exagen

Holly Lane Energy Park

Public consultation

March-April 2023

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 us on the details provided and let us know 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

Exagen Development Ltd is seeking to develop a renewable energy project connecting into the existing local 132kV overhead line which passes through the site. The project comprises of a ground mounted solar photovoltaics (PV) array together with battery storage.

The solar farm is located on land east of **Holly Lane, south of the town of Balsall Common.** The point of connection and battery storage infrastructure is located **2km north-west of Kenilworth**. The two will be connected via a buried cable that will follow Table Oak Lane, Meer End Road and the A452.

The solar farm and the majority of the grid route lie within the administrative area of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and the battery storage, point of connection and remaining grid route lie within Warwick District Council. The two site areas are shaded in and labelled on the map on the following page.

We are seeking your views on this proposal ahead of submitting a formal planning application to the councils. A project website is available to keep the local community up to date, and to facilitate your feedback, ahead of an in-person public consultation event delivered by the project team.

We will also be hosting an online public consultation event. Key dates and venues for these are set out below.

--Dates for your diary--

Webinar

Tuesday 18th April, 7pm
GoTo Webinar ID: 506-481-027

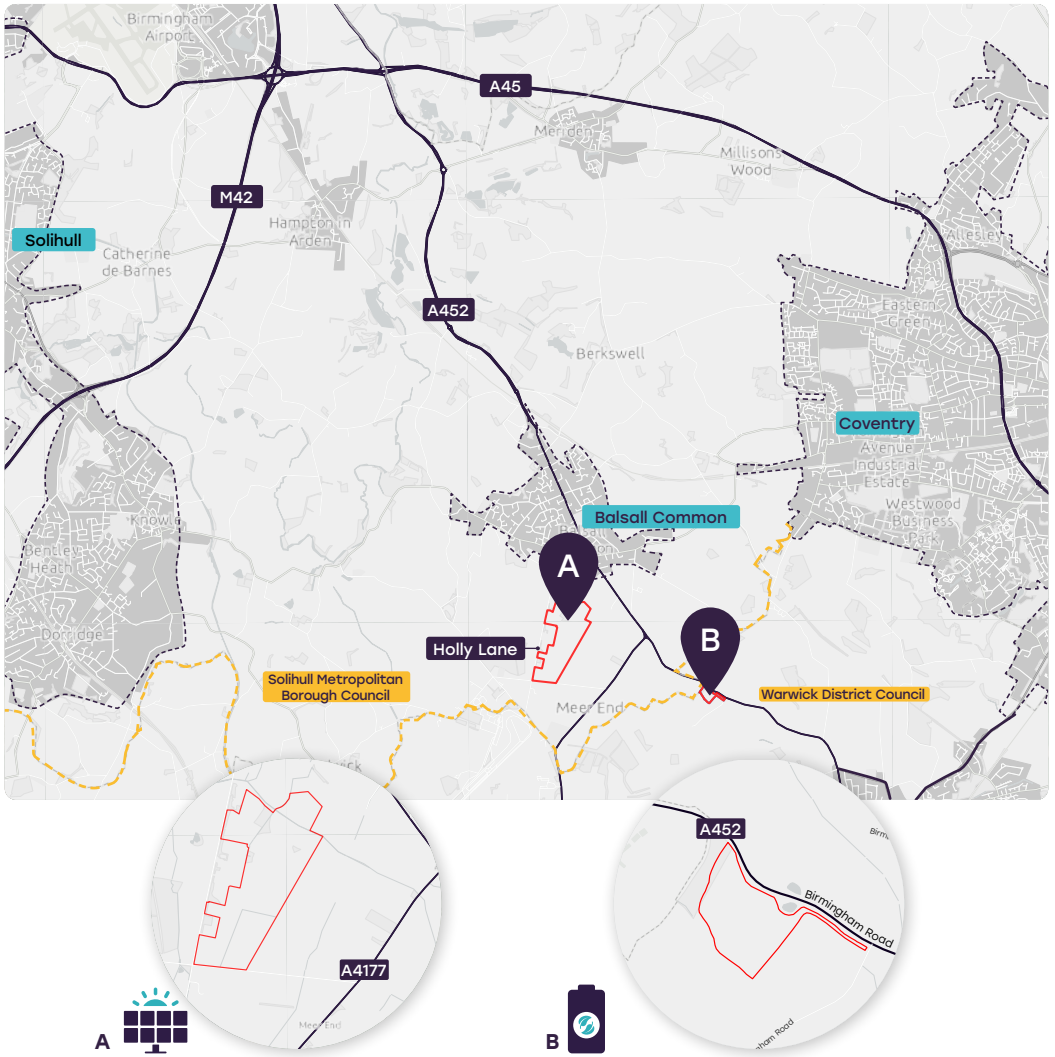
Register for the webinar here.

Public exhibition

Thursday, 20th April, 1-3pm 5-8pm
Balsall Common Village Hall
Main Hall
112 Station Road
Balsall Common, CV7 7FF

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

Holly Lane Energy Park



Project overview

The solar farm extends to 48 hectares (ha) on the main site, which is located 650m south of Balsall Common. A separate small compound approximately 2ha containing the substation, point of connection and battery storage infrastructure is located 2km north-west of Kenilworth. We are undertaking consultation and environment assessment to determine the most suitable land for development.

Access to the main site is proposed off Holly Lane in the northwest, via an existing agricultural access point that will be widened to provide a safe access junction. Holly Lane provides connectivity onto the A4177 and the wider trunk road network, avoiding minor roads through small settlements.

Access to the point of connection and battery storage compound is possible directly off the A452 (Birmingham Road) at the northeast of the site, by extending the existing junction used to access local farms. Off this a new access road will be constructed northwest to the development area.

Construction of the development would take approximately 6 months. Once operational, the site would be remotely operated with visits limited to occasional cars and vans for maintenance only.

The solar farm will have an export capacity of 28MW, which is the equivalent to the electricity usage of approximately 11,000 homes in Solihull per year.

The battery storage facility will have a capacity approximately of 75MW and will provide 2-hour duration of electricity export per discharge, equating up to 150MWh. One discharge of a 75MW battery is equivalent to the daily electricity usage of 19,000 homes in Solihull or the batteries of 3,750 electric vehicles.

The solar farm will have an export capacity of 28MW, the equivalent to the annual electricity usage of **11,000 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 2050 ambitions which are important for generations to come.
- 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:

- Available grid capacity and infrastructure on site, with just a short section of underground cable required to join the solar farm and the point of connection.
- No alternatives outside the Birmingham green belt or on brownfield land.
- Site free of any other significant environmental designations and good opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancements.
- Very special circumstances exist for solar and battery storage development in the green belt.
- Good access.
- Limited close-range receptors.
- The solar farm site benefits from substantial screening from mature woodland and trees, helping limit any impacts on the openness of the green belt.
- The point of connection and battery compound site is well screened on three sides, to the north, west, and south. New landscaping can be implemented where necessary on the eastern boundary.

Local engagement

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

We engage with communities on each project through public consultation and try to 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 services 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.

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Pre-planning process

A number of surveys are being conducted to establish any potential effects from the development on the site and surrounding environment. These surveys include; ecology, archaeology & cultural heritage, construction access & traffic, flood risk, noise, and glint & glare. In addition, a landscape and visual impact assessment will be undertaken to identify any impacts on key viewpoints.

We will use the findings of these surveys, 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 on our proposals so they can shape the final design. Nonetheless, upon application submission, members of the public will also be provided with an opportunity to formally comment on the proposals to the local planning authority directly.

Solar farm 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 ranging from 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.
- 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.

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. Areas of landscape and biodiversity improvement will include:

1

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

2

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

Mammal gates will be installed on perimeter fencing ensuring small mammals continue to have access to species-rich grassland planted beneath the solar panels.

3

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.

4

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

5

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

TBC

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

Point of Connection and battery storage compound components

- 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.
- Internal access tracks.
- Perimeter security fencing and CCTV.
- Substation.

The solar farm will be connected via underground cable to the substation which will connect directly into one of the pylons on the 132kV electricity distribution line that crosses the site.

We have presented two designs for the battery storage, substation and point of connection compound.

The preliminary design was our initial layout that we submitted to the Councils as part of pre-application consultation. As a result of comments provided by Warwick District Council to reduce potential visual impact/ impact on the openness of the green belt, we sought to accommodate the infrastructure in the west of the site, optimising use of the existing mature screening to the north, west and south. This is shown on our revised layout. We welcome comments from the public on this.

Landscaping and biodiversity enhancement will include growing existing hedges taller and adding hedgerow trees along the A452, as well as planting an area of woodland along the southeast boundary of the compound for screening and biodiversity connectivity. Areas of wildflower grassland will be planted in the stripe beneath and west of the overhead line. Smaller measures such as log piles for reptiles and amphibians to hibernate, and bird and bat boxes fitted to existing mature trees will also be established.

1

Bird and bat boxes to be installed in existing mature trees.

2

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

3

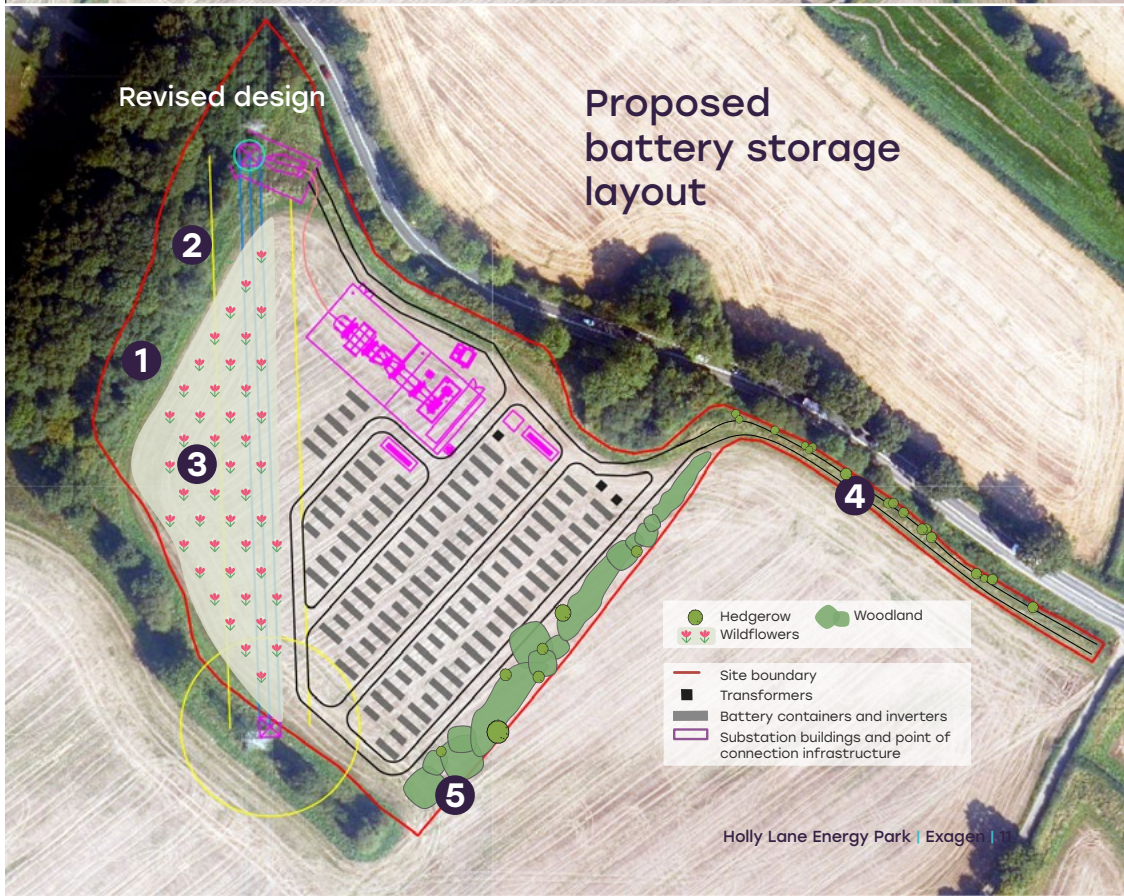
Wildflower grassland to the west of the compound particularly underneath the pylons.

4

Existing hedge to be maintained at taller height circa. 3m and enhanced with native hedgerow trees.

5

New area of tree belt/ woodland to the east.



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.

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

Details of the project team for the Holly Lane Energy Park are below.

Mark Rowcroft
Managing Director

Edward Shuttleworth
Development Manager

Flavia Bernabò
Project Development Coordinator

Andrew Mott
Planning Manager

Our partners

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