



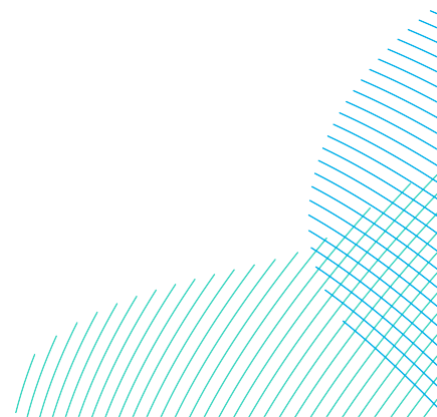
High Grove Solar

Update on Project Timeline, Surveys and Community Engagement Proposals – April 2026



Contents

Introduction.....	1
Project timeline.....	1
DCO application	1
Following DCO application	1
Environmental surveys.....	2
Community engagement	2



Introduction

This document has been produced in response to a request to provide a 'statement document' for High Grove Solar, summarising in particular:

- An update on the project timeline;
- Ongoing environmental surveys; and
- Future community engagement proposals.

The following sections provide an update on each of these topics.

Project timeline

DCO application

The National Energy System Operator (NESO) has been carrying out a process of reforming the queue for grid connections across the UK. Energy generation projects were required to submit their applications to NESO in August 2025 to confirm their connection to the grid. In December 2025, NESO updated applicants on the initial outcomes of this process.

Through this process High Grove Solar has received 'Gate 2 Phase 2' status. This means that the connection date for the project is likely to be between 2031 and 2035. NESO has indicated that final connection offers are expected to be issued for Gate 2 Phase 2 transmission connected projects between early September 2026 and mid January 2027.

The outcomes of NESO's process may have implications for the work National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) have been carrying out to identify a location for the new 400kV substation that will be required to connect High Grove Solar Farm and other electricity generation projects into the existing transmission network. This is because both the number of projects connecting into the substation, and the timing of any connections is relevant to determining the design and location of the substation.

To allow time for NGET to complete their work, the development consent application (DCO application) for High Grove Solar Farm has been deferred from April 2026. At this stage, a revised DCO application date has not been confirmed, however, is currently anticipated to be around October 2026 at the earliest. This date will be kept under review as NGET's work progresses.

Following DCO application

The timescales for the various stages that follow submission of a DCO application are largely statutory timescales, which are defined within the Planning Act 2008. A summary of the maximum timescales for each stage is provided below for information:

- **Acceptance** – the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) has 28 days to decide whether an application meets the requirements to proceed to the examination stage.

- **Pre-examination** – once an application has been accepted, an applicant must publicise this and explain how people can register to become Interested Parties. Interested Parties are kept informed of progress and opportunities to make representations or speak at public hearings. PINS appoint an Examining Authority who hold a Preliminary Meeting to discuss how and when the application will be examined. This stage does not have a statutory timescale but is typically around 3-5 months long.
- **Examination** – an application undergoes a period of examination which usually lasts 6 months. The Examining Authority gathers and reviews evidence and views, including supporting evidence provided by an applicant, statutory consultees and representations made by Interested Parties. There may also be a small number of hearings, including an open floor hearing, at which members of the public can register to attend and speak.
- **Recommendation** – after the examination, an Examining Authority has up to 3 months to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State on whether or not to grant development consent.
- **Decision** – following receipt of the recommendation, the Secretary of State has up to 3 months to make a decision on whether or not to grant development consent.
- **Post-decision** – there is a 6 week period for the Secretary of State's decision to be legally challenged, through a process known as Judicial Review.

Environmental surveys

Several environmental surveys are currently ongoing or imminently commencing across parts of the project site. These are focused on ornithology and include:

- Wintering bird surveys;
- Breeding bird surveys; and
- Stone curlew surveys.

Additional survey requirements for other species may be identified when the timeline for submitting the DCO application is confirmed, to ensure all relevant survey data remains up-to-date at the point of DCO application.

Community engagement

RWE values community input to its proposals for High Grove and has been working to refine the project in response to the feedback received during the statutory consultation in Spring 2025.

Once the location of the NGET 400kV substation is confirmed, any final design changes to High Grove can be made and a comprehensive update shared with the community.

As previously outlined to key community representatives, this is proposed to take the form of:

- Meetings with Members of Parliament to share the revised design and respond to comments received in response to statutory consultation;
- Meetings with Norfolk County Council and Breckland Council to share the revised design and respond to comments received in response to statutory consultation;
- Meetings with Parish Councils to share the revised design and changes made in response to Parish Council feedback from statutory consultation;
- Meetings with near neighbours with whom RWE has committed to following up with, to address specific concerns and comments raised previously; and
- An online newsletter update that can be referred to by members of the wider community for a summary of how feedback from the statutory consultation has been taken into account.

All of the engagement summarised above will take place prior to submission of the DCO application.

There will then be further opportunities to engage with the proposals beyond submission, during the pre-examination and examination stages as outlined under the timeline section above (in the event the application is accepted by PINS).

The project inbox, phone line and freepost address also remain open for any specific queries members of the community may wish to submit and receive a response from RWE on. Please find details of these, together with the project website address, below:



01362 350 063



rwe.com/highgrove



info@highgrovesolar.co.uk



FREEPOST HIGH GROVE SOLAR

**RWE Renewables UK Solar
and Storage Ltd**

Windmill Hill Business Park,
Whitehill Way
Swindon SN5 6PB
www.rwe.com