicant, provided a link to a webinar and project website, along with an online survey. The leaflets also included information on the two in person public consultation events being held and how residents could attend.

The Site is within the Parish of Christian Malford, however it is situated close to the borders of Dauntsey Parish and Lyneham and Bradenstoke Parish. Therefore, public consultation events were chosen to be held in both Christian Malford Village Hall and Bradenstoke Village Hall as these are the meeting places of the Parish Councils.

The first public exhibition event was held in Bradenstoke Village Hall located in Bradenstoke, Chippenham, SN15 4EL on Wednesday 3rd May 2023. The event was open to members of the public between 16:30 and 20:00. An estimate of 20 people attended the event (not everyone completed the sign in sheet so an estimate of attendance was made). The second public consultation event was held in Christian Malford Village Hall located on

Station Road, Christian Malford, Chippenham, SN15 4BL on Thursday 4th May 2023. The event was open to members of the public between 16:00 and 20:00. An estimate of 40 people attended the event (not everyone completed the sign in sheet so an estimate of attendance was made). After the exhibition copies of the display boards w published to the project website to ensure it was available for anyone unable to attend the exhibitions.

A survey questionnaire was issued to attendees for completion either on the day or to be returned to Exagen by post or email. The purpose of the questionnaire was to provide an opportunity to better understand the views of local residents with regards to climate change, solar farms, and for them to indicate whether they supported the Development or not. Space was also provided on the questionnaire for any comments or questions regarding the Development to be passed on to the project team. The data generated from the returned questionnaires is presented in Section 4.

Contact details (phone number, email address and physical address) for the Project Team were also provided on the questionnaire so that local residents could raise any specific concerns with regards to the Development, or have any questions answered.

A copy of the survey questionnaire and leaflet provided to local residents as part of pre-application consultation is provided in Appendix A. A copy of the exhibition boards is provided in Appendix B.

3.6 Webinar

After the public exhibition, Exagen ran an online webinar, designed to ensure accessibility of project information was extended to those unable to make the two in person events. The webinar included a presentation on the project by the Project Manager, followed by an opportunity for questions to be posted by attendees for the Project Team to discuss and answer.

The webinar was advertised both by leaflet drops to residential properties, advertisements in the local newspaper and also on the project website as set out previously.

The webinar was held on Monday 15th May 2023. In total 10 people/groups of people registered for the event and 9 people/groups of people attended the webinar.

After the webinar, a recording was published to the project website to ensure it was available to watch for anyone unable to attend the scheduled time.

3.7 Project Website

At the start of the public consultation period, Exagen established a project website for the presentation of information and as a mechanism to ensure interested parties are kept up to date with developments.

The website address is https://exagen.co.uk/projects/swallett-energy-park/. Along with the website a dedicated project email was set up, swallettenergypark@exagen.co.uk.

The website introduces the project including the key dates for consultation events, provides copies of the material presented at the public exhibitions and webinars, and will be used to provide ongoing updates on the project as it progresses through planning and into construction and operation. The website also provides contact details for the Project Team should members of the public wish to raise anything with the Team directly.

The website was published in late April 2023 and was monitored for traffic and correspondence until the end of July 2023. A total of 4 emails were received at the dedicated email address. One telephone call was received. Details of the correspondence are detailed in section 3.9.

3.8 Survey

As reported in Section 3.5 an online survey was run during the consultation period. In addition, printed survey forms were provided to attendees of the public exhibition. In total there were 67 completed questionnaires – these have been analysed in Section 4.

As part of the survey, respondents were invited to leave their contact details so Exagen could respond to any queries raised. Emails were sent to those respondents who left details. Correspondence is recorded in Section 3.9.

3.9 Correspondence – Emails, Webinars and General Comments from Questionnaires

A number of questions were posed during the webinar and there were 4 emails received through the dedicated project email. Exagen received no mail relating to the Development prior to the submission of the planning application. These are summarised below along with Exagen's response.

Summary of Comments	Exagen's Response
Phone Calls	
One phone call was received from a local resident discussing the potential access point for the Development. There were safety concerns raised should the agricultural access opposite Great Ridgeway be used as the primary access for the Development.	Following this comment and in consultation with the local highways authority the access is proposed further east towards the eastern end of the Site, thus being away from Great Ridgeway and avoiding potential safety concerns.
Email Questions	
Following recent information about the National Grid's shortage of capacity to link in to wind farms and solar parks with, a huge backlog for existing site to link to the grid, what will be the situation for Swallett Energy Park?	There is a big backlog at a National Grid level for connections of renewable generation projects. We have secured a grid connection from SSEN (Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks) but SSEN are awaiting input regarding the connection of any project connected under the Melksham substation group, which includes Swallett Energy Park, from National Grid. This is likely to have an effect on the connection date of the scheme however work by the industry stakeholders is underway to ensure projects are able to connect to the network quicker. This includes moving to a 'first ready, first served' model and also changing the way the grid is modelled to consider the flexible nature of renewable generators.
Can you explain why the batteries were dropped on the Swallett Energy Park, please? As a professional engineer I know that load balancing using batteries makes solar a lot more useful.	To answer your question regarding the batteries, at no point did we have an import connection for Swallett Energy Park from the DNO as part of our grid connection offer, so we were looking to include batteries to future proof the Site in case the situation changed in the future. Following local feedback from the public consultations and the added complexity of the planning if it was included, we decided to remove the batteries.
What is happening to the public right of way / footpath that currently routes directly across your proposed solar farm site please?	I can confirm that the public right of way/footpath through the Site will remain. Our planning submission proposes to improve the footpaths in the hope that they may even be used more. The panels will leave a large buffer around the footpath to ensure that they remain feeling like an open space to be enjoyed. Once we have a final layout for the Site ready for when we submit planning in November, I can of course share the layout with you.

Summary of Comments	Exagen's Response
1.The hedge-line along the proposed site boundary to the B4069 will need considerable enhancement if it is to provide an effective screen. 2. The public path through the site should be retained and improved by providing clear access points for local walkers but without risk to visitors parking cars along the verge, alongside the site and in the adjacent areas. 3. The existing 'protected meadow area' should be preserved but moved to the corner immediately in front of Swallett Farm Cottages to create a green barrier between the solar park and those properties and indeed our own and our neighbour's. 4. Great Crested Newts have been seen in our pond in the past and care will need to be taken to ensure their protection on the site during construction and operations. The relocation of the protected meadow area as suggested above would help with this. 5. We have noted comments at your presentations that you are actively investigating ways for local residents 'within a certain distance of the site' to receive some form of discount to their electricity bills. We have also noted Greg Jackson's comments in the media and on a recent Laura Kuenssberg show that he is in favour of this and actively progressing this on other renewable projects. Please would you keep us informed of your proposals in this regard as, if the project proceeds, it would obviously go some way to compensating local residents for the inevitable inconvenience and detriment to the locality that will follow for many years.	1. We will be looking to enhance the current hedgerow as well as adding native species to help increase the screening. We will also be creating various new hedgerows and woodland belts within the Site. The planning application that we submit will include a landscape mitigation plan. This will be prepared when a final design is available and will be informed with input from the independent project landscape consultant, heritage consultant and ecologist. The assessments that are undertaken with regards to visual impacts and impacts on the setting of the heritage assets, will be based on the final design and will consider the mitigation that is proposed. 2. I can confirm that we are retaining the existing path and proposing various improvements to it so that visitors and walkers can enjoy walking this route (see previous response). 3. In consultation with both professional landscape and ecological consultants, it is proposed that the relocated protected meadow area will be located to the east of the Site. However, the area of the Site directly adjacent to Swallett Farm Cottages has since received significant setbacks from the proposed infrastructure and will instead have a large section of wildflower planting and an extensive woodland block. This can be seen in the montages presented in Appendix D and should help to both screen the Site from these residential properties and provide a haven for local wildlife. 4. Thank you for notifying us of this, as part of the planning application we undertake various surveys to identify the types of wildlife species in the area, all of this is then submitted along with details of how we will ensure they are protected throughout construction and the life span of the site. 5. This is absolutely something that we are actively looking into with Octopus Energy and will of course keep the local community updated with any news or updates regarding this.

Summary of Comments	Exagen's Response
Webinar Questions	
How will community benefits be appraised and decided?	An independent body is appointed that will look after those funds, applications will be made for those funds and used. We have a designated project email, so if there are any suggested applications please do email them to us. In terms of registering interest, itself will probably have an associated panel, which may be parish council and we'll be looking to work with them to ensure we have a panel of people who can assess the community fund and where the applications get considered and how the fund gets allocated to the relevant parties that apply.
Has any thought been given to using the power to feed Network Rail which is next to the site?	We have tried to contact Network Rail and their energies team but with no success to date..
Do the panels produce any glare in the sunshine?	Solar panels are designed to absorb light which means they are fairly dull, any light they reflect is essentially energy that is lost. At certain times of day when the sun is at a certain angle, most likely at sunrise and sunset, light can reflect off the panels. The planning application will be supported by a Glint and Glare Assessment which will identify any areas where its possible for reflections to occur and illustrate the predicted durations of such effects. Consideration is also given to landscaping to reduce such effects further.
Will the B4069 need to be closed at any point for the grid connection?	One option would be to lay the cable across the fields to the existing substation at Lyneham as it's the shortest and most sensible route and would only including crossing the road. The alternative will be down the B4069 from the corner of the Site to the substation, this would result in some disturbance, ideally we wouldn't close it, it would be managed with traffic lights with only one lane closed. Generally the laying of the cable is a short process, hopefully over a few weeks.
Please can you give more information on discounts to electricity bills?	We are partnered with Octopus Energy, they have a fan club which is essentially where residents who are within close proximity to the project can get a reduction in electricity tariffs. We are not able to fully commit to this at this stage, but we are in discussions with Octopus to explore the opportunity of expanding the scheme to our project.
65% of the UK's food is already imported how can repurposing agricultural land be considered when that percentage will be increased?	The level of land required to meet solar targets is actually quite small, there are some very good stats, but roughly 1% of farmland is required to meet Net Zero targets. There is already 3% of land that is occupied by golf courses, although we appreciate it is taking agricultural land out of production, it is not as drastic as you may expect. The land can still be used to graze sheep if the farmer would like to so a degree of agricultural activity is maintained.
When the panels are installed will rain water pour off the panels, across the field and into the road?	Because there are no big foundations for the panels, they are pushed in on steel piles which occupy less than 4% of the Site, water should continue to soak into the land. Furthermore the ground cover beneath the panels will be a species rich grass and so will assist with infiltration of surface water and reduce erosion. Along the front edge of where the panel is, the soil will act like a soakaway away to help make sure that water is absorbed.
Will the closest homeowners get compensation for potential detriment to house prices and inconvenience of construction?	No, we are not able to provide that sort of compensation, nor is it considered necessary. The purpose of the planning process is that the benefits and impacts associated with the Site will be weighed up.

Summary of Comments	Exagen's Response
There is a large solar site in Lyneham, why do we need another one so close?	The site selection for the project is driven by the grid and where we can find capacity to connect a project, so we identified there is grid capacity at Lyneham Substation. Although it is nearby, the woodland and intervening hill between the sites will prevent any significant cumulative impact of the Site, and the main reason we need this project is that as a Nation we are a long way from our 70GW solar target by 2035.

Survey Questions

The comments raised on the completed surveys are summarised in this section. For ease they are categorised by Issue Raised and the subsequent column identifies the number of times that issue was raised. Our response is then provided in the end column.

Issue Raised	Count	Applicants Response
Location and/or Size	4	The site area for the solar farm has altered with large set back distances from key receptors and the addition of further vegetation buffers which have been introduced to further screen nearby residential properties and reduce visual effects. Exagen has sought to demonstrate that the location of the Site, being so close to Lyneham Substation, is not only suitable but optimal for the proposed development through the documents submitted as part of the planning application.
Landscape/Visual Impact	13	The potential landscape and visual impacts of the Development will be fully assessed in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal. This will be undertaken by an independent Chartered Landscape Architect (Landscape Institute). The approach and assessment viewpoints for the LVA have been discussed and agreed with the Council. Given the nature of the existing landform and vegetation, along with the proposed landscaping as part of the Development, any landscape and visual effects would be localised and not affecting any high value or protected landscapes. Following the public consultation some changes have been made to the layout to increase separation between properties and the development, where possible. In addition, landscape screening measures to help further reduce the views from the surrounding properties have been included as part of the Development. Significant consideration has also been given to the public right of way through the Site in the design.
Impact on Wildlife	7	The applicant has submitted an Ecological Impact Assessment as part of the planning application. This report details the surveys undertaken and any required mitigation that is required. The report also documents the findings of the biodiversity net gain assessment.

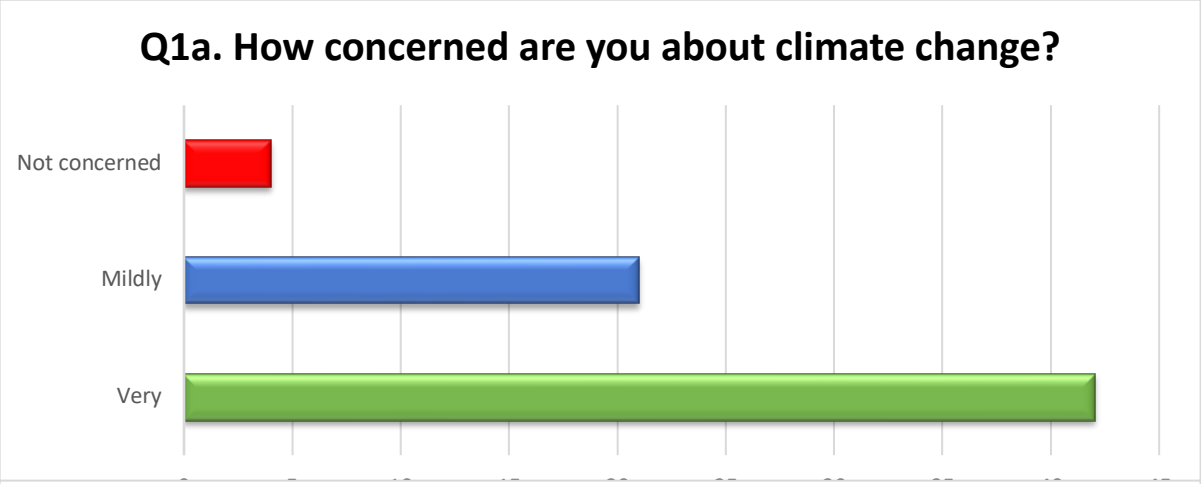
Summary of Comments	Exagen's Response	
Traffic/Noise/Disruption	8	A Transport Statement and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) has been prepared to consider and where necessary mitigate the impacts of any construction traffic. Routes have been chosen to mitigate the impact on any settlements. The details of traffic routes and mitigation requirements will be agreed with the local Highways Authority and the CTMP will be a key contract document provided to selected contractors during construction of the Development.
Use of agricultural land	2	The site is Grade 3b agricultural land. Land Grades 1, 2 and 3a are defined as being 'Best and Most Versatile' (BMV). Natural England consider that the permanent loss of more than 20 hectares is the threshold for a "significant loss"; given there is no BMV on Site and the development is only temporary, there would be no significant loss of agricultural land.
Lack of Community Benefit	3	Exagen is aware that any form of community benefit, financial or otherwise, is not considered a material planning consideration so is not included as part of the planning application. However, the project will provide a substantial community benefit as part of the Development of the scheme. We will work with local communities and groups to agree a mechanism for access to the funds and the types of projects that could benefit.
Lack of Publicity	4	Exagen has clearly evidenced its community engagement prior to application submission as part of this document. It is considered that sufficient engagement has been undertaken which has most importantly been used to help refine the final design of the Development.
Supporting Comments		
Net Zero and Climate Change	4	Several comments were made regarding the substantial positive contribution this project will make towards net zero. There are ambitious government targets, such as the British Governments National Energy Security Strategy which sets a target of 70GW of solar by 2035. Further detail can be found in the Planning Design and Access Statement.
General Support	28	General comments of support were made regarding the overall proposals. Examples: 'Important that we generate more renewable energy' 'Important to generate energy as efficiently as possible' 'We need more renewable energy and design is sympathetic to the area;

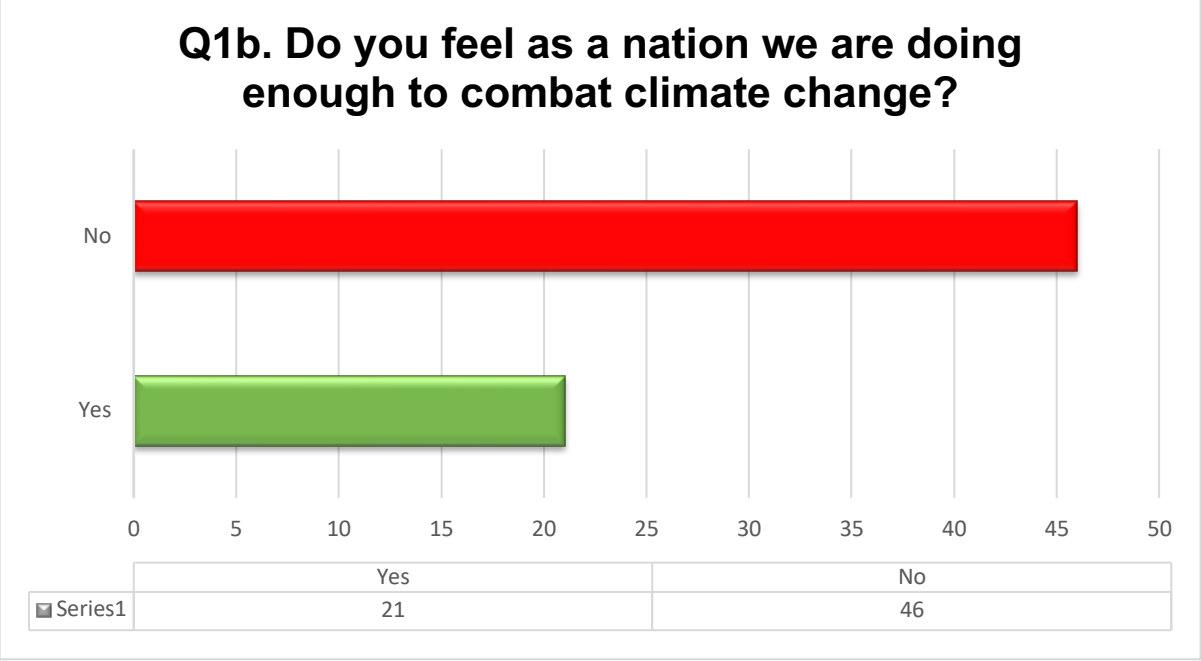
Summary of Comments	Exagen's Response	
Home Grown Energy	4	Comments were made regarding the benefit of home grown energy. This may include creation of jobs, additional energy security and better ethical standards. The UK also has big ambitions to become an exporter of power, taking advantage of the green energy resources we have.
Prevents Environmental Damage	1	The development will help prevent the environmental damage that is caused by deriving power from other, non renewable energy sources.

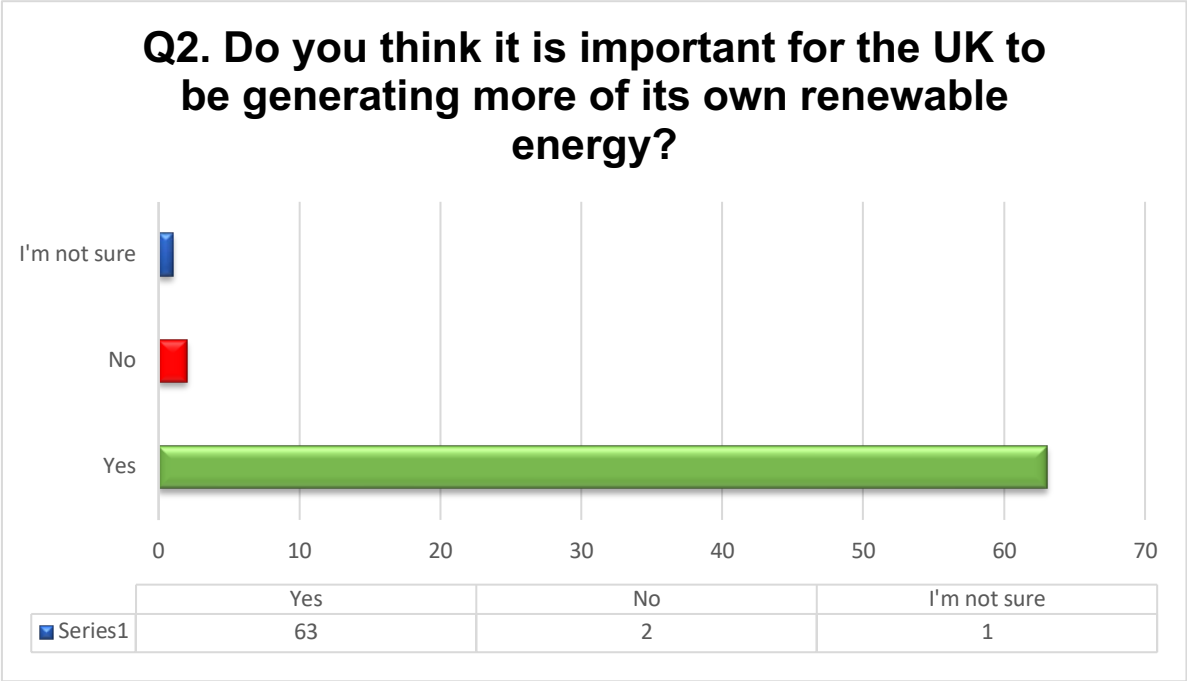
4 SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

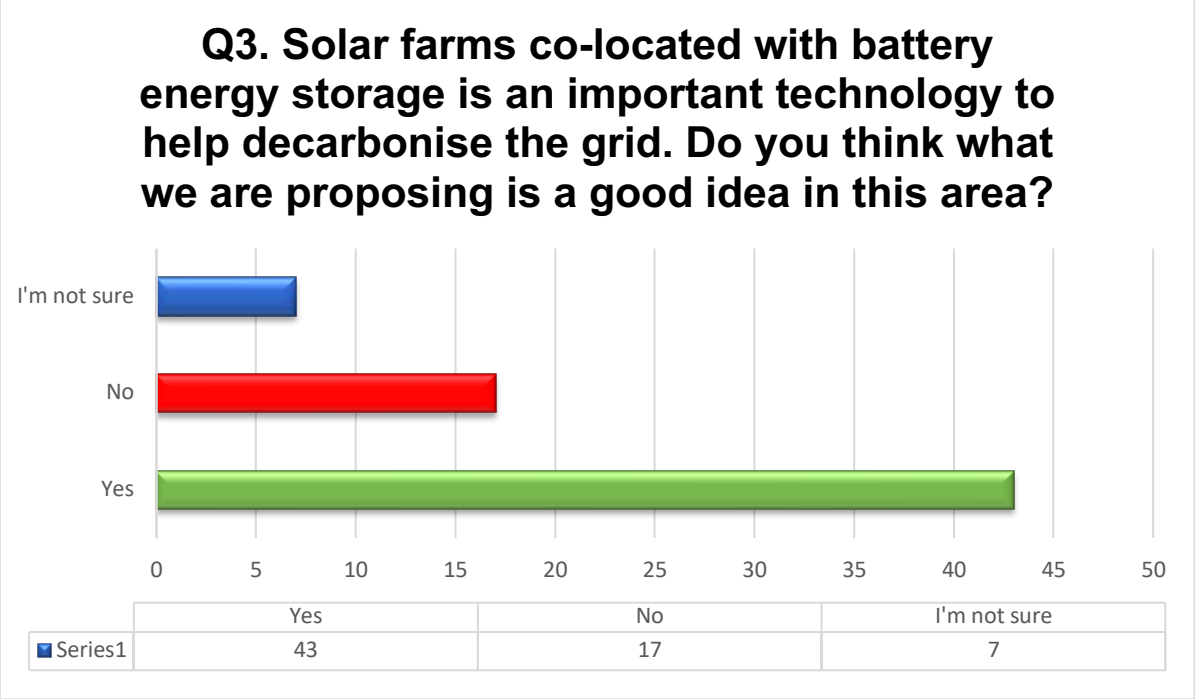
67 questionnaires were completed and provided to Exagen. Survey Monkey was used for the online surveys and a paper version was handed out to attendees of the consultation events; an extract of the data is presented here.

Many of the open questions that are presented here have been discussed alongside Exagen's response in Section 3.9 above.

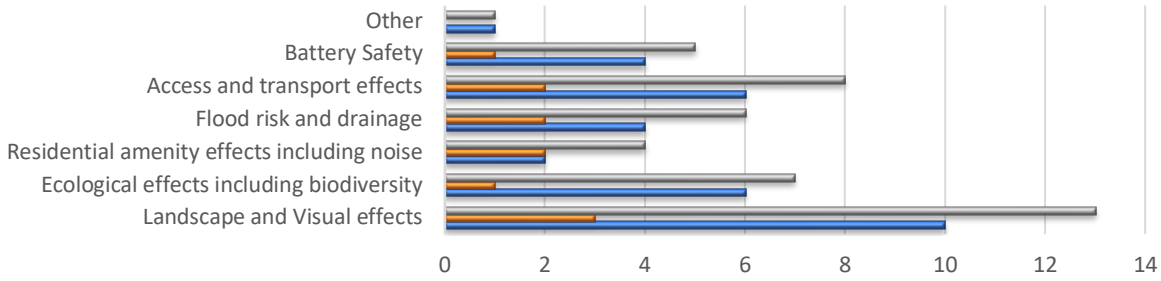





Q2. Do you think it is important for the UK to be generating more of its own renewable energy?
I'm not sure
No
Yes
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
Yes
No
I'm not sure
Series1
63
2
1


Q3. Solar farms co-located with battery energy storage is an important technology to help decarbonise the grid. Do you think what we are proposing is a good idea in this area?
I'm not sure
No
Yes
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
Yes
No
I'm not sure
Series1
43
17
7

Q4. Which of the following potential effects arising from the proposal give you the greatest concern and why?



	Landscape and Visual effects	Ecological effects including biodiversity	Residential amenity effects including noise	Flood risk and drainage	Access and transport effects	Battery Safety	Other
Total	13	7	4	6	8	5	1
Online	3	1	2	2	2	1	0
Paper	10	6	2	4	6	4	1

Q4a. Why did you answer Q4 the way you did?

- Visual impact of nonagricultural installation in countryside
- No concerns
- None
- No concerns
- Support for the community
- None
- After today's discussions, I have no concerns

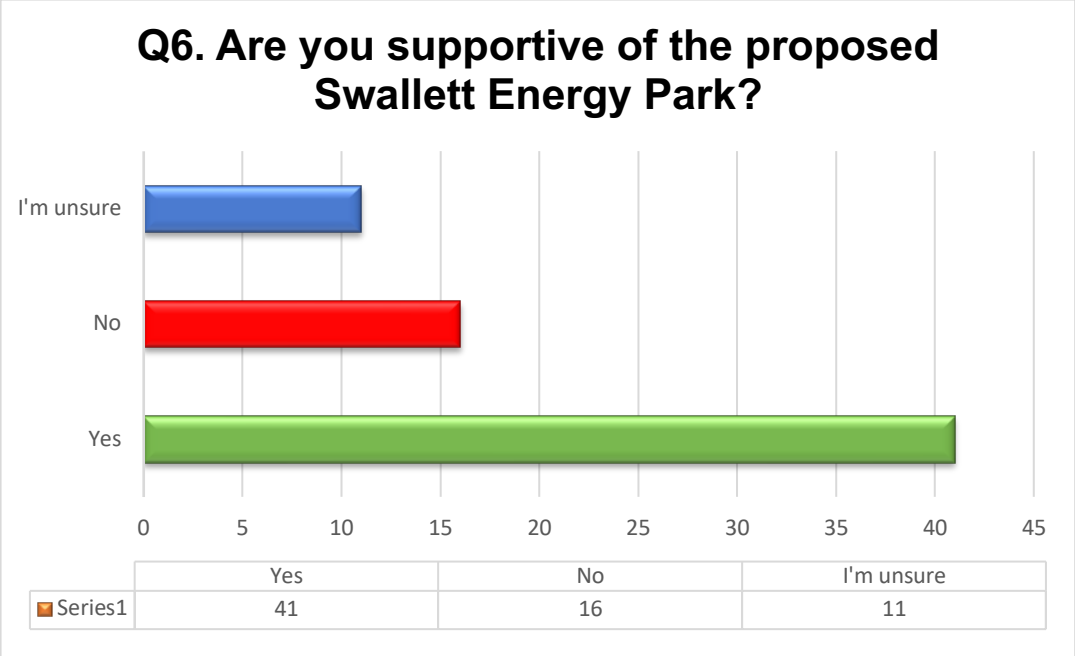
Q5 Are there any elements of our proposal that you would like more information on, are of concern, things we should consider or features that you would like to see as part of the project?

Answered: 45 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	What is the lifespan of the solar panels?	7/15/2023 6:44 PM
2	We are losing too much farm land	7/14/2023 11:33 PM
3	No	7/14/2023 5:00 PM
4	How will the solar farm be connected to the grid and how will it effect our local supply as we live very close to the proposed site. What will happen with water run off as there will be no crops growing to asborb the water.	7/13/2023 10:47 PM
5	No	7/13/2023 1:49 PM
6	Need to support and do our bit	7/13/2023 10:17 AM
7	Why not put it in a field next to chippenham? Why are you trying to take up farm land or countryside with it? I don't want a solar park near my house, ruining good countryside and further reducing space for wildlife such as deer and muntjack. I know what they look like there is one in allington, you'll fence off the whole area providing tiny holes for wildlife, do it next to chippenham not by us in Christian Malford! In fact, there's a massive logistics centre by the tip, that you built which no one wanted other than business, do it next to there and keep the eye sore well away from the village.	7/12/2023 8:29 AM
8	None	7/12/2023 8:13 AM
9	Lifespan of the equipment and opportunity cost of using the lane in this manner	7/12/2023 6:47 AM
10	Images you supply in your brochure are largely misleading. The cover page uses permanent grass pasture that had been cut to produce silage for cattle in a low carbon system as a backdrop of "poor" ground. Images of drought hit maize in the relative fields to show low productivity, is misleading, when even "high" yielding land was similar in2022.	7/12/2023 12:59 AM
11	Road improvement from Sutton benger through Christian Malford would be nice. Road isn't great, not looked after nor footpaths alongside it. Really don't want it to be damaged more, so repairs and keeping the road tidy wound be our main concern. You are proposing deer hedge around the site perimeter, it would be good if additional green hedge was planted along side the perimeter to allow more biodiversity	7/11/2023 10:41 PM
12	How the project will minimise traffic on and damage to local roads during the construction.	7/11/2023 9:28 PM
13	A website showing the output of the wind farm, utilisation of the batteries - like grid watch.	7/11/2023 9:20 PM
14	We went to the meeting that was in the village hall, and our concerns were all discussed, and were very happy with the outcomes of those discussions. I'd also like to point out this directly affects us, it will be right next to our property. Some of the things discussed were the move of a large area of wild meadow, as well as bee hives and potentially a holding pond, to enhance and even increase local wildlife in the area.	7/11/2023 9:06 PM
15	Flooding - already a problem at junction of Dodford Lane and Main Road, a way that the huge area of solar panels could be made more attractive maybe by making it a smaller area, give information on how the crop that was grown in that area will be replaced because food security is also important, will immediate neighbours benefit in any way from the electric produced on our doorstep?	7/11/2023 8:39 PM
16	No	7/11/2023 8:19 PM
17	The proposal needs to show how it will integrate its environmental diversity features with	7/11/2023 7:23 PM

	"green corridors" running through the area so that it does not become an isolated asset.	
18	No	7/11/2023 7:18 PM
19	Screening from road / viewpoints : particularly of the horrendous block of battery containers. Transformers well away from housing and public footpaths. And what about the public right of way / footpath which goes across the proposed site.?	7/11/2023 6:09 PM
20	You seem to have dropped the batteries. I think these should be reinstated. As a professional engineer I can attest that battery storage makes solar a lot more useful.	7/11/2023 5:34 PM
21	I would like to see 1. Neighbouring properties get lower-cost electricity, and 2. Neighbouring properties to get higher-current connections paid for.	7/11/2023 5:31 PM
22	Screening of site with mixed hedging, plus wild flower areas .	7/11/2023 5:28 PM
23	Exactly where it will be.	7/11/2023 5:20 PM
24	Making sure the existing hedgerows etc are kept in place	7/11/2023 5:18 PM
25	No	7/11/2023 5:00 PM
26	No	7/11/2023 4:27 PM
27	The site should include a battery storage facility	7/11/2023 4:23 PM
28	Wildlife habitats	7/11/2023 4:17 PM
29	More wildlife areas.	7/11/2023 4:17 PM
30	1. What measures will be taken to minimise disruption to the local community during the construction phase? 2. What financial incentives will be available to the Parish? 3. The area is a known flood risk zone, what steps will be taken to mitigate this? 4. Will there be any improvements to local infrastructure?	7/11/2023 4:14 PM
31	No not interested	7/11/2023 4:02 PM
32	None	7/11/2023 3:53 PM
33	No	7/11/2023 12:32 PM
34	Currently the technology for recycling use PV panels is non existent in the Uk. It's a time bomb waiting to happen. PV panel programs are the cheap way of electrical generation. Cheap is usually bad. Unfortunately the companies doing schemes such as these won't pick up the bill, because they will be bust.	7/11/2023 12:20 PM
35	I appreciate that I may come over as a nimby, but I would like the solar panels to be as unobtrusive as possible. You say that there will be significant improvements in biodiversity as a result of this solar farm which is not supported by any of the other solar farms in the UK but it is a nice idea. Much less sun light will be getting to the ground to help plant growth even with translucent panels. Solar farms get in the way of deer/rabbits/wildlife and when the solar panels deteriorate after 15 years, not 40 years as you say, they can gradually poison the soil. So what can you do please about that, particularly as there are no solar panel recycling sites in the UK. Is the nearest France? How would you clean up such sites? Please let us know the amount of trees and types you plan to plant. Thanks.	7/11/2023 11:50 AM
36	Noise impact , screening from. South , Bradenstoke Abbey Site	5/20/2023 12:52 AM
37	N/A	5/15/2023 4:35 PM
38	The wear and tear on access route , increase in traffic , damage to the eco system , effect on wildlife , flora and fauna and people ,detrimental effect to properties in the area, noise during construction .	5/15/2023 4:33 PM
39	Taking productive agricultural land out of crop delivery. Deep concern for heritage assets surrounding and overlooking the site	5/10/2023 3:52 PM
40	Should not be on agricultural land that has Listed Buildings adjoining it and is in clear site from all directions	5/5/2023 1:07 PM
41	Tree/ hedge planting to disguise the solar farm helping to blend with the local environment. Other local solar farms 'intended' to do this on their sites but haven't. Commitment to	5/5/2023 12:18 AM

	environmental landscaping or any local benefit is important, rural communities are often suspicious of large developments as promises are often not followed through.	
42	I'd have to come back to you on this after reading the proposal again.	5/3/2023 6:19 PM
43	because every new development should have solar panels and green belt should remain protected	4/29/2023 1:44 AM
44	You guys are all getting rich at other people's expense and will walk off with your big fat cheques, leaving the residents to live with the aftermath. There is no benefit to local residents - I would suggest at the very least you offer large discount on energy bills	4/27/2023 6:48 PM
45	None	4/27/2023 4:09 PM



Q7. Can you explain why you answered Question 6 the way you did?

Paper survey responses

- Location logical
- Solar farms have to be built somewhere
- It can only be good
- Agree we need to move away from fossil fuels
- A good design can minimize impact to landscape. Noise is offset by railway
- We need more renewable energy sources now and in the future
- Too much PV already
- Relatively low impact solution to provide flexible energy source
- Important to generate energy as efficiently as possible
- We need more locally generated electricity
- Problems on local roads, they are already under stress during construction
- The proposal provides positive answers to my climate change concerns
- We need energy
- We need more solar power and help with the local community
- It's the wrong place visually
- Renewable energy
- Clearly environmental issues are crucial & possibly may reduce energy costs overall, local & national

- Very little information on layout provided

Online survey responses

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Important that we generate more renewable energy	7/15/2023 6:44 PM
2	We are losing too much farm land.	7/14/2023 11:33 PM
3	It's good for the environment and isn't disruptive to every day life but will provide a benefit	7/14/2023 5:00 PM
4	We do not know anything about the park, only seen the application tonight through parish council. No leaflets to the local residents have been given.not happy as no engagement with residents.	7/13/2023 10:47 PM
5	The climate and energy crisis is very real and we need to do more to combat it	7/13/2023 1:49 PM
6	It is the right thing to do. Stop not wanting it in my backyard	7/13/2023 10:17 AM
7	You don't need to build this next to a village, do it next to a town or the motorway, reducing wild space because it's easy is irresponsible, you talk of climate change and creating sources of renewable energy, don't reduce countryside to this purpose, we don't have enough of it.	7/12/2023 8:29 AM
8	We all need to use greener energy	7/12/2023 8:13 AM
9	Support renewable energy and design is sympathetic to the area	7/12/2023 6:47 AM
10	Access to site is poor, access to the substation will mean that communities will be 100% closed due to other roads closed in the immediate area until 2025 at least. Costs of sourcing food from abroad are increasing, local production needs to be ringfenced. Solar farms of this nature require mechanical maintenance or chemical control. Grass is grown to cover other species, control of height is by cutting using tractors and other hand held equipment. Other controls needed use herbicides to control plant growth. Panels do not work with livestock and it is a known and proven fact. Production of grass fodder for livestock feed or even biogas digester feed is a more effective crop for the utilisation of "poor land" as has been termed. The Dauntsey vale is known for the quality of grass growing ground, not maize or other cereals. The panels will be visible from around the area as it is a vale and so will viewed from higher grounds and surrounding	7/12/2023 12:59 AM
11	We live in Christian Malford, so very close to the proposed development. We have received a brochure through the door months ago explaining what is being proposed and have no objections to fields being converted to solar farm and grazing sheep. More of these kinds of projects are needed as some people prepared to pay extra for clean energy. We do need to use technology and sun/wind/water to generate more electricity. Also because of the land slide that area is lacking revenues, so if you are able to benefit from it and possibly help to bring some jobs for local people that would be great.	7/11/2023 10:41 PM
12	I am supportive so long as the battery storage is included in the proposal. The UK needs more renewable energy to reduce its carbon emissions. However, just having solar panels does not remove dirty energy generation from the grid. Having battery's can help with this.	7/11/2023 9:28 PM
13	The country needs more renewable solar parks and the grid needs supporting with batteries and their ancillary services they provide.	7/11/2023 9:20 PM
14	We are indeed. Even though the view from our home will change, it will be for the right reasons.	7/11/2023 9:06 PM
15	It is such a vast area and we get so much flooding into Dodford Lane opposite the site already. With less agricultural land to absorb the rainwater it will overflow ditches and flood over the road even more	7/11/2023 8:39 PM
16	See answers 1 to 4	7/11/2023 8:19 PM
17	The proposal will make our community a net exporter of electricity reducing the load on the national grid as our demand for electricity grows.	7/11/2023 7:23 PM

18	So many fields - derelict buildings across Wiltshire but you choose part of a local community with beautiful fields and landscapes.	7/11/2023 7:18 PM
19	Unsure of impact to local residents visually and audibly by both construction and ongoing operation of the solar farm. The battery banks in particular will be visually u appealing and can see no detail of how these will be " hidden" - are you putting v these next to the B4069 for example - which would be unacceptable. .	7/11/2023 6:09 PM
20	Simple: we need as much renewable power (and nuclear) as we can get.	7/11/2023 5:34 PM
21	We have a climate emergency. Solar power is one of the lowest cost solutions to the emergency. We need a LOT more of it. (Currently the total area of UK solar (230 km^2) is less than the total area of UK golf courses (1,256 km^2).)	7/11/2023 5:31 PM
22	Improving the sites appearance plus providing nature corridors and habitats.	7/11/2023 5:28 PM
23	We need to move away from fossil fuels.	7/11/2023 5:20 PM
24	We need to move away from fos files	7/11/2023 5:18 PM
25	We should be generating more of our own energy	7/11/2023 5:00 PM
26	Placing solar panels in an area of beauty is not the way to go forward. They should be placed alongside motorways, trunk roads and all new build housing developments should automatically have them installed.	7/11/2023 4:27 PM
27	We need to generate more renewable energy.	7/11/2023 4:23 PM
28	As have not seen or heard anything about it apart from this	7/11/2023 4:17 PM
29	Harm to the countryside, wildlife, fenced off areas.	7/11/2023 4:17 PM
30	My support will be dependent of the final plan and benefits to local community	7/11/2023 4:14 PM
31	The outlook on beautiful green fields. The traffic this will cause to the already disrupted area.	7/11/2023 4:02 PM
32	Cheaper electricity	7/11/2023 3:53 PM
33	Use of poor land and generation of green energy	7/11/2023 12:32 PM
34	Panels are a time bomb waiting to happen. They are old tec and will be taken over by far more effective systems. We just do not have the vision in this country to see it.	7/11/2023 12:20 PM
35	Read the answer to question 5, thanks.	7/11/2023 11:50 AM
36	Using good quality agricultural land - we need to become self sufficient in food supply - that would help climate change. Also we will see this eyesore from our house	5/20/2023 12:52 AM
37	Uk based renewable energy generation reduces reliance on energy imports and improves the country's energy security. Solar is one of least intrusive and safest form of renewables.	5/15/2023 4:35 PM
38	Given that there is a 269 acre solar park on the Lyneham airbase, which when built was the largest in the uk. We feel there are sufficient solar parks in this area for the residents to put up with. What actual economic benefit is there to people in the area apart from the farmer who is leasing you land for a significant amount.	5/15/2023 4:33 PM
39	Please see response to question 5	5/10/2023 3:52 PM
40	Various objections on scale, locations, proximity to Listed Buildings, inadequate screening, lag on live operation etc	5/5/2023 1:07 PM
41	At this stage I am still reviewing the the available information and considering the pros and cons for the local area. I look forward to seeing the more detailed plan in the near future.	5/5/2023 12:18 AM
42	I'm satisfied with the explanation given to me and questions answered at the display in Bradenstoke.	5/3/2023 6:19 PM
43	see above	4/29/2023 1:44 AM
44	There is already a big solar farm at Lyneham - stop destroying our countryside	4/27/2023 6:48 PM
45	It doesn't effect the view from my property	4/27/2023 4:09 PM

Q8. If you think there is a local organisation, project or cause which could benefit from a community benefit fund, please leave details here

Paper survey responses

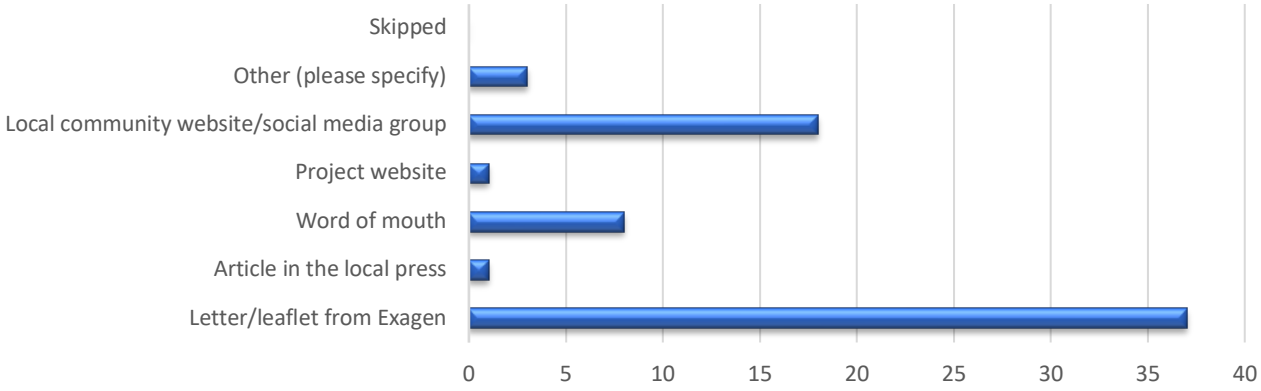
- Dauntsey Lock residents are the nearest neighbours and we would like a pavement to our nearest bus stop at St James
- Not relevant
- Christian Malford Village Hall
- Christian Malford Cricket Club
- Wilts/Berks canal blue/green corridor lies just the other side of the railway
- New village hall
- The proposed new Christian Malford Village Hall
- Peterborough Arms/Wilts & Berks canal society
- No doubt about it, the Christian Malford village hall where you held this event needs rebuilding. Used by many groups from elderly to kids etc
- Village hall
- Shard community ownership Educational programme for local schools
- Christian Malford village hall is being rebuilt, please contact committee
- School, Church, Village Hall
- Christian Malford Village Hall rebuild
- New Village Hall
- Christian Malford Village Hall

Online Survey Responses

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Friends of Sutton Benger School Changing local buses for electric vehicled	7/15/2023 6:44 PM
2	Christian Malforf School	7/13/2023 10:17 AM
3	Bribery?	7/12/2023 8:29 AM
4	None	7/12/2023 8:13 AM
5	Shelter	7/12/2023 6:47 AM
6	Christian Malford playground needs replacing	7/11/2023 10:41 PM
7	-	7/11/2023 9:28 PM
8	1) Dauntsey to Dauntsey lock has no footpath or easy walkable routes. Anything you could do to protect and support pedestrians. 2) not all of Dauntsey lock has fibre access ~5 properties are excluded if the project needs communication connections then including these properties would be helpful.	7/11/2023 9:20 PM
9	Christian Malford School, play park, public transport additional to the very infrequent 91 bus that does not stop anywhere between Christian Malford and Dauntsey	7/11/2023 8:39 PM
10	Christian Malford Village Hall replacement fund.	7/11/2023 8:19 PM

11	Wilts Berks Canal Trust	7/11/2023 7:23 PM
12	Christian Malford Cricket Club.	7/11/2023 6:09 PM
13	Re build of Village hall. Toilet facilities at All Saints Church.	7/11/2023 5:28 PM
14	Open Blue	7/11/2023 5:20 PM
15	1. Parish Council - Recreation Ground (Children's Play Area) 2. New Village Hall 3. Church - toilet & kitchenette	7/11/2023 4:23 PM
16	Springboard in Chippenham	7/11/2023 4:17 PM
17	There are various local groups that would benefit	7/11/2023 4:14 PM
18	Yes new cricket pavilion	7/11/2023 3:53 PM
19	Christian Malford recreation ground play area and cricket club	7/11/2023 12:32 PM
20	Village hall, cricket club, friends of the church.	7/11/2023 12:20 PM
21	The rebuild of the Christian Malford Village Hall, church and the school.	7/11/2023 11:50 AM
22	We already have the lyneham fund	5/20/2023 12:52 AM
23	N/A	5/15/2023 4:35 PM
24	We feel this is a leading question, almost bribery. There are always community projects that need funding ie restoration of the wilts Berks canal in Dauntsey Lock.Would you fund those without a solar park as do other businesses !	5/15/2023 4:33 PM
25	Please do not attempt to bribe people to support the scheme and demonstrate where this money will come from if you are to sell the scheme on pre construction	5/5/2023 1:07 PM
26	Pavements to connect Dauntsey lock with Dauntsey for better community cohesion and walking access to public transport routes, public rights of way and local businesses. Dauntsey Recreation ground is currently in need of new equipment funding support. There are a few local organisations and projects that would benefit from grants.	5/5/2023 12:18 AM
27	St Mary's church needs repair and Bradenstoke Amateur Dramatic Society needs support.	5/3/2023 6:19 PM
28	None	4/27/2023 4:09 PM

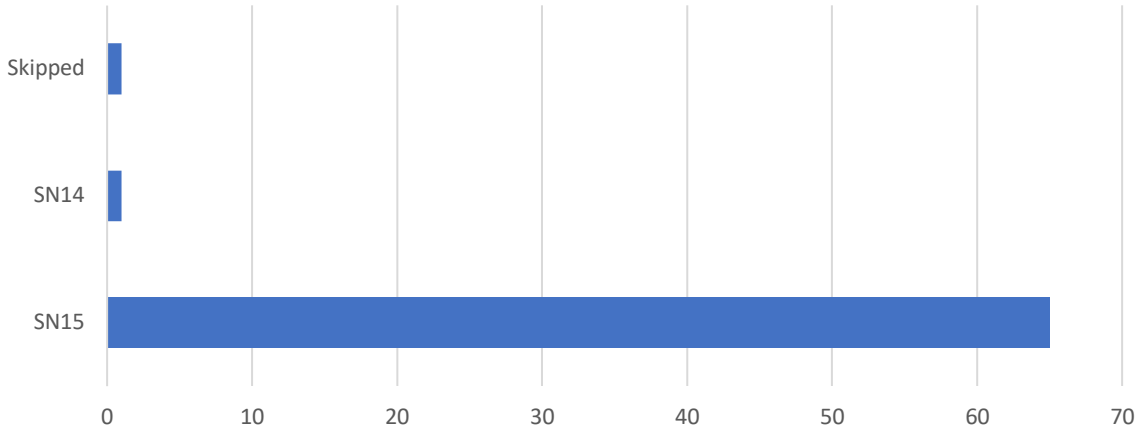
Q9. How did you hear about the proposal?



	Letter/leaflet from Exagen	Article in the local press	Word of mouth	Project website	Local community website/social media group	Other (please specify)	Skipped
Series1	37	1	8	1	18	3	0

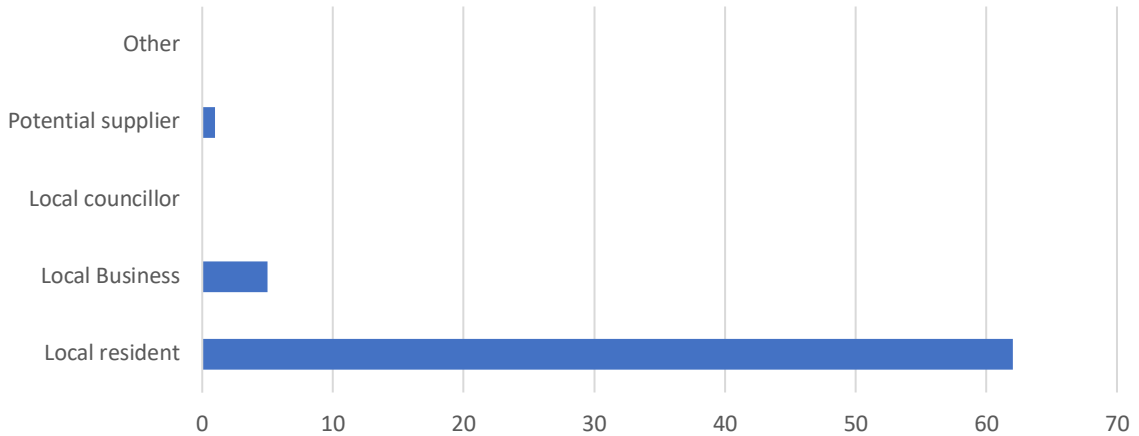
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Parish council	7/13/2023 10:47 PM
2	Leaflet through the door & local Facebook group. Also saw printed cardboard sign objecting this scheme on a traffic light outside Kington Langley.	7/11/2023 10:41 PM
3	In person	7/11/2023 3:53 PM

Q10. So we understand where feedback is coming from, please give us the first section of your postcode



	SN15	SN14	Skipped
Total	65	1	1

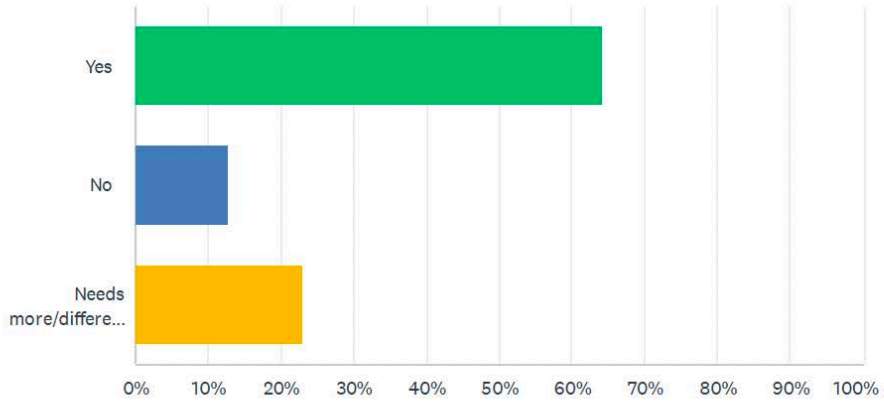
Q11. Please chose one of the following which best describes your interest in the project



	Local resident	Local Business	Local councillor	Potential supplier	Other
Total	62	5	0	1	0

Q12 If you have seen our project website, was it helpful?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	64.10%	25
No	12.82%	5
Needs more/different information (please specify)	23.08%	9
TOTAL		39

#	NEEDS MORE/DIFFERENT INFORMATION (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Didn't know of the site	7/13/2023 10:47 PM
2	Would be nice to see render images of what it would look like on the viewpoint photos. Picture is easier to interpret than text	7/11/2023 10:41 PM
3	How will the battery farm be screened from the B4069. Will there be intrusive, persistent transformer noise near local residents?.	7/11/2023 6:09 PM
4	Not seen it	7/11/2023 4:17 PM
5	More info of acreage to be left for wildlife, should be 33% of overall land	7/11/2023 4:17 PM
6	No data on noise emissions- the lyneham solar park is really noisy	5/20/2023 12:52 AM
7	Detailed plans for screening	5/10/2023 3:52 PM
8	Needs much more info	5/5/2023 1:07 PM
9	More detail on site layout to show how solar farms sit within the area proposed	5/5/2023 12:18 AM

Q13 Any further comments? Want to be kept updated? Please leave details here

Answered: 19 Skipped: 26

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	More information to local residents as nothing so far	7/13/2023 10:47 PM
2	Please put solar energy parks near towns and cities etc, not in or around villages.	7/12/2023 8:29 AM
3	None	7/12/2023 8:13 AM
4	Good luck! You probably get some negative comments but I believe it's bold and important what you are trying to achieve. Even though it's going to make you a lot of money along the way.	7/11/2023 10:41 PM
5	I would like to be kept updated. [redacted]	7/11/2023 8:39 PM
6	Christian Malford is a rural parish in an arable and livestock farming area which needs to offset the carbon impact of its activities - the proposal will reduce dependence on electricity generated from fossil fuels.	7/11/2023 7:23 PM
7	Construction traffic along the B roads and through villages to the site will be of concern	7/11/2023 6:09 PM
8	As a local resident I wholeheartedly support this project.	7/11/2023 5:31 PM
9	We must embrace these initiatives rather than challenge them.	7/11/2023 5:28 PM
10	[redacted]	7/11/2023 4:17 PM
11	[redacted]	7/11/2023 4:14 PM
12	None	7/11/2023 3:53 PM
13	No	7/11/2023 12:32 PM
14	You are carrying out further surveys I believe and so can the data from those be made available? Thanks.	7/11/2023 11:50 AM
15	Build it somewhere else -	5/20/2023 12:52 AM
16	N/A	5/15/2023 4:35 PM
17	We require updating our email address is [redacted]	5/15/2023 4:33 PM
18	Would like to know how it progresses and any changes from the plan that we've seen.	5/3/2023 6:19 PM
19	Please build this somewhere else	4/27/2023 6:48 PM

5 CONCLUSION

Exagen has carried out extensive pre-application consultation with the local community. The resultant Development is considered to be an informed and appropriate development. The design evolution process has considered the comments made during the consultation process in coming to its final design and layout.

In terms of the survey questionnaires that were completed:

- 94.02% of respondents said the UK should be generating more of its own renewable energy;
- 94.02% of respondents were concerned about climate change and of those, 66.66% were very concerned;
- 68.65% of respondents felt, as a nation, we were not doing enough to combat climate change;
- 64% of respondents felt what we were proposing was a good idea, 11% were not sure and the remaining 25% did not.
- 60% of respondents supported the proposed development, 16% were not sure and the remaining 24% of respondents opposed the proposed development.

There were positive comments submitted noting the substantial positive contribution this project will make towards net zero and the importance of the energy generation being in the UK, delivering on energy security.

There were concerns raised around the scale of the project, visual impact and effect on the nearest residential properties and ecology and biodiversity. Exagen has taken into account comments and made changes to the design and layout. These changes include additional vegetation buffers to further shield nearby residential properties, a new access route onto the Site located further away from neighbouring properties, as well as further setbacks from panels with new screening which is supported within the residential montages. There are no significant ecological impacts associated with the Development and with the landscaping and biodiversity enhancements incorporated in the design this helps to not only filter and reduce visibility but also offer substantial net gain in biodiversity.

Photomontages were offered to local residents and where these were requested they were produced. These were presented to illustrate the potential visual effects of the development when considering the final design and landscaping proposals. These were not required within the LVA however copies are enclosed in Appendix D.

Exagen is committed to continuing to liaise with the local community and key stakeholders throughout the life of the project to ensure that local views continue to be taken account of and the construction is carried out in as sensitive a way as possible. This has been facilitated by the establishment of the project website.

The consultation and engagement that Exagen has carried out with the local community and consultees is considered to accord with the provisions of the Localism Act and the NPPF as well as the Council's SCI guidance on community involvement for major planning applications.

exagen

APPENDIX A

LEAFLET AND SURVEY

Swallett Energy Park

Public consultation
April and May 2023

exagen



We are keen to inform both owners of properties and residents of our proposals.

If this leaflet is received by the occupier of the property and you are not the freehold owner please can you ensure this is shared with them.

Alternatively, please contact Exagen using the details provided and share the contact details for the freehold owner so we can provide them with a copy of the leaflet.

Please note that taking part in this consultation process does not affect your statutory rights to make representations to the councils when the formal planning application is submitted.

Introduction

Dear resident, we would like to introduce Exagen and our new project, Swallett Energy Park. We want to take this opportunity to understand your views, by gathering feedback on our plans. You have received this leaflet because you live near to the project or are located in close proximity to the proposed access route.

Swallett Energy Park is a ground mounted solar farm with the option to add co-located battery storage. The project will connect via a buried cable into the local grid at Lyneham substation, located just to the east of the site.

At Exagen, we are creating the next generation of renewable energy projects and grid-balancing battery storage facilities to support the UK's energy future. We do this in partnership with the local community.

The site comprises of one parcel of land located between the M4 motorway and the railway line between Chippenham and Swindon. The project is west of Dauntsey Lock and northeast of Christian Malford.

To make this project work for all, we are seeking your views on this proposal ahead of submitting a formal planning application to Wiltshire Council.

You can see the red line on the map on page 2 which indicates the land available. Through consultation with the community, the council, and environmental assessments we will look to refine the development area to create a project that works for the local community.

We want you and your community to be involved and stay informed, that's why we've created a dedicated website for you to stay updated on the project and provide feedback.

We invite you to attend a public exhibition on the project, delivered by our project team, and if you can't make that there will also be a webinar, a recording of which will be posted on the website.

--Dates for your diary--

Public exhibitions

Wednesday, 3rd May, 4.30-8pm
Bradenstoke Village Hall
Bradenstoke,
Chippenham SN15 4EL

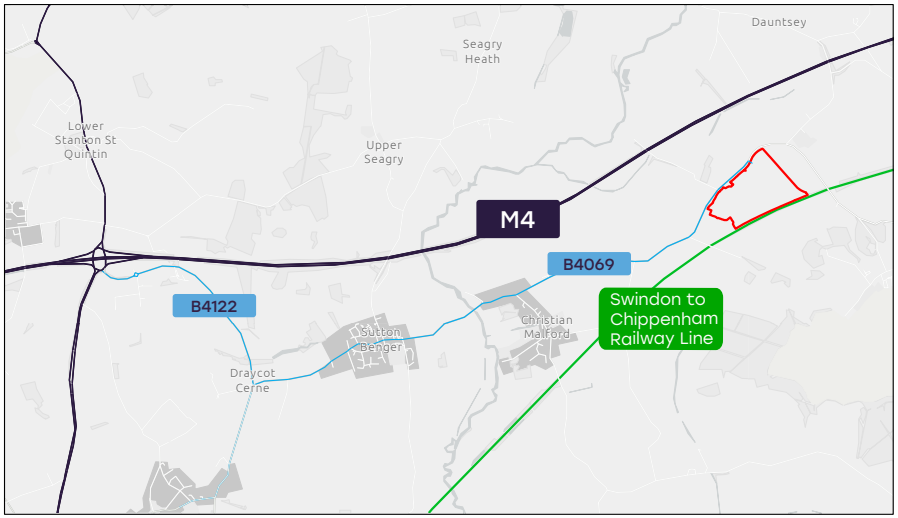
Thursday, 4th May, 4-8pm
Christian Malford Village Hall
Station Rd,
Christian Malford,
Chippenham SN15 4BL

Webinar

Monday, 15th May, 7pm
GoTo Webinar ID: 316-899-371

To learn more visit
www.exagen.co.uk/swallett-energy-park

Swallett Energy Park



The site access route in **BLUE** via an existing agricultural entry point, upgraded to meet the needs of the new purpose. The route to site will be from the M4, then via the B4122 which joins the B4069, which heads east towards the site access point.

Construction of the development will take approximately 6 months.

Once operational the site would be remotely operated with visits limited to occasional cars and vans for maintenance only.

Project overview

The project consists of a solar farm with the option to add co-located battery storage, placed on 115 acres (46.5 hectares) of land south of the M4 motorway between the B4069 and the Swindon to Chippenham railway line, to the north-west of the village of Dauntsey Lock.

The project will include the solar farm, battery storage system and associated infrastructure all within the land boundary. There will then be a short section of buried cable between the site and Lyneham substation which will run approximately 750m in the B4069. A total of approximately 100 acres (40.5 ha) of land will be required for the development. We are undertaking consultation and environment assessment to determine the most suitable land for development.

The solar farm will have an export capacity of up to 30MWp, which is the equivalent to the annual electricity usage of approximately 9,400 homes in Wiltshire.

The battery storage facility will have a capacity of up to 23MW and will occupy less than 1 acre. It will provide 2-hour duration of electricity export per discharge, this is the same as powering approximately 5,800 homes in Wiltshire per charge.

The solar farm will have an export capacity of 30MWp, equivalent to the annual electricity usage of **9,400 UK homes.**

Why do we need projects like this?

- Solar is one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation and fastest to deliver.
- Batteries can manage the peaks and troughs on the UK grid throughout the day, reducing our reliance on fossil fuels for reactive power.
- New renewable energy projects will enable the UK to meet our Climate Emergency and net zero by 2050 ambitions which are important for generations to come.
- Wiltshire Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019 and are seeking carbon neutrality by 2030, this project will help to deliver this goal.
- Investment now into renewable electricity infrastructure makes for a cleaner, cheaper and more secure energy system for the UK.
- The use of the site for solar energy generation creates new habitats, green infrastructure improvements and substantial biodiversity gains.

The use of the site for solar energy generation creates new habitats, green infrastructure improvements and substantial biodiversity gains.

Why here?

The site has been selected for a number of reasons:

- The site benefits from available connection to the grid network which has become limited, with no alternatives on brownfield sites nearby.
- Proximity to the Lyneham substation in Dauntsey Lock means that the distance of cabling to the point of connection is short.
- Site free of any other significant environmental designations and good opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancements.
- The site is equidistant at approximately 5km from the Cotswolds and North Wessex Downs AONBs and not visible from either.
- No loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land – all Grade 3b.
- The lack of long-distance views towards the site from low-lying areas to the north, east and west.
- Presence of on-site existing hedgerow and opportunity to enhance the local biodiversity with new planting such as native woodland, hedgerow and grassland.
- Good access.













Local engagement

Exagen is committed to the local communities in which we operate.

We engage with communities on each project through public consultation and identify local initiatives that we can support through a community benefit fund.

Local contractors and businesses will be engaged as far as possible during the construction and operational phases, where service offerings are not specialist. If you would like to obtain further information about the community benefit fund or enquire about providing services for this project, please visit the project website.

> If you would like to obtain further information about a community benefit fund please visit the project website.

Pre-planning process

A number of surveys are being conducted to establish any potential effects of the development on the site and surrounding area. These surveys include ecology, archaeology & cultural heritage, construction access & traffic, noise, flood risk and glint & glare. In addition, a landscape and visual appraisal will be undertaken to identify any impacts on key landscape and visual receptors. Our preliminary list of viewpoints is available on our website.

We will use the findings of these surveys and comments from Wiltshire Council in their pre-application advice, alongside the comments received through the public consultation process, to refine the final design of the development in advance of the planning application being submitted. We want to get your comments now on our proposals so they can shape the final design, however, members of the public will also be provided with an opportunity to formally comment on the proposals direct to the Wiltshire Council when the application is submitted.

Energy park components

- The solar panels, individually approx. 2m x 1m, would be mounted on metal frames fitted to the ground. The panels are fixed facing south at an angle of between 10 to 35 degrees, with a gap of between 3.5 to 6m between rows. The bottom end of the panels 0.7m above the ground, rising to 3m at the top.
- Inverters and transformers, housed in glass reinforced plastic/ steel containers, painted to match surroundings.
- Battery storage containers arranged in rows – appearance of standard shipping containers with a height of approximately 3m and painted to match surroundings.
- Inverters, low voltage transformers and high voltage switchgear.
- Access tracks.
- Perimeter deer fencing to a height of 2.4m (wooden post and steel mesh).
- Motion activated CCTV cameras on 3m high poles inside the fence.

Biodiversity

The site is arable farmland bordered by native species hedgerows with trees or tree belts. The fields are intensively farmed and cultivated close to the field boundaries.

All existing high value vegetation will be retained and enhanced as part of the project.

Biodiversity enhancements are central to our project planning and we employ a range of practices to suit the local environment.



Wildflowers planted to improve habitat for pollinators, including under the overhead lines.



Bird and bat boxes will be installed in areas of mature trees across the site, exact locations informed by our ecological consultant.



Switching intensive arable farmland for species rich grassland around the panels to be grazed by sheep, retaining agricultural purpose alongside renewable energy.



Existing hedgerows will be enhanced where necessary, including gapping up and strengthening certain locations using native species. This will ensure greater connectivity through green corridors.



Reptile hibernacula and log piles to be located over the site in field margins.



Areas of new native species woodland will be planted to provide screening of views from certain residential properties and for longer term biodiversity.



We will engage with local bee keeping groups with a view to hosting bee hives on our site.









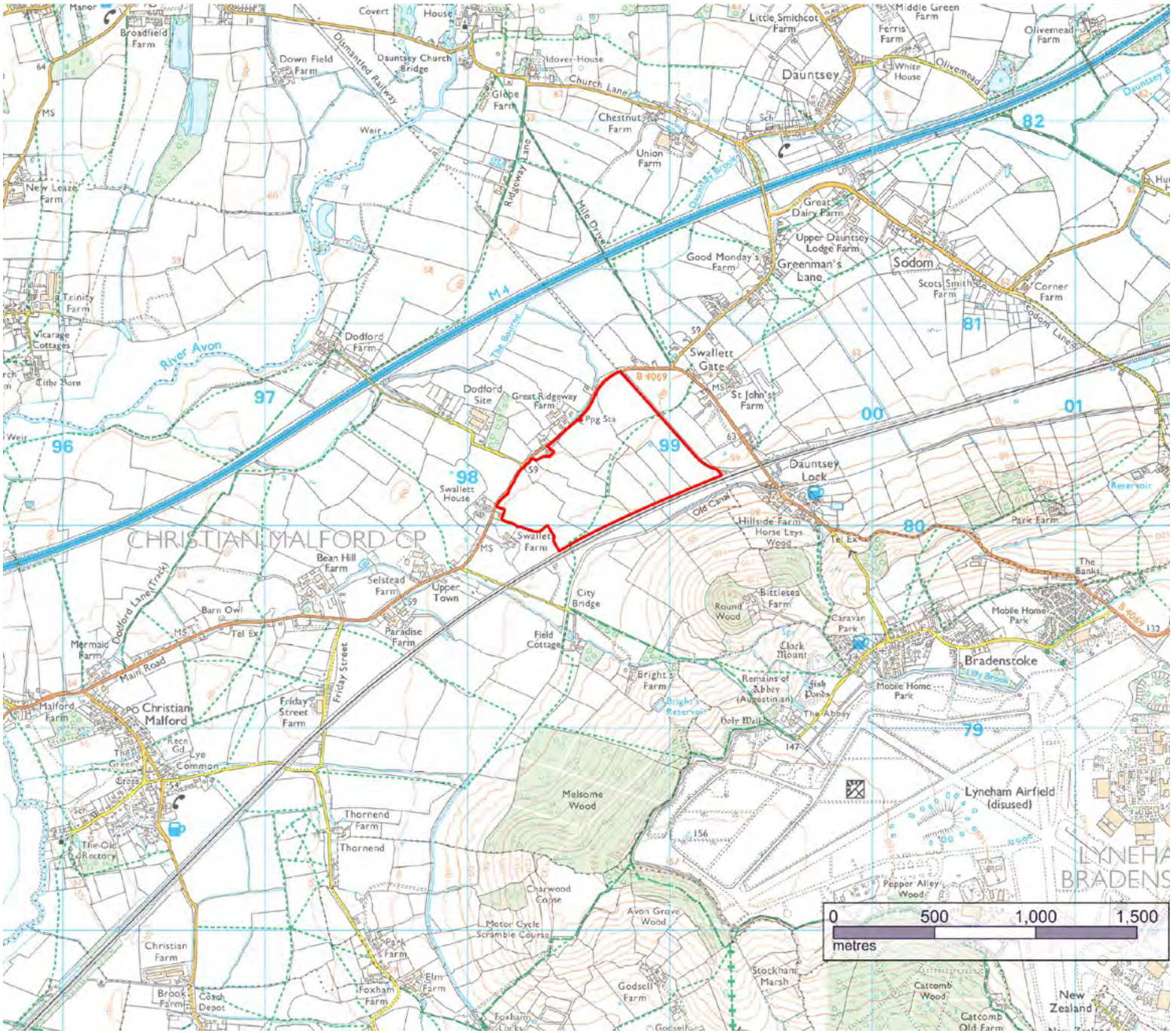


Swallett Energy Park

The proposed project boundary is highlighted in **RED** on the Ordnance Survey map.

The design for the development has not been completed. We are consulting with the council and undertaking this round of public consultation to better understand the key sensitivities and design considerations.

The final design will include appropriate offsets from residential receptors, including heritage assets, the right of way through the site and additional landscaping. Any potential sources of noise will also be located away from sensitive receptors.



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About Exagen

Exagen is a renewable energy developer, asset owner and asset manager, building the next generation of utility scale solar farms and grid-balancing battery storage facilities. That means we are involved in projects all the way through from origination through planning to construction and operation.

Details of the project team for the Swallett Energy Park are below.

The Exagen Development Team comprises of staff with more than 100 years of combined experience in development of renewable energy projects in the UK.



Mark Rowcroft
Managing Director

Edward Shuttleworth
Development Manager

Hugo Charteris
Project Development Coordinator

Andrew Mott
Planning Manager

Our partners

octopus energy generation

Proudly supporting Bumblebee Conservation Trust

CLA

regen transforming energy

renewableUK

Solar Energy UK

REA

The British Beekeepers Association · Founded 1874 ·

Exagen is committed to creating a sustainable future and is working towards this goal with our projects.

To find out more about Exagen, this project and the work we do, please visit our website **www.exagen.co.uk**



Energising a cleaner future

Swallett Energy Park
Public Consultation Survey | 2023

This survey is about the proposed Swallett Energy Park.

Your feedback will help inform the proposal. We may analyse the question responses to help inform us but at no point will we share personal details.

The survey begins with some questions about renewable energy and then moves onto questions about this project. We would be grateful if you can complete as much of it as you can - it should only take a few minutes.

Thank you for your time.

1. a) How concerned are you about climate change?

a ☐ Very ☐ Mildly ☐ Not concerned

b) do you feel as a nation we are doing enough to combat it?

b ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Do you think it is important for the UK to be generating more of its own renewable energy?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I'm not sure

3. Solar farms co-located with battery energy storage is an important technology to help decarbonise the grid. Do you think what we are proposing is a good idea in this area?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I'm not sure

4. Which of the following potential effects arising from the proposal give you the greatest concern and why?

☐ Landscape and visual effects
☐ Ecological effects, including biodiversity
☐ Residential amenity effects, including noise
☐ Flood risk and drainage
☐ Access and transport effects
☐ Battery safety
☐ Other (please specify)

5. Are you supportive of the proposed Swallett Energy Park?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I'm not sure

6. Can you explain why you answered question 5 the way you did?

7. If you think there is a local organisation, project or cause which could benefit from a community benefit fund, please leave details here

8. How did you hear about the proposal?

☐ Letter/leaflet from Exagen
☐ Article in the local press
☐ Word of mouth
☐ Project website
☐ Local community website/ social media group
☐ Other (please specify)

9. So we understand where feedback is coming from, please give us the first section of your postcode

10. Please chose one of the following which best describes your interest in the project

☐ Local resident
☐ Local business
☐ Local Councillor
☐ Potential supplier
☐ Other

Stay informed with our project by adding your contact details below.

Name

Email

Number

☐ Yes, I would like to recieve updates about this project via email or phone call.

We are committed to respecting your privacy and safeguarding your personal data https://exagen.co.uk/privacyandcookie-policy/

exagen
energising a cleaner future

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APPENDIX B

EXHIBITION BOARDS



Why this site

- Available grid capacity and infrastructure on site, with just a short section of underground cable required to join the site to the point of connection at Lyneham Substation.
- The site benefits from its proximity to the limited available grid connection and is situated on Grade 3b agricultural land which avoids the use of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land.
- Site free of any other significant environmental designations and good opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancements.
- Good access.
- There is an onsite existing Local Wildlife Site, as part of the design we plan to enhance and restore this area to increase the local biodiversity value of the site.
- The site benefits from established existing screening both on site and in the nearby vicinity, including hedgerows, mature woodland and trees. The solar development is typically around 3 m in height so allowing the existing hedgerows to grow and providing additional enhancements to the northern boundary will help to limit views from nearby receptors and ensure that the site integrates well into the existing landscape.

Swallett Energy Park
Existing site photos