

exagen

Mantle Solar Farm

Public consultation
January / February 2025



Introduction

Dear occupant, we want to introduce you to Exagen and our new proposed project, Mantle Solar Farm, to the south-east of Wymeswold. As a local resident, we would like to take this early opportunity to understand your views and feedback on our evolving plans.

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 is made up of three parcels – western parcel, central parcel and eastern parcel. The site is set back from the nearby settlements of Wymeswold and Six Hills and given the rolling topography and existing vegetation is generally well screened.

It is currently proposed that Mantle Solar Farm is connecting into the electricity distribution network on the powerlines that cross the northern parcel, utilising existing electrical infrastructure and available capacity in the area. The solar farm will provide low cost, low carbon electricity to the UK grid.

The yearly output of the solar farm is predicted to equate to the electricity use of approximately 18,800 average UK homes per year.

We are seeking your views on this proposal ahead of submitting a formal planning application to Charnwood Borough Council. We seek to take a collaborative approach with the local community, building feedback into our project design. We have already been in contact with the planning team at the council via their pre-application service gathering valuable insight with this same goal.

Through this public consultation, discussions with the council, and through conducting surveys and assessments, we will look to create a project which is sensitively designed and helps accelerate us towards achieving the UK's climate goals. This is your opportunity to influence our design.

We want you and your community to be involved and stay informed, that's why we've created:

A dedicated website.

exagen.co.uk/projects/mantle-solar-farm

An online survey for you to provide feedback and stay updated on the project.

bit.ly/mantle-survey

In-person drop-in sessions

The drop in event hosted by our project team to discuss the project design, key information and to answer any questions.

**Wymeswold War Memorial Village Hall
Jubilee Room**

LE12 6TY

6th February

12:00 - 15:00 and 16:00 - 19:00

Should you not be able to attend, the project team will host an online webinar, a recording will be available on the project website.



Webinar Presentation

Sign up with this QR code or link below.


6:30pm

11th February

bit.ly/Mantle_Webinar

Site Location Plan



 The planning boundary extent shows the total area available for development, the concept design is shown on page 6.

Cheap, clean power

Ground-mounted solar energy is one of the cheapest power sources in the UK, and is significantly cheaper and cleaner than gas which often delivers a significant amount of our daytime supply.

Whilst the electricity generated from Mantle Solar Farm will feed into the national electricity grid, as solar is deployed across the country, bills for everyone should become more consistently cheaper and less reliant on expensive fossil fuel imports.

Sensible land use

Large-scale ground-mounted solar such as at Mantle Solar Farm does take up farmland, however Exagen are committed to using lower-quality land where available; the site has no land determined Best and Most Versatile, confirmed by site survey.

In the UK, solar farms currently occupy 0.1% of land. Should enough solar be deployed to meet our legally-binding climate targets, this would increase to just 0.3% of all land, or 0.5% of farm land, roughly the same as golf courses.

Robust energy system

The amount of electricity we generate in the UK is projected to increase which helps boost our energy security in an international context, and enables the electrification of key industries such as transport, heat, and technology.

Meet our climate targets

The UK has a legally binding obligation to meet our climate targets, and government policy highlights the urgent need to deploy renewables to enable this. 70GW of solar capacity is needed as soon as 2035; as of the end of 2024 around 16GW has been deployed.

Great for biodiversity

Solar farms, including Mantle, can be managed for biodiversity and on similar sites, wildflowers and grassland quality and biodiversity has increased substantially compared with the monoculture of crops.

Community Benefit

Local contractors and businesses will be engaged as far as possible during the construction and operational phases, where services offerings are not specialist.

When the project is operational we will provide a community benefit fund which will be tied to the project for its lifetime, this can provide funding for local amenities and support for organisations. We welcome suggestions on where and how this money should be used. More details will be shared as the project progresses.

Pre-Planning Process

Exagen are currently undertaking numerous environmental surveys to establish any effects of the solar farm on the site and surrounding areas.

The final design will be informed by ongoing consultation and environmental assessments, including:

- Landscape and Visual Appraisal
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Ecology species surveys for Great Crested Newt, bats, both breeding and wintering bird surveys.
- Heritage Assessment
- Archaeological Geophysical Survey
- Topographic Survey
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Agricultural Land Classification
- Transport Statement and Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Noise Assessment
- Glint and Glare Assessment

The findings of these assessments, alongside your comments, will be used to refine the final design ahead of a full planning application submission.

We have submitted documents to the council's pre-application service, gathering valuable feedback on the site design.

Construction and Access

The site will be accessed from the Six Hills Junction on the A46, via Melton Road and Narrow Lane. Safe access is achievable from Narrow Lane into the various parcels – in total 4 junctions will be required.

The eastern parcel will require upgrades to two existing field access points, the central parcel will require a new access to be created in the southeast corner of the field and the western access will be via the existing track that serves the poultry farm and requires no additional work.

This traffic routing strategy ensures no traffic needs to pass through Wymeswold Village or any other local settlement.

Construction of the solar farm is anticipated to last roughly six months. A Transport Statement and Construction Traffic Management Plan will accompany our application and will detail the numbers of vehicles needed to access the site during construction and operation, and design any junction improvements required to ensure access is safe and suitable.

During operation, the site would be remotely operated and would require few visits per month by van or car.



You can provide feedback on our plans using our **online survey** using the QR code above.
(bit.ly/mantle-survey)



Public Consultation Concept Map



The solar farm will have an export capacity of **49.9MW**. Across the year, the electricity produced will be the same as the annual usage of **18,800 UK homes**.

The plan on this page shows the initial design for the project within the land available for renewable energy development.

Existing hedgerows and trees will be retained and enhanced and new areas of planting are also included. Specific areas are proposed as grassland and managed for ground nesting birds which may be displaced by the solar panels.

The substation compound area is outlined on the layout with the final design still to be completed.

The final design will be informed by ongoing consultation and environmental assessments, including; landscape and visual appraisal, heritage assessment, ecology surveys, agricultural land classification survey, noise assessment, transport assessment and a flood risk assessment.

Biodiversity enhancements will include:

- Wildflower meadow planted outside of fence line including plant species for pollinators
- We will engage with local bee keeping groups with a view to hosting bee hives on our site
- Reptile hibernacula and log piles to be located over the site in field margins
- Bird and bat boxes near to or on installed on mature trees
- New woodland and scrub planting and addition of hedgerows with trees.

Landscape and visual impact

Mantle Solar Farm is situated on fields to the south east of Wymeswold village. Overall there are very limited views of the solar farm from the village once screening from landform and topography, buildings and vegetation is included.

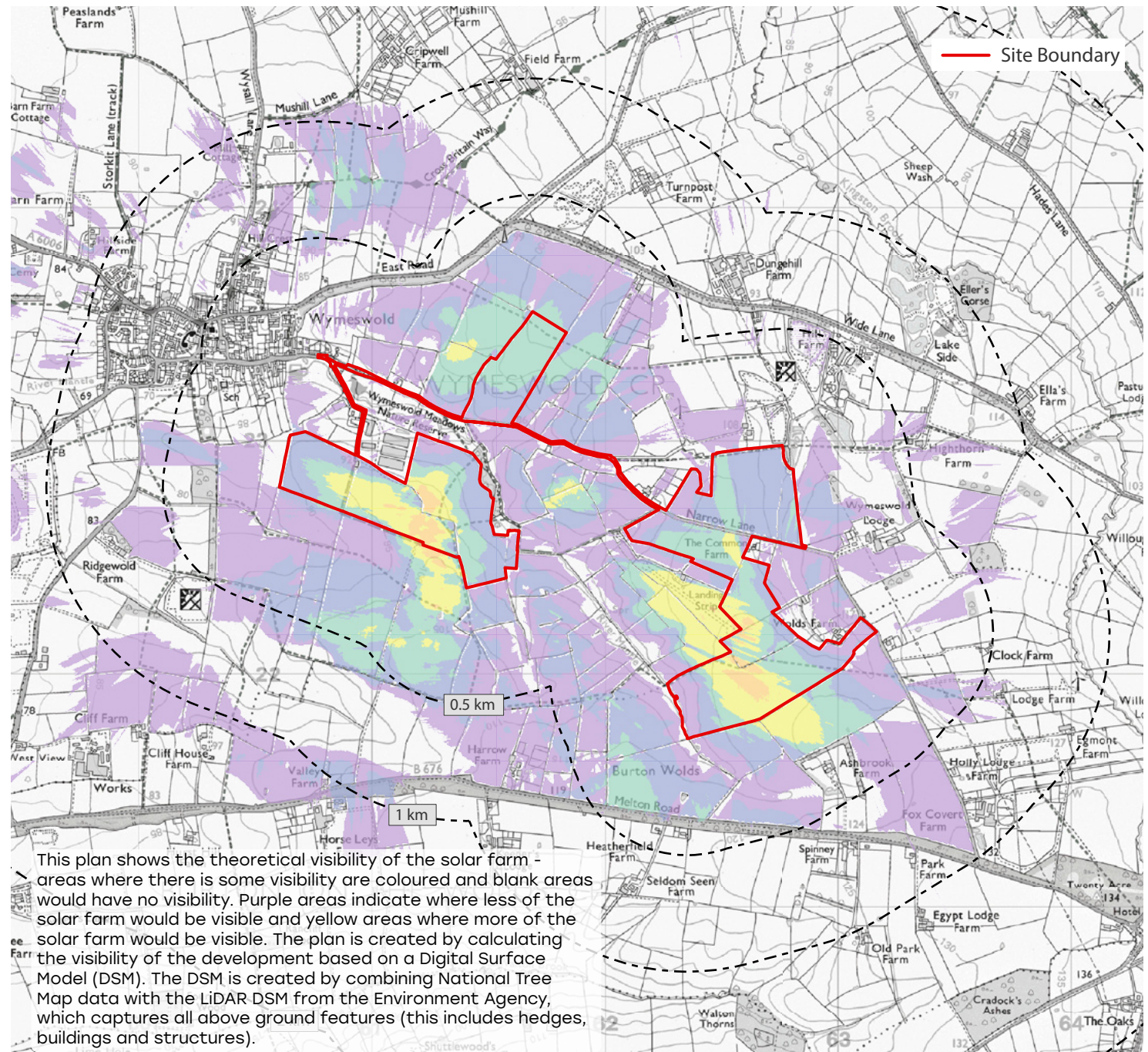
The site benefits from the existing screening such as established hedgerows and field trees that reduce the visual impact on some nearby properties. To make sure any natural screening is enhanced, we will include planting of new hedgerows and trees to reduce visual impact further.

Key Design Considerations Include:

- Minimising visual amenity effects on nearby residential properties
- Reducing the visual effect on users of public rights of way
- Lessen potential effects on designated heritage assets
- Avoiding the temporary loss of any best and most versatile agricultural land
- Avoidance of ecological sensitivities through appropriate offsets and provision of ecological mitigation as required

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 1 - 10% may be visible
- 10 - 20% may be visible
- 20 - 30% may be visible
- 30 - 40% may be visible
- 40 - 50% may be visible
- 50 - 60% may be visible



We are energising a **brighter future** by creating next generation energy solutions that are **cleaner, sustainable and community focused**.

Transforming energy for good

Exagen develop, build and operate renewable energy projects for the good of people and our environment.

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 combined experience in development of renewable energy projects in the UK.

You can provide feedback on our plans using our email mantle@exagen.co.uk

To find out more about Exagen, this project and the work we do, please visit our website exagen.co.uk/projects/mantle-solar-farm/

Project team



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Our partners



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