



WELCOME TO THIS PUBLIC EXHIBITION ABOUT CRESSING SOLAR FARM.

EDF Renewables UK is bringing forward proposals for a new solar farm on two areas of land south of Braintree: between Tye Green and Black Notley, and north of Cressing, connecting to the national electricity grid at the nearby Braintree Substation.

The solar farm that we are looking at is split into two sites comprising: Cressing East and Cressing West. You can view further information about the two sites on the following boards.

Together, the proposed sites would be capable of generating up to 49.9MW of renewable electricity. This is enough to meet the needs of around 9,500 homes every year¹ and save approximately 21,500 tonnes of carbon in emissions².

We are seeking your views before we submit planning applications for each site to Braintree District Council in early 2023. As the two sites are closely related we are treating them as a single integrated scheme which would share a grid connection and operator. Both sites will be developed as a single solar farm.

WHO ARE EDF RENEWABLES?

Cressing Solar Farm is being brought forward by EDF Renewables UK. We have more than 25 years' worth of experience in delivering renewable energy projects in more than 20 countries around the world.

In the UK and Ireland, we are providing some of the much needed new affordable, low carbon electricity across all technologies. We also work with our battery storage team to bring forward battery energy storage projects.

We also have solar experience in Essex as part of the team that is bringing forward proposals for Longfield Solar Farm near Terling and Fairstead. For more information, please visit our website: www.edf-re.uk

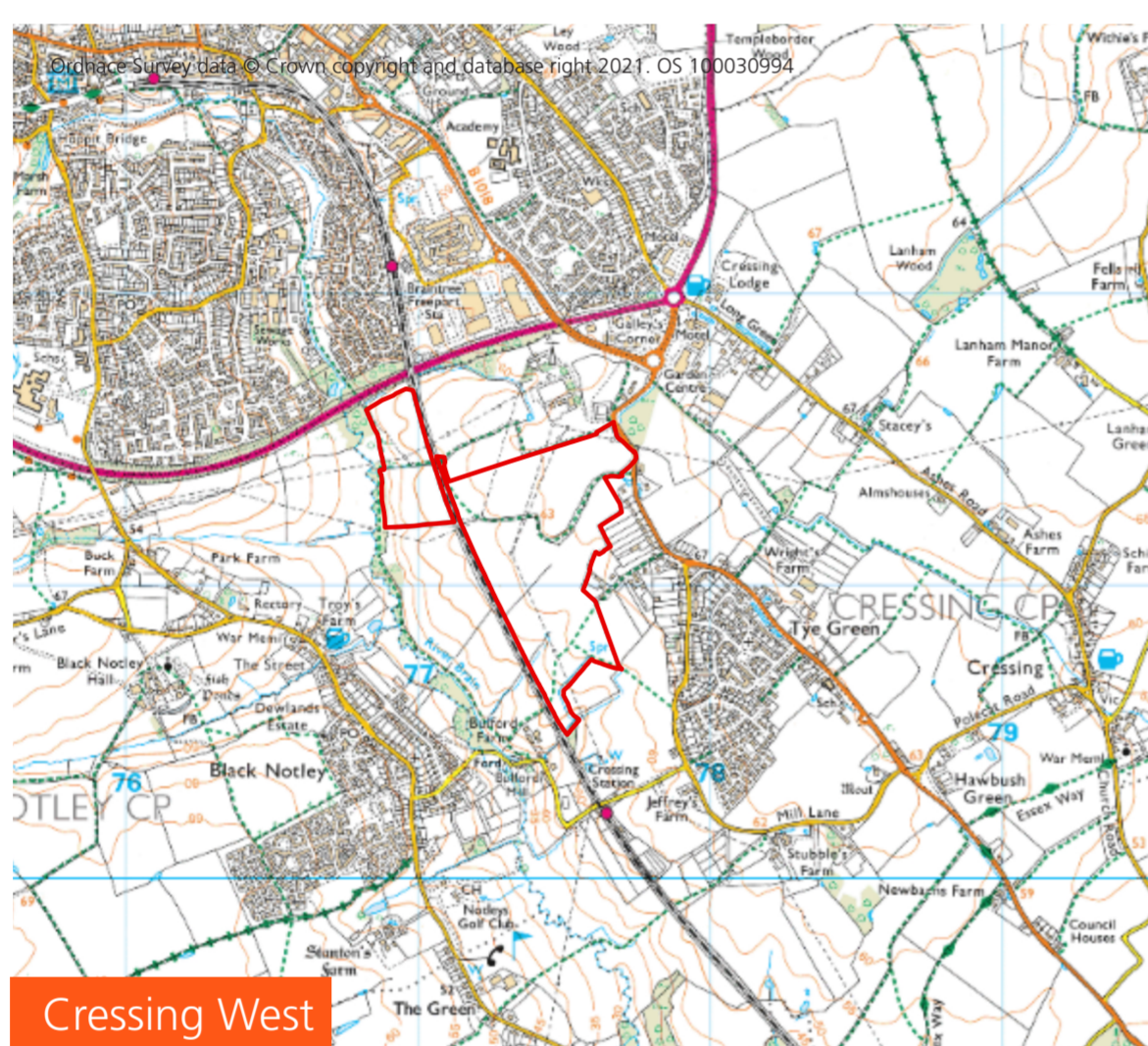
1 Based upon the average domestic electricity consumption per home (temperature corrected) per the Energy Consumption in the UK (published July 2019, Table C9 of ECUK: Consumption data tables)

2 Based upon BEIS's "all fossil fuels" emissions statistic of 450 tonnes of carbon dioxide per GWh of electricity supplied in the Digest of UK Energy Statistics (published July 2019, p96)

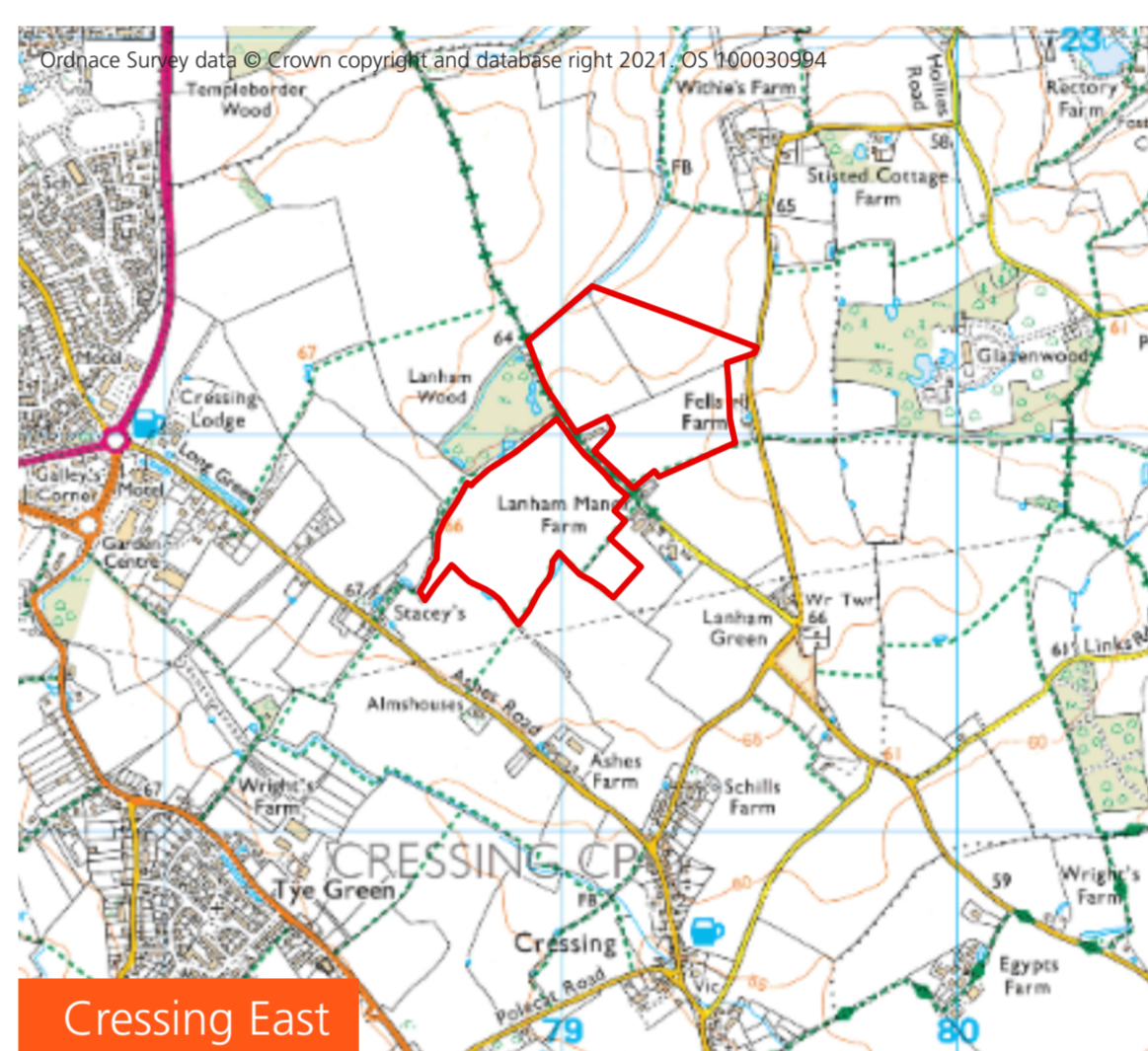
Introduction

The Cressing Solar Farm sites are located on several fields in close proximity to the Braintree National Grid Substation. We are looking at two sites:

Cressing West would be located to the south of the A120 and to the west of the B1018 between Black Notley and Tye Green. The majority of the site would be to the east of the railway line to the north of Cressing Railway Station. A smaller section of the site is to the west of the railway line close to the A120.



Cressing East is the smaller of the two sites and is located on land adjacent to Lanham Wood and either side of Lanham Farm Road, to the north of Cressing.



Together, the two sites are approximately 70 hectares. We believe these are good sites for a solar farm for the following reasons:

- There are no historic, ecological or landscape designations in the two sites' area.
- Initial ecological and habitat surveys have not indicated any concerns.
- The sites are suitably sunny and provide good irradiation levels.
- There will be minimal impacts on Public Rights of Way (PRoWs).
- The land across the sites is currently used for arable farming. This land can be rested during the operating life of the solar farm and restored to agricultural use following decommissioning.

We are continuing our assessments, the initial results of these and how we'll report on them in our final planning applications are outlined on the following boards.



The need

The UK has been undergoing major changes in the way it meets its energy needs.

The Government has set a target of reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. This means that we need to phase out older forms of power generation like coal and find new, renewable, sources of energy. The ongoing energy crisis has added further importance to domestic renewable energy production.

Solar is a tried and tested way of helping to meet this need. Already, solar can produce as much as 30% of the country's electricity at different points in the year³. However we need to increase this rate to meet the country's wider renewable energy goals. The Cressing Solar Farm is just one of a number of new solar farms that we are bringing forward across the country to help achieve net zero emissions.

³ Solar Energy UK Briefing: Path to 2023, 2030 & 2050 (published March 2022, p5)

The solar farm

How do solar farms work?

Solar farms use photovoltaic (PV) panels to generate electricity from the sun. These panels will be mounted on the ground in rows.

The layout

We have prepared the plans on this board to show where the panels could be located. We're asking for your feedback on this layout as part of this consultation.

The panels will be mounted on a frame and set at an angle of around 20 degrees. Taken together, the panels will be no more than 3 metres in height. There will be gaps in the rows to allow us to access and maintain them.

What else will be on the site?

The panels require several pieces of infrastructure to support them. These include:

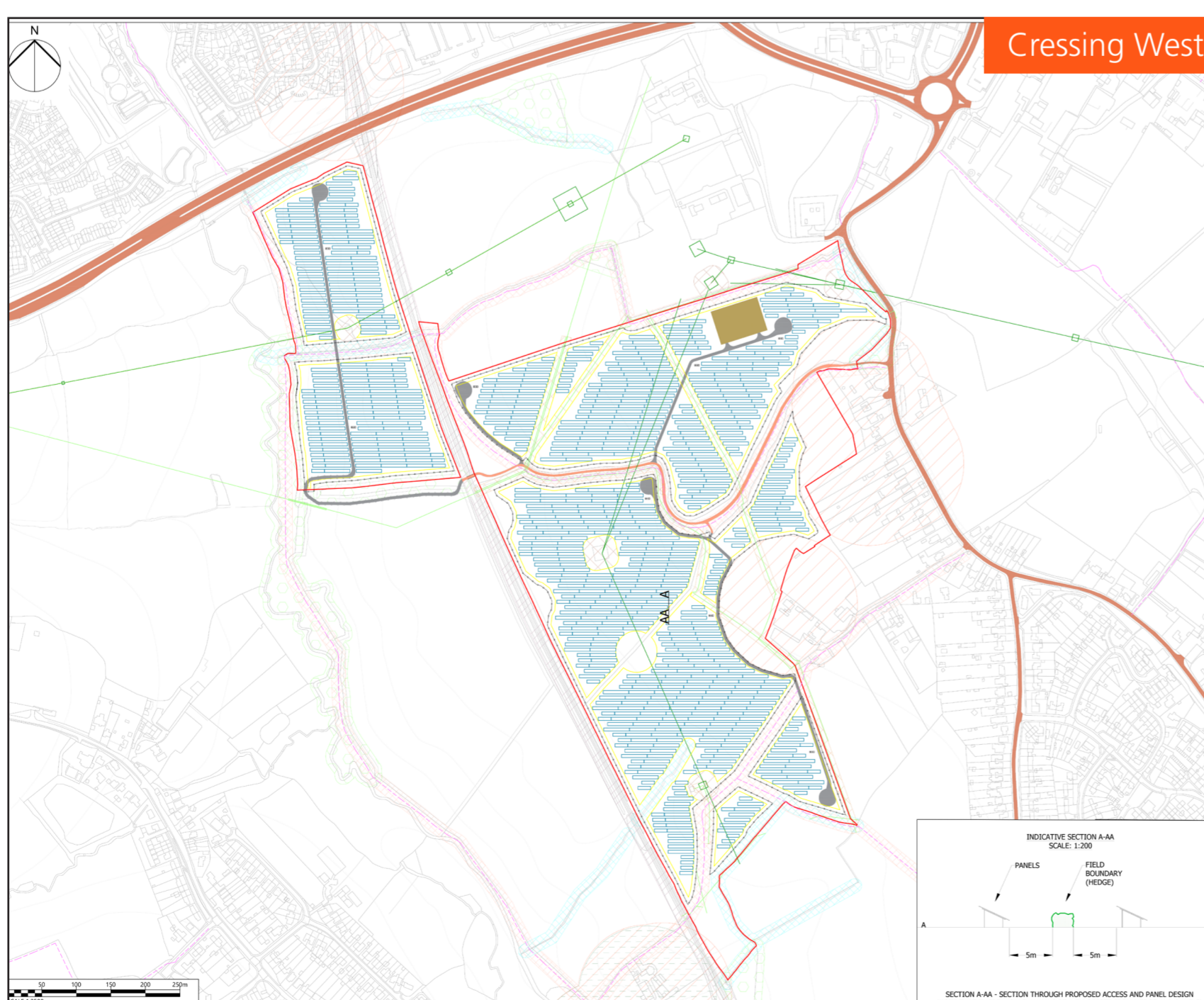
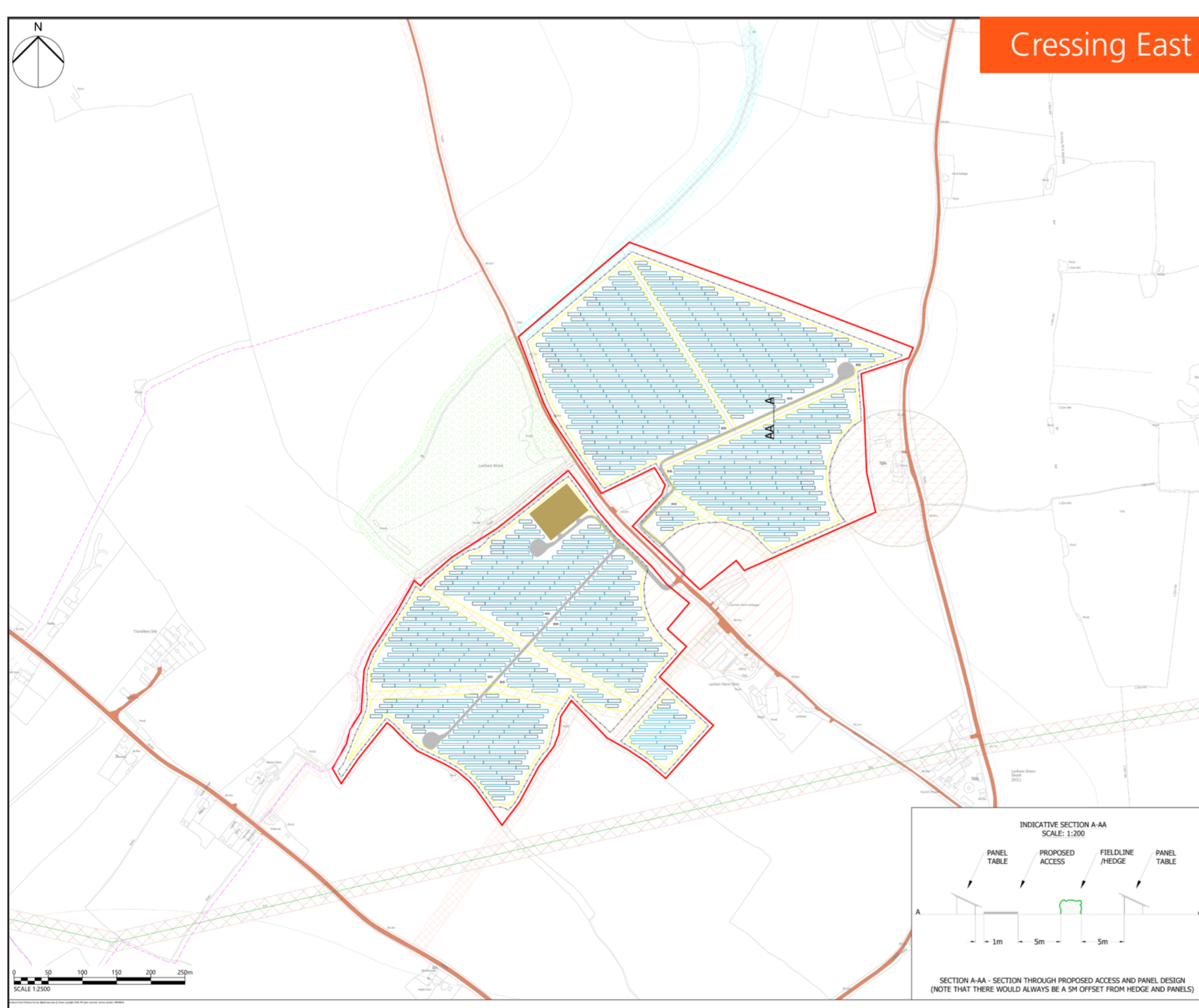
Inverters: these convert the direct current (DC) electricity collected by the panels to the alternating current (AC) used in transmission.

Transformers: these control the voltage of the electricity generated.

Switchgear: a combination of electrical disconnect switches, fuses or circuit breakers used to control, protect and isolate electrical equipment.

There will also be a light perimeter fence and CCTV cameras to protect the PV panels from theft, as well as access tracks. There will be no lighting within the sites.

The solar farm will connect to the National Grid at Braintree Substation. This will involve an underground cable running from each of the sites to the Substation.





Environmental assessment

We have discussed our project with the Council and have been asked to submit the solar farm as two separate planning applications. We will however develop the project as a single cohesive scheme.

We carefully consider the environmental characteristics of a potential site when preparing proposals for a solar farm.

This involves carrying out surveys and assessments to understand potential impacts from development and any need for mitigation measures.

These will include assessments of the scheme's potential environmental impacts on factors such as cultural heritage, landscape and visual impact, existing infrastructure, flood risk, noise and vibration, socioeconomics, transport and access, air quality, ground conditions and glint and glare. Where appropriate, we will propose mitigation for any significant effects.

We are committing to providing local habitat improvements and welcome comments on the different measures that we could include. Areas for habitat improvements are shown on the draft layout plan.

All of our assessments will be submitted as part of our planning applications to Braintree District Council. Upon submission, the Council will publish these and run its own consultation on our proposals.

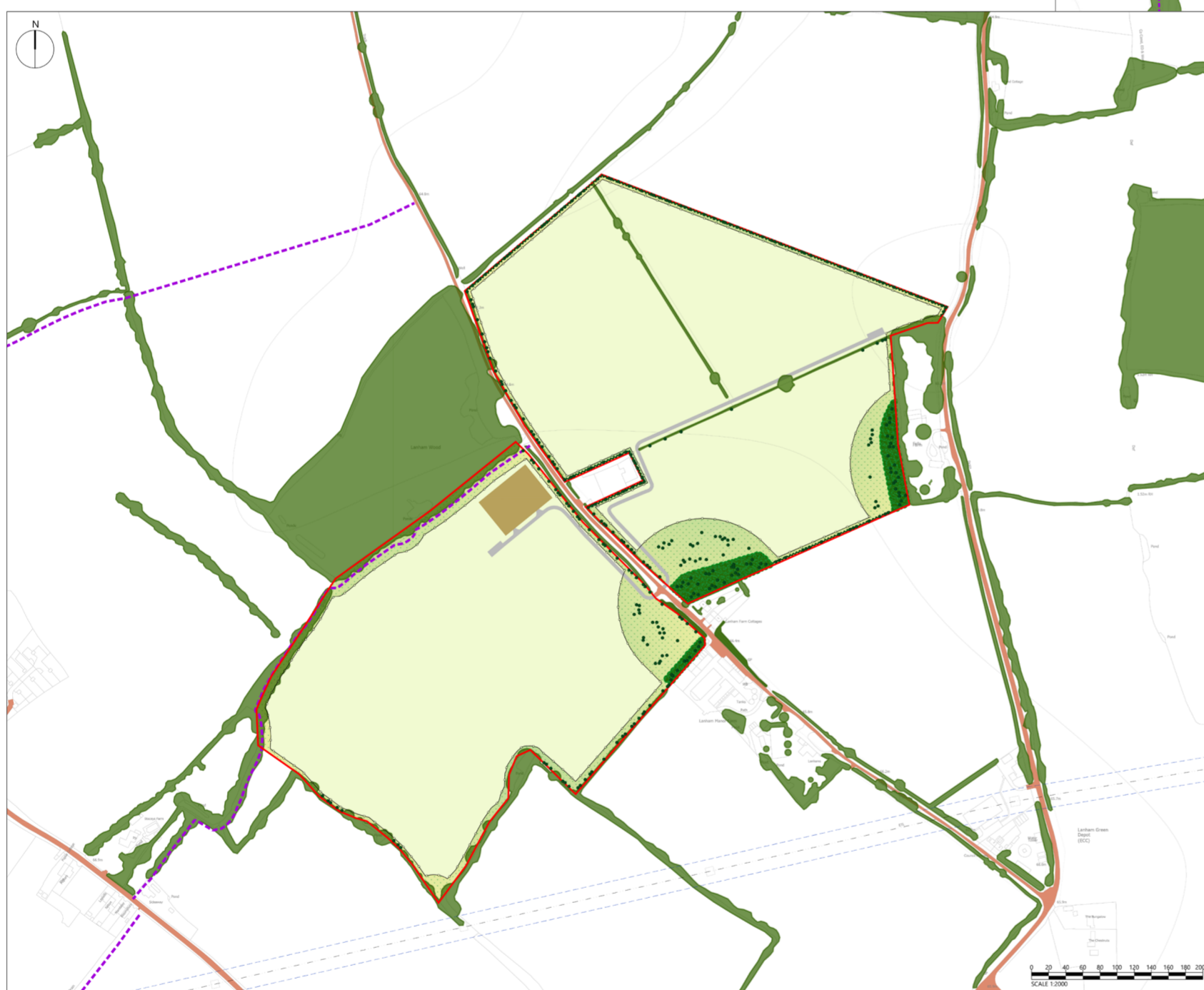
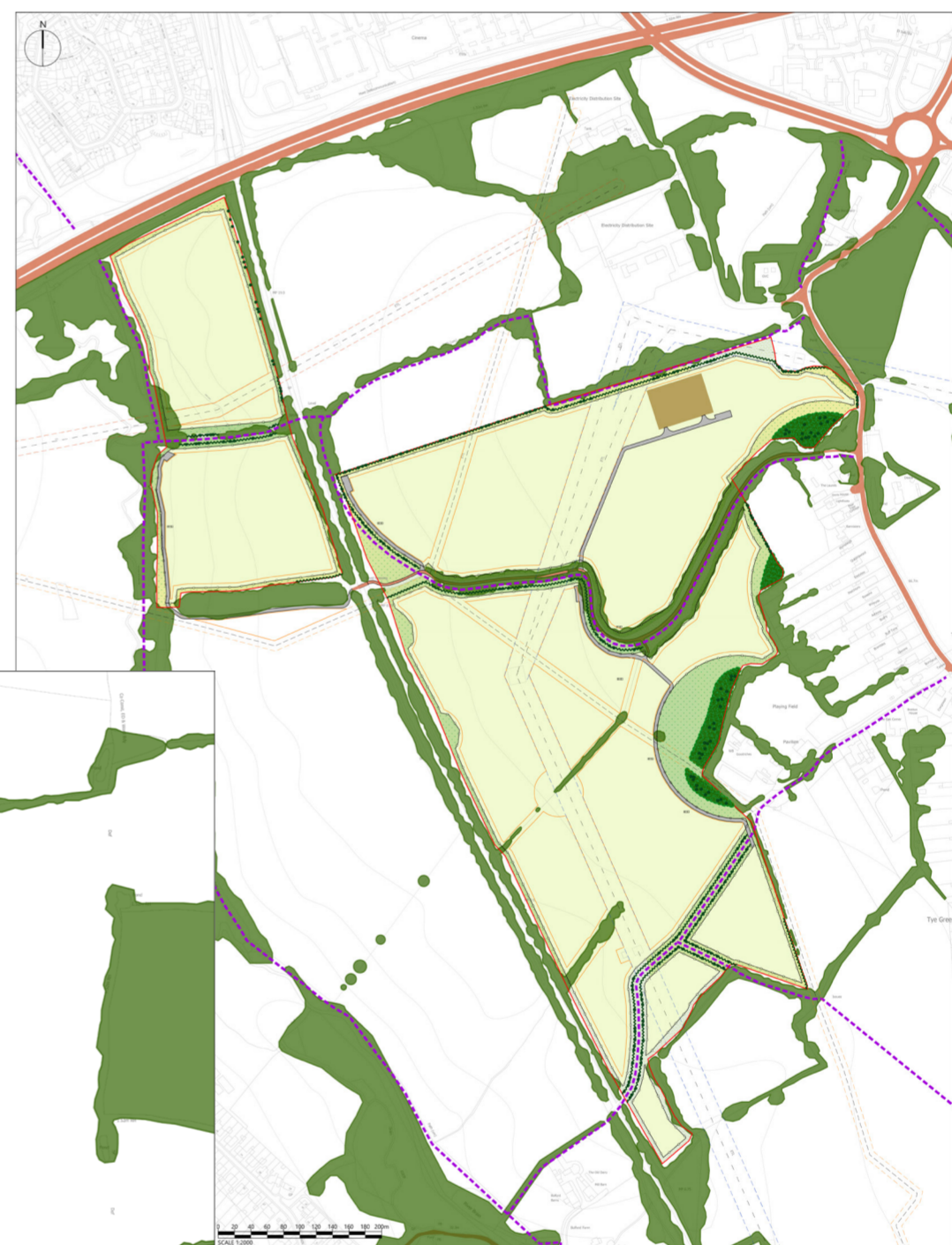
Landscape and Visual Impact

Our design seeks to minimise the scheme's impacts on our neighbours and the surrounding environment. Existing trees and hedgerows will help screen the solar farm from view, however further assessment will highlight areas where mitigation measures can be implemented.

We will also ensure that impacts on Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) are minimised. A draft version of the mitigation plan that we will submit with our planning applications has been prepared to indicate where native species woodland mix, trees, hedgerows and wildflower meadow mix are proposed. Plans showing this are on this board and available to view through this exhibition.

A selection of viewpoints surrounding the sites have been studied to understand the proposals within the context of their local surroundings. Copies of our initial viewpoint photographs are available to view as part of this exhibition. The annotation line on each viewpoint image represents the potential visual extent of the sites.

Draft Landscape Plan: Cressing West



Draft Landscape Plan: Cressing East

Heritage

Our applications will include a full assessment of potential heritage impacts both in terms of archaeology at the sites and other features in the landscape. The need to protect these assets will continue to guide the content of our proposals.

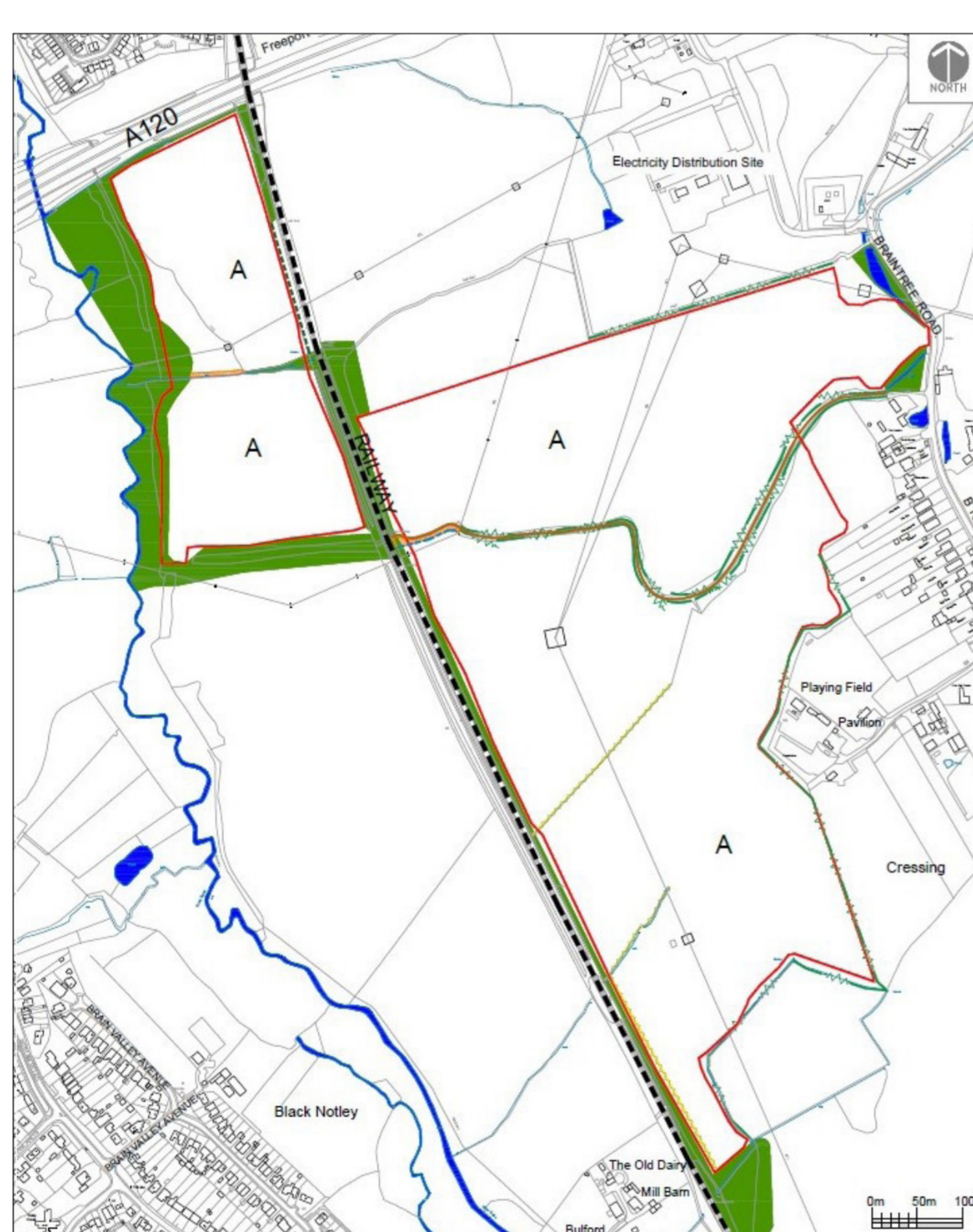
There are no Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or World Heritage Sites near to the sites. A number of listed buildings are located within 1 km of the sites. Views of the sites from the nearby listed buildings are minimal due to existing vegetation but additional planting in the form of a woodland mix has been proposed to further screen views.

Ecology and biodiversity

We are committed to improving the local environment through the development of Crossing Solar Farm and are aiming to achieve a biodiversity net gain.

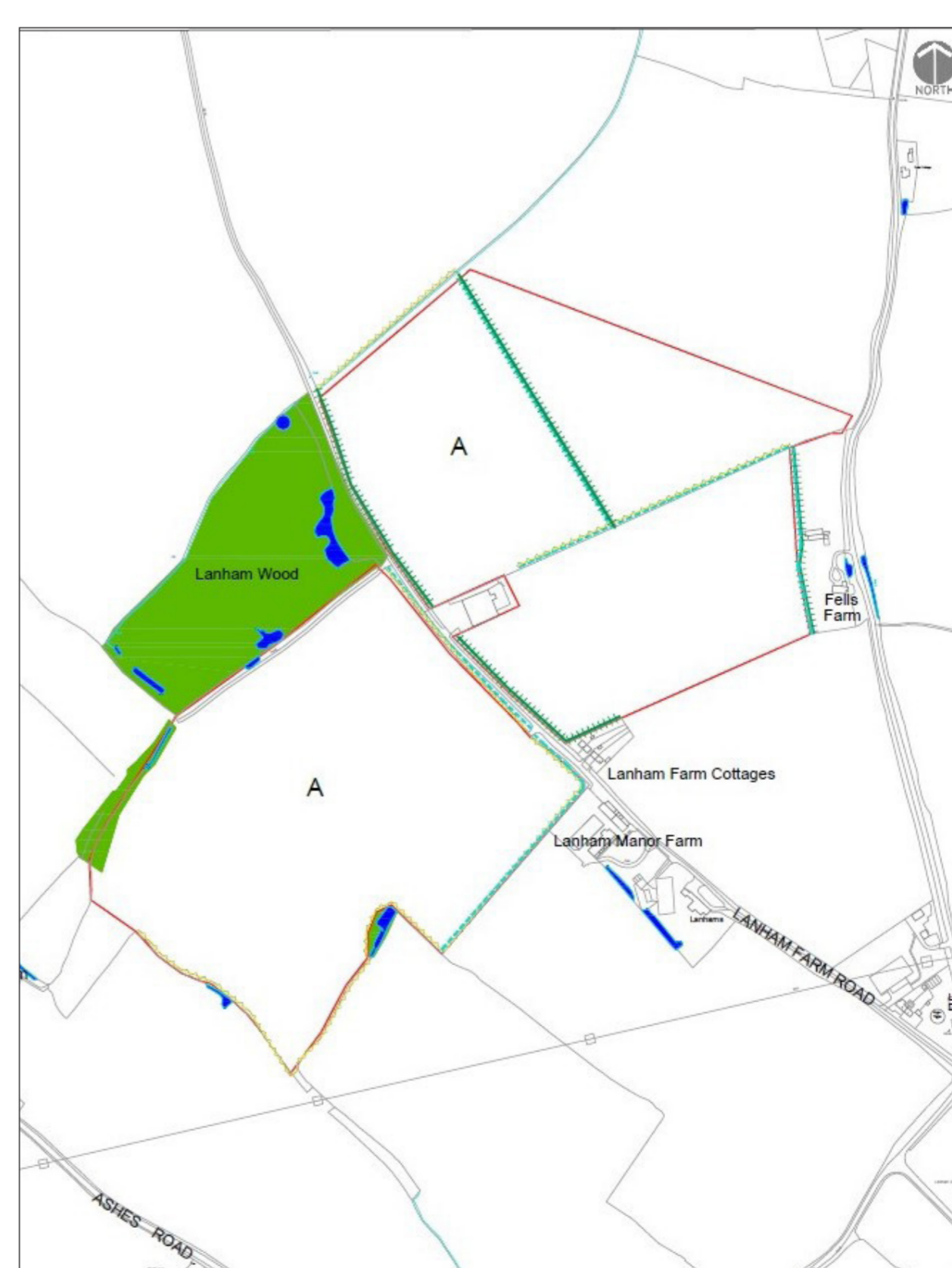
We are carrying out surveys to identify habitats and species on the sites such as great crested newts, reptiles, bats, badger, wintering and breeding birds. The proposals include sowing wildflower meadow mix beneath panels, new native species woodland mixes and hedgerow enhancement, bat boxes and mammal gates which will all contribute to benefits for local wildlife and a biodiversity net gain within the sites.

We will consult with local conservation groups as we refine our proposals for submission.



Habitat Survey - Crossing West

LEGEND	
	Red line area
	Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural
	Other tall herb and fern - ruderal
	Running water
	Standing water
	Cultivated / disturbed land - arable
	Intact hedge - native species-rich
	Defunct hedge - species-poor
	Hedge with trees - species-poor
	Dry ditch
	Railway track
	Track



Habitat Survey - Crossing East

Construction

Should Cressing Solar Farm receive planning permission, we anticipate starting work at the sites in 2023, with the aim of completing testing and becoming operational by 2024. The construction phase will take up to 9 months to complete.

The installation of the PV panels involves pushing their mounting structures into the ground. We may also need to dig trenches in some areas to install the cable and solar stations, which will be on small foundations.

We will prepare a Construction Management Plan and agree this with Braintree District Council. This will set out how we will manage construction activities and any traffic moving to and from the sites.

Our proposed access route for each of the sites is as follows:

- **Cressing East** - access will be via Lanhams Farm Road, approached from Lanhams Green Road to the south via the A120. Existing gateways and entrances will be used where possible to minimise hedgerow loss.
- **Cressing West** - Access will be taken from the existing agricultural track off the B1018 (approached from the A120) which is also a Public Right of Way Footpath and would require the track to be upgraded to segregate users. Access to the smaller parcel of land (west of the rail way line) is still to be decided and we welcome any feedback on this through the consultation.

Access to each of the sites is subject to our Transport Assessment being finalised. During construction, we anticipate that the maximum number of deliveries will be 10-15 per day to each of the sites. This will only be during the initial months of construction.

Operations

We invest and remain involved in projects for the long term. EDF Renewables UK oversees its projects during their operating lives.

Should we obtain planning consent, we would oversee the sites during their operating lives and where possible partner with local contractors for ongoing management.

Once the solar farm has been constructed, the maintenance team will be the only traffic to enter the sites. This will be twice a month on average and will make use of 4x4 vehicles.

We anticipate that the operational lifetime of the sites would be 40 years. This would be secured as a condition of our planning consent and after this time, the solar farm would be decommissioned.



Community engagement

We are committed to making a positive impact in the communities in which we operate. If the project were to become operational, EDF Renewables UK would put in place a dedicated community fund during the scheme's operating life. This will be worth up to £20,000 a year.

We would like to see the fund allocated by the local community, and should we receive planning consent, we will discuss this with community representatives.



Next Steps

Thank you for taking the time to attend this exhibition about our proposals for Cressing Solar Farm.

The comments we receive will continue to inform the planning applications that we will submit to Braintree District Council.

We expect to submit our applications in early 2023. Following this, Braintree District Council will carry out its own consultation on our proposals. The application would then be determined by the Planning Committee.

You can find out more by:

- Visiting our dedicated project website (www.edf-re.uk/cressing) to view these banners again and complete the online questionnaire.
- By attending one of our public exhibitions held at the following dates and times:
 - The Notleys Golf Club, Witham Road, White Notley, Witham, Essex, CM8 1ST
 - Thursday 6 October 2022, 3:30pm to 7:30pm**
 - St Barnabas Church Hall, Claud Ince Avenue, Cressing CM77 8HJ
 - Saturday 8 October 2022, 1:00pm to 5:00pm**
- Contacting us on our freephone number **0800 169 6507** or by emailing us at **Cressing.Solar@edf-re.uk**
You can respond to our consultation by:
- Filling in our consultation questionnaire and posting it to:
**FAO Cressing Solar Farm Consultation,
Freepost SEC NEWGATE UK LOCAL**
- Filling in our **online questionnaire** on our project website:
www.edf-re.uk/cressing
- Emailing us your response to **Cressing.Solar@edf-re.uk**

We are consulting until **11:59pm on Monday 31 October**

Once the consultation closes, we will carefully consider all of the views we receive and update our plans. We would then seek planning permission from Braintree District Council in early 2023.