

# Welcome

Thank you for attending our public exhibition for the proposed Trinlaymire Solar Farm.

This public exhibition, hosted by Ampyr Solar Europe, is to outline plans for a solar farm near Threemiletown, West Lothian. The project is in partnership with the Hopetoun Estate.

The proposed solar farm site takes in roughly 53 hectares of land and, if consented, it will supply the equivalent electricity needs of over 9,400 homes per year.

We first brought forward proposals for a solar farm at Trinlaymire in Summer 2022 and held a public exhibition event in November 2022. We then had meetings and correspondence with community representatives and local residents to discuss the plans and receive feedback.

In response to feedback, we have altered the site boundary to include more land to the north of the site to allow panels to be moved further away from properties at Canal Court.

We submitted a new Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) to West Lothian Council with the updated boundary line for the project in early July 2023.

We would like to thank the local community councils, residents and elected representatives for their time and input on the proposals to date. These exhibition events are to showcase the updated design and to receive further feedback from local residents and community representatives.



Trinlaymire Solar Farm Site Map

## About the Developer

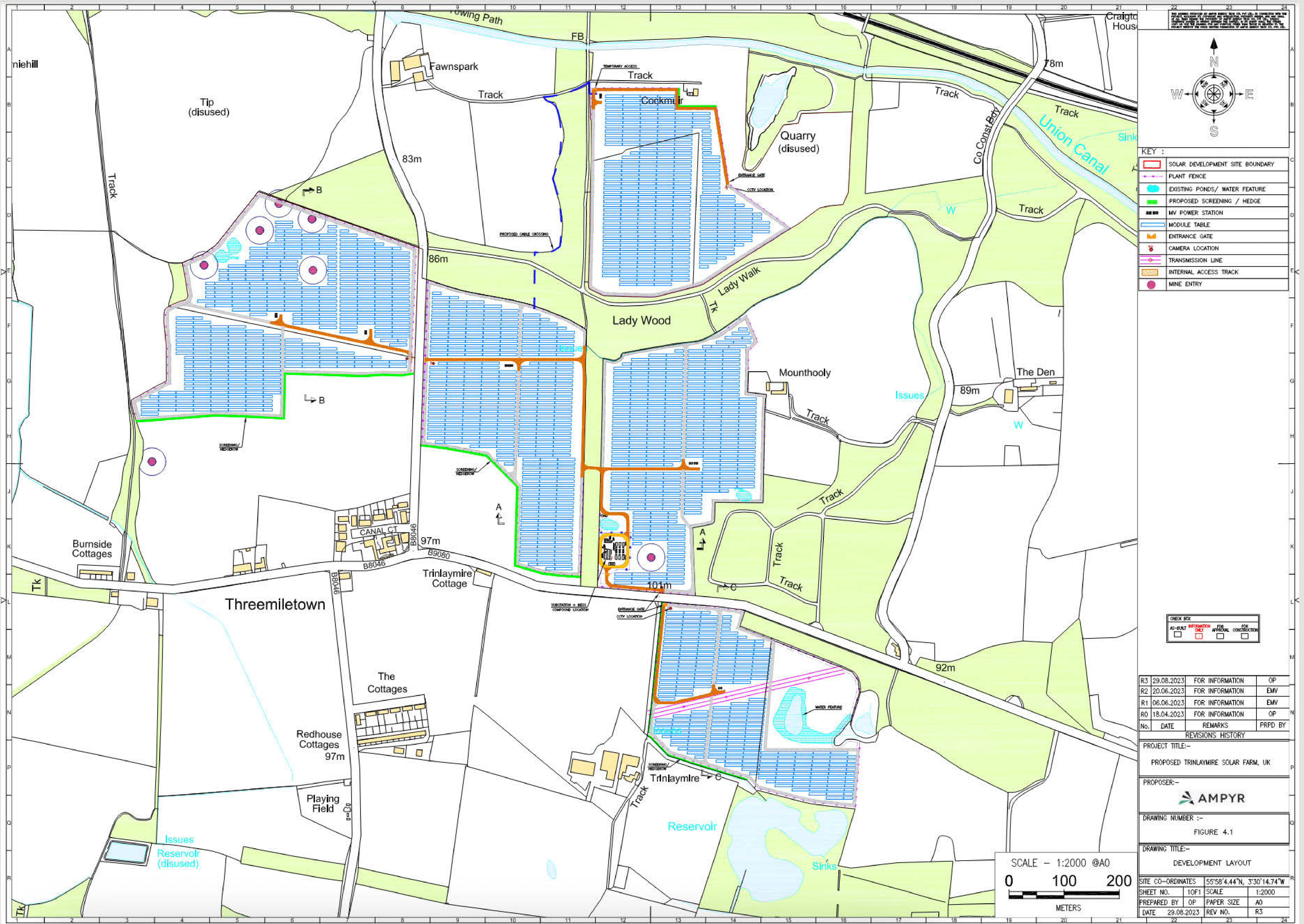
Ampyr Solar Europe is a joint venture between AGP Group, Hartree Partners and NaGa Solar.

It specialises in solar development, with a combined pipeline of over 5GW of large-scale ground-mount solar projects in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands and a team of over 70 experienced renewable development professionals



# Our proposals

Our proposals would consist of over 73,300 individual solar PV panels.



## Main Changes

We have made several changes to the proposal since our August 2023 exhibition. These are:

- o Buffer-zone to the north of Canal Court has been increased by approximately 45m. This has been achieved by removing panels from the field next to Canal Court to less favourable land in the most northern field;
- o Western most inverter station has been moved further away from Canal Court; and
- o Re-worked internal track plan to use existing farm track between ancient woodland.

Thank you for attending today's exhibition and to the residents and community representatives for their time and input into the proposed development to date.

## The solar farm

- Approximately 53 hectares of land.
- Fixed tilt solar photovoltaic system.
- The panels will be inclined at an angle of about 15° and face south.
- The front edge of the panels will be approximately 0.6m above the ground, while the back edge will have a maximum height of approximately 3m.
- There will be approximately 2.5m distance between each row of panels.
- The land between the rows and under the panels can be used for sheep grazing.
- Sub-station area with a small site maintenance facility.
- Inverters and transformers to convert power from DC to AC (Alternating Current).
- Natural screening planted
- Security fencing - fencing will be permeable to small animals and there will be no audible alarms or permanent lighting at the site.
- Close Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras. These will be kept to a minimum and located to reduce any visual impact and respect privacy.

# Design Iteration

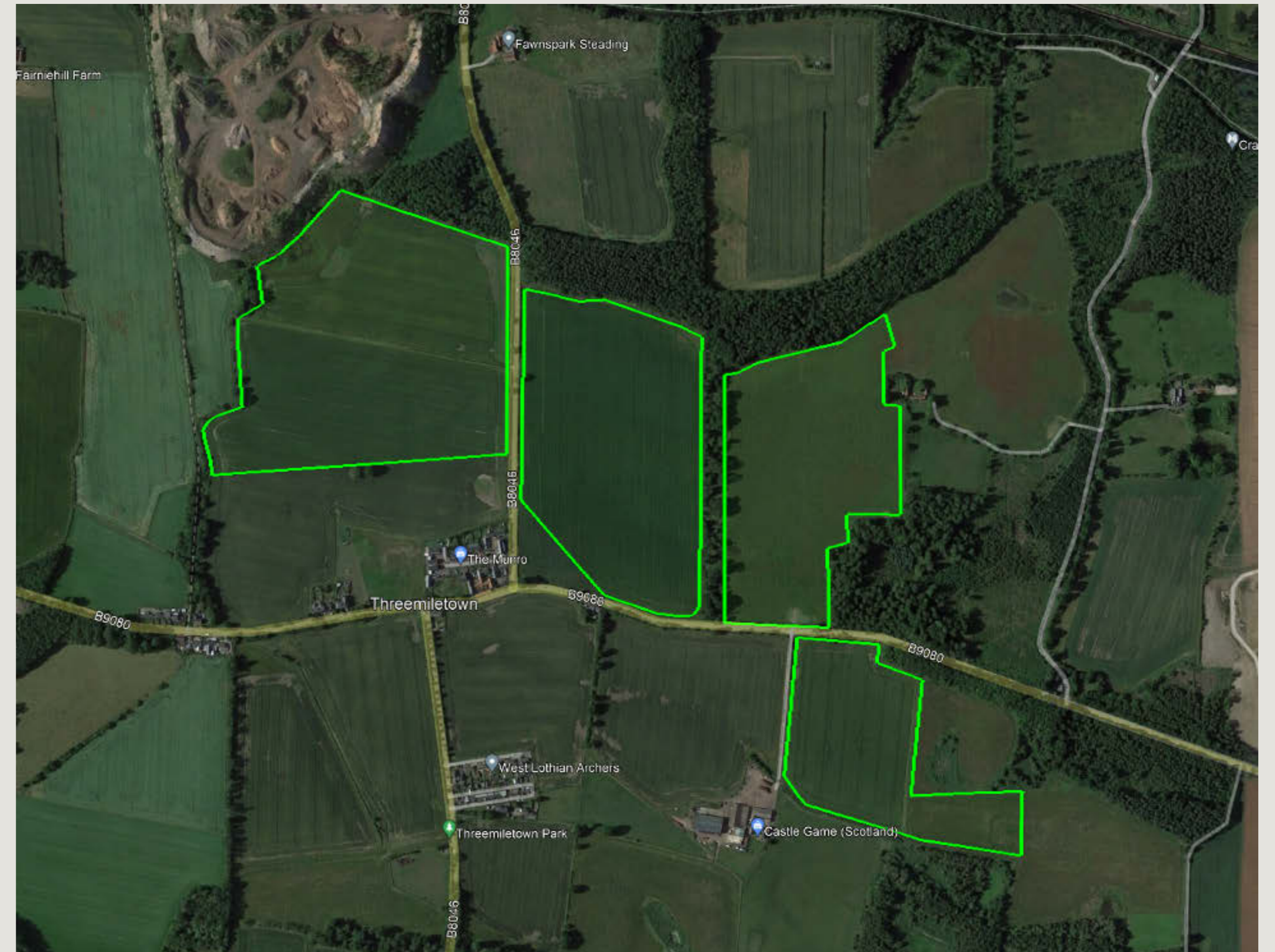
We know that the overall look of Trinlaymire Solar Farm is a key point of interest for the local community.

This board explains the design iteration process we have undertaken since we first started assessing the site for a potential solar farm. This board includes both the August and September designs.



## November 2022

- We first brought forward proposals for a solar farm at Trinlaymire in September 2022 and held public exhibition events in November 2022. The above design was presented at the November 2022 Exhibition.
- Approximate distance to Canal Court (North) - 60m
- Approximate distance to Canal Court (East) - 25m
- MWp - 44
- Acres - 118.4



## May 2023

- Following feedback, we pushed the site boundary back to the north of the Canal Court residences and removed sections of panels from the area to the east of the site.
- Approximate distance to Canal Court (North) - 120m
- Approximate distance to Canal Court (East) - 55m
- MWp - 42.9
- Acres - 115.4



## August 2023

- In response to ongoing feedback, we considered further design changes and, as a result, the site boundary has been altered to include more land to the north of the site to allow panels to be moved even further away from properties. This design led to the new PAN notice.
- Approximate distance to Canal Court (North) - 185m
- Approximate distance to Canal Court (East) - 200m
- MWp - 45
- Acres - 124.4



## September 2023

- Following feedback from the August 2023 exhibition, we have undertaken further design changes, including removing more panels in the field to the north of Canal Court and moved the western most inverter station further away from Canal Court.
- Approximate distance to Canal Court (North) - 230m
- Approximate distance to Canal Court (East) - 200m
- MWp - 45
- Acres - 122.4

# Feedback from August 2023 Exhibition

This consultation responds to comments from our previous exhibition event, which was held in August 2023. We were pleased that 65 attendees joined us at our previous exhibition. Following on from our August consultation, we have listed the main topics raised with us and these are explored below.

## 1. Why has the solar farm been proposed here?

The Hopetoun Estate is one of the major landowners in proximity to the Broxburn Grid substation, where capacity was identified for the solar farm to connect to the electricity network. Therefore, a desktop assessment was conducted, which reviewed:

- o planning considerations such as designated areas, and local and national planning policy
- o technical factors such as the topography of the land, traffic access and shading
- o available land

Based on the outcome of this work, several areas were identified for site visits, which resulted in the final selection of Trinlaymire as a suitable location for the proposed solar farm.

## 3. Solar Farms and House Prices

There is no definitive position on the impact of solar farms on the value of residential housing and there have been no recent studies on solar farms and their potential impact on house prices in the UK. In response to queries on solar farms and house prices, we contacted Scottish Renewables to enquire for recent studies and we would welcome a fresh study and examination of solar farms and house prices in the UK.

On house prices, the Solar Trade Association (now Solar Energy UK) state: To date there is no evidence to suggest that solar parks negatively affect property prices. With appropriate screening, the visual impact of a solar farm is negligible. It does not generate noise, and has commonly been accepted by the general public. Source: Solar Farms: A Factsheet by the Solar Trade Association.

## 4. Solar Farms and Health

Solar farms have been operational in one form or another for several decades. To date, there has been no evidence to suggest that they are either harmful to health or that a planning authority has consented a solar farm that presents a danger to public health.

The electricity from the solar farm emits extremely weak electromagnetic fields and the World Health Organisation (WHO) notes that there is no evidence that these are harmful to human health in any way - source: <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/radiation-electromagnetic-fields>

## 2. Distance from homes

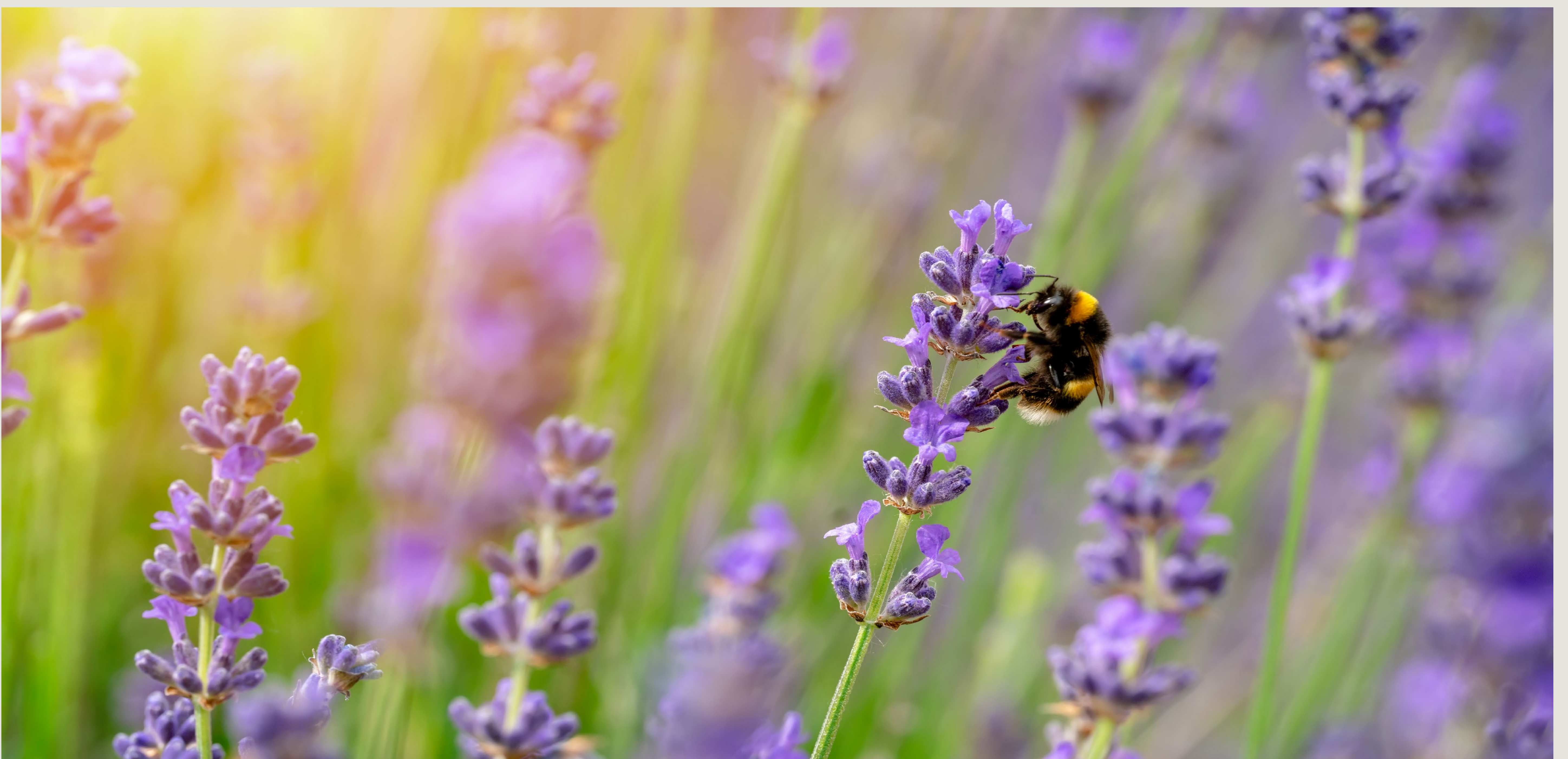
The buffer zone between residential housing and the proposed solar farm is consistent with other proposals in Scotland and the wider UK. Indeed, there is precedent elsewhere in Scotland, where solar sites have been consented that are within 70m of residential housing.

Since August 2023, we have removed panels in the field to the north of Canal Court and increased the setback from 185m to 230m.

## 5. Noise

The noise impact assessment has been carried out in accordance with the relevant standard for noise assessments of developments such as solar farms.

Any noise associated with the solar farm equipment will be present during the daytime only, as the solar panels will only produce power during daylight hours. This noise is able to meet the adopted noise criteria, even when accounting for tonal buzzing from the equipment. The overall levels that are expected to be experienced are objectively low and are likely to be masked by existing road traffic noise for the majority of the time.



# Environment

We are mindful of the existing environmental context of the site. We are doing this by undertaking a number of surveys to make sure we understand the potential impacts the solar development may have and have included several updates since August 2023.

## Environment

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

The project would bring environmental benefits, including new habitat areas. The land underneath the panels will be laid to permanent grassland and left undisturbed, with the potential for sheep grazing on rotation, at a suitable stocking density, therefore allowing the land to rest, leading to improved biodiversity on site. Our proposal includes creating new wildflower meadows, attractive to native wild bees and other pollinators.

We would plant new hedgerows as well as new shrub and tree areas. Further planting to close gaps and connect existing hedgerows would create extensive wildlife corridors in addition to new habitats that will benefit a range of species, including invertebrates, birds, small mammals and foraging bats.

The project will be able to produce clean, renewable energy equivalent to approximately 12% of all residential annual demand in West Lothian\*.

\*76,000 households in West Lothian (<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/34925/Key-Facts>) x 4,001.2 kWh (average household consumption in Scotland 2020)



## Heritage

There are no recorded archaeological monuments located on the site. There are two Gardens and Designed Landscapes (House of Binns and Hopetoun House) within 2km of the proposed development site.

There are three Scheduled Monuments and several Listed Buildings (the closest a category C Listed Building likely to be screened by intervening woodland) within 2km of the site. The new land moves the proposed development closer to the Union Canal, which is a Scheduled Monument, but the impact is assessed as being low due to the mature screening between the proposed site and the canal.

Potential impacts on the settings of these will be considered in the environmental assessment. This will be informed by a desk-based assessment to identify all known heritage assets, designated or otherwise, that could be directly affected by the Proposed Development. A site visit will be undertaken to record conditions of assets and assess the potential impact on their setting.

## Glint and Glare

An assessment of potential glint and glare impacts on local receptors has been undertaken and the report is in the process of being prepared as part of the EIA Report.

## Agriculture

The current agricultural activity on the land is rotated between arable and temporary grassland. We know that food security is important. The next big challenge to our food supply is expected to be caused by climate change, so addressing this, including by using solar energy, will improve our food security.

During the solar farm's life span, the ground beneath the solar panels will be planted with a species-rich grassland mix. The area under the panels can also safely be used for grazing small livestock such as sheep, since the panels will be 0.6m above the ground. This will help to continue agricultural use of the land after the site is built.

## Ecology and Biodiversity

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken for the initial development site, comprising an ecological desk study and extended habitat survey to identify habitats present within and around the site as well as the potential for protected or otherwise notable species to be present.

The species mix identified include crested dog's-tail, meadow fox-tail, Yorkshire-fog and cock's-foot grasses, with red clover, occasional soft-rush (particularly along the field edges to east and west) and broad-leaved dock, creeping thistle bush vetch and creeping buttercup present in the sward.

The ecological desk study uses data from local records centres and the National Biodiversity Network (NBN). They are widely used in the industry as a standard way of collecting data and are recommended by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

The PEA is in the process of being extended to account for the additional land that has now been added to the proposals. Future surveys include:

- Further surveys for badger and other habitats
- Pre-construction survey for badger

Ornithological surveys have also been undertaken including breeding bird surveys and wintering bird surveys.

Any sensitive features and habitats or ornithological constraints that have been identified, as well as potential biodiversity enhancement measures, will be incorporated into the design of the solar farm and committed mitigation for the planning application.

## Mining Report

A Preliminary Coal Mining Risk Assessment (CMRA) has been undertaken to identify potential risks associated with historic mining and potential mitigation for the proposed development. The majority of the site has very low risk associated with underground mining.

Solar panels will be appropriately sited to take account of potential mining instability in areas where shallow workings have been identified. Founded infrastructure (e.g. the substation) will be sited where possible in areas with no identified risk associated with underground mining in coal or oil-shale seams.

## Flood Risk

A detailed Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment will be undertaken in accordance with relevant national and local guidance. The hydrological features within and in proximity to the site will be fully taken into account to ensure there is no increase in flooding on or near the development.

# Construction and Economics

## Traffic

An assessment of construction traffic impacts on the local road network will be undertaken, in consultation with the local Authority. Suitable construction traffic route(s) and management measures will be outlined.

The construction process for a solar farm of this nature would generally take between four to six months. As the proposed site is split across five fields, multiple access routes will be required for construction and ongoing operational access. We are currently considering the preferred route for construction traffic, but the primary ingress route under consideration is via the B8046 from the M9.

The peak of construction activity occurs in Month 1 of the construction programme, with a total of approximately 80 construction movements (40 inbound and 40 outbound trips per day).

Traffic movements would be governed by a Construction Traffic Management Plan, which would be put in place before construction starts. This will agree specific points, such as delivery times, restrictions, and routes to ensure that construction traffic does not have a detrimental impact to the local road network. For example, it could stipulate deliveries could only take place between 10am and 4pm to avoid peak hours.

Once operational, a solar farm generates very little traffic, with only monthly maintenance visits.

## Economic Impact

We are committed to working with the local supply chain and local businesses to deliver the project.

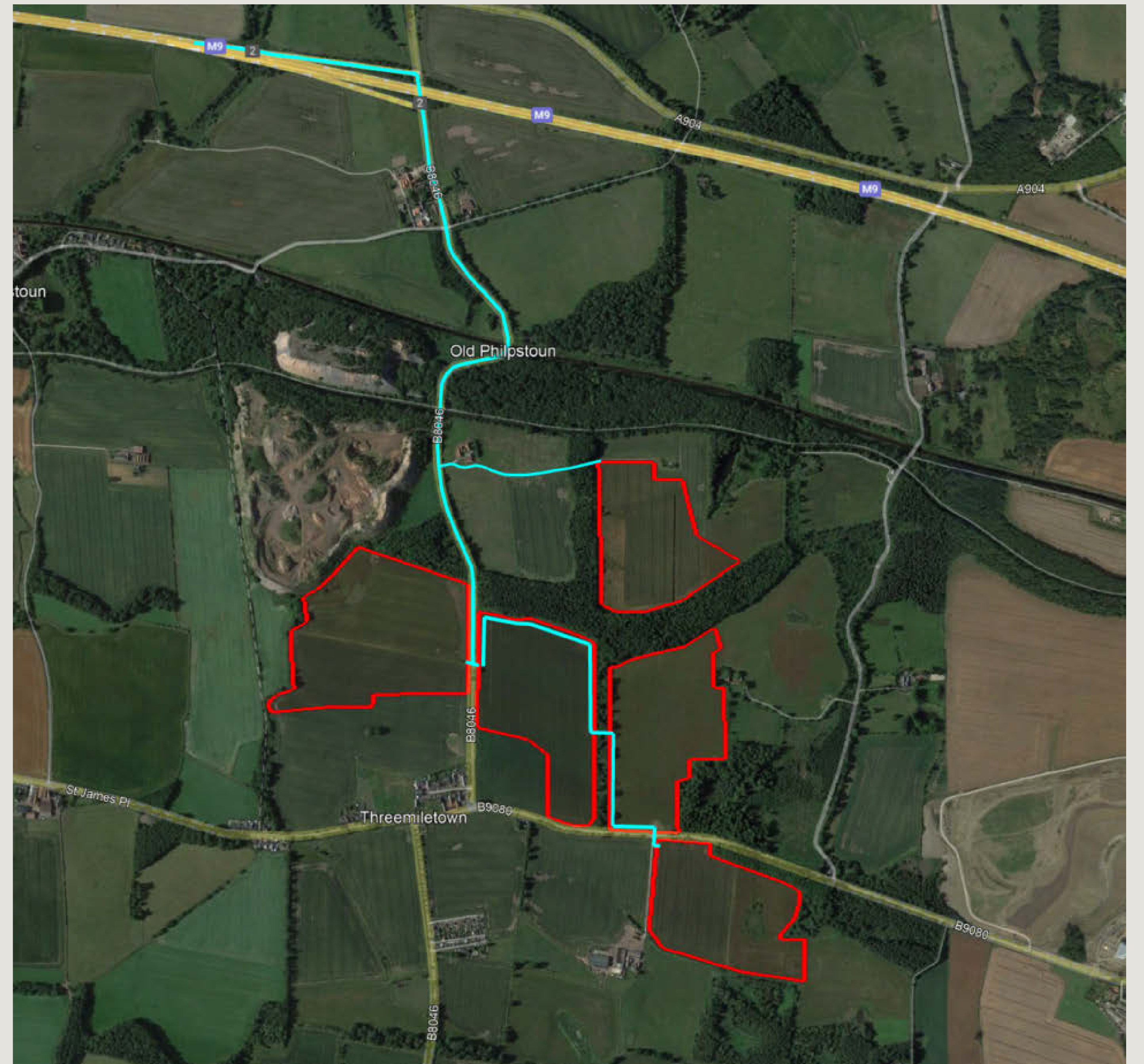
If consented, we will hold 'Meet the Developer' events for local businesses to learn about the opportunities connected to the project, including for construction, maintenance, civil engineering, fencing and landscaping. The solar farm will also pay council business rates to West Lothian Council.

## Community Benefit

We are committed to a community benefit for our projects, such as supporting apprenticeship schemes, biodiversity on site, school visits, and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with the community.

We want to be a long term partner with the local community and, if the project is consented, we will create a Community Benefit Fund that will provide an annual fund to the local area when the project is in operation.

At the August 2023 exhibition, the suggestion of footpaths linking Threemiletown, Winchburgh and Ecclesmachan was the most common feedback, followed by the suggestion of a community co-operative and/or energy discount.



Indicative Construction Transport Route

## Local and National Policy

West Lothian Council, the Scottish Government and the UK Government have all declared a Climate Emergency.

In response to the Climate Emergency, the Scottish Government has committed to reducing the country's emissions by 75% by 2030 and to a legally binding target of net-zero by 2045.

West Lothian Council is committed to taking action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change for some time and signed the Climate Change Declaration in 2007 and declared a Climate Emergency in September 2019.

As part of the Council's response to the Climate Emergency, West Lothian Council aims to achieve a net-zero position by 2045 at the latest and has interim targets of a 61% reduction by 2028, 65% reduction by 2030 and 86% reduction by 2040.

This project can play a part in helping West Lothian Council and the Scottish Government meet their 2030 and 2045 targets.

## Decommissioning

The solar farm will be designed with an operational life of 35 - 45 years.

At the end of the solar farm's lifespan all hardware can be easily removed, and the land returned to its previous use. The condition of the land must be the same, if not better than it was before the project started.

# Thank you for attending today

This consultation is the local community's opportunity to further shape our proposals before we submit a planning application later this year.

## Have Your Say

We are keen to hear your views on our latest proposals. If you have any comments or questions please talk to any of the project team here today or, if you prefer, please complete and return one of the feedback forms.

## Timeline

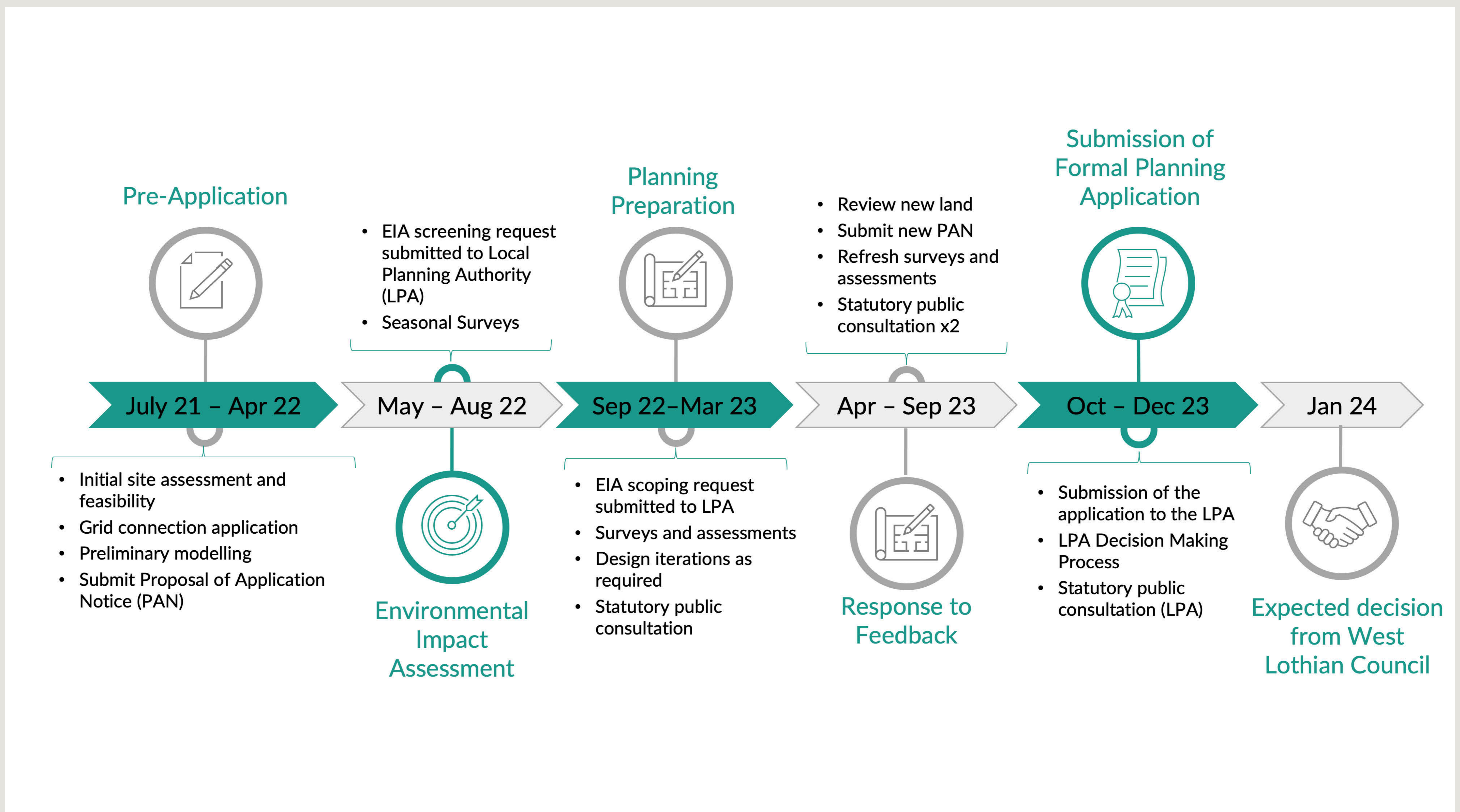
The projected timeline for Trinlaymire solar development can be seen below, which gives a summary of the pre-planning and planning process.

## What Happens Next?

Feedback from today's public exhibition will be incorporated into the planning application that we will eventually submit to West Lothian Council. We hope to submit an application later in 2023.

West Lothian Council will then undertake its own consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees. Local residents will be able to make representations to the Council on the application at this time. West Lothian Council will then make a decision on whether the solar farm can go ahead.

If consent for the project is granted, we would hope to start construction in Summer 2024. We expect construction to take six months and then the solar farm would be operational.



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

You can share your views on the project in one of the following ways.

- **Online:** using the project website to leave feedback - visit [www.trinlaymiresolar.co.uk](http://www.trinlaymiresolar.co.uk)
- **Email:** using the scheme email address, [contact@ampyrsolareurope.com](mailto:contact@ampyrsolareurope.com)
- **Post:** Trinlaymire Net Zero Ltd, Ampyr Solar Europe, 25 Eccleston Place, Victoria, London SW1W 9NF
- **At this event:** by filling in a hard copy form and submitting it to a member of the project team