

The Site

Site Selection

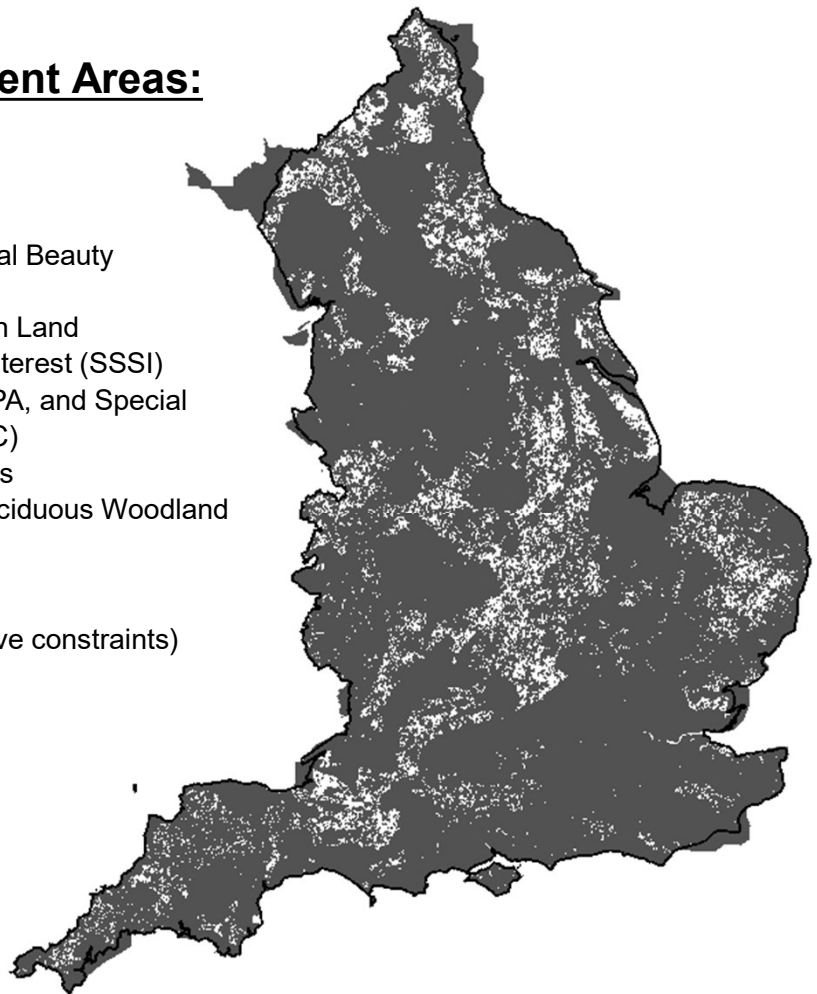
The site has been selected following a detailed selection process. There are several key reasons why the site is suitable to accommodate the development, which can be summarised as follows:

- The site has a viable and achievable grid connection and does not require any extensive network upgrades
- The site provides a large area of flat ground
- The site is low quality agricultural land (Grade 3b), not 'best and most versatile' land
- There are no public rights of way (PROWs) within or adjoining the site
- There are few residential properties adjoining or near the site
- The land is available for the development for the duration of the project lifetime
- The site itself is not subject to any statutory landscape designation including National Park, AONB, or Green Belt
- The site is not located in the flood zone
- The site is not subject to any ecological designation such as SSSI land or nature reserve
- It is well distanced from local heritage assets
- The relatively high levels of solar irradiation within this location
- The site offers significant opportunity for ecological enhancements

National Scale

Restricted Solar Development Areas:

- National Parks
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - Green Belt
 - ALC Grade 1 & 2 and Urban Land
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Special Protection Areas SPA, and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
 - Registered Parks & Gardens
 - Designated Ancient and Deciduous Woodland
- Site Location
(not subject to any of the above constraints)



The Proposed Development

The proposed development would consist of the installation of a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar PV panels including mounting framework, inverters, underground cabling, stock proof fencing, CCTV, internal tracks and associated infrastructure, landscaping, biodiversity net gain and environmental enhancements for a temporary period of 50 years.

Considerable landscaping works are proposed to be incorporated along with the solar panels with a view of effectively screening the development from view and reinforcing the key habitat features within the area alongside wildflower areas.

The development is proposed to be temporary being operational for a period of 50 years, after which the site would be restored to its current agricultural function. This type of planning consent would not alter the greenfield status of the land in any way which might facilitate further prospective development of the site.



Solar farm developed near agricultural land showing growth of vegetation in buffer zones



Wildflower meadow around panels



Example Transformer Unit on site

Construction Process

The solar arrays would be set out in rows and mounted on a framework system which is either screwed or driven into the ground depending upon the ground conditions. The solar panels are entirely inert and once established on site there would be minimal disturbance. The panels will be static (non-rotating), and the ground could also be grazed by sheep, thus preserving an agricultural function and generating an additional agricultural yield. The solar panels will be spaced to avoid overshadowing and elevated on an angled frame supported by steel foundations. The arrays will be positioned along an east-west axis with the panels facing south to achieve optimum exposure for solar energy absorption.



The arrays are bolted onto a steel framework system which is pushed into the ground at fixed spacings (there are no concrete foundations).



- Frame is installed by operatives above steel piles.
- Panels are delivered to site and are ready to be installed

Benefits of the Proposals

The scheme would deliver key environmental benefits and secure the ongoing management of the land for a period of 50 years. The proposals would incorporate key measures to enhance the key features of the site and deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain as measured using the independent Metric prepared by Natural England. The proposals would incorporate the following environmental benefits:

- Existing vegetation retained
- Existing improved grassland
- Proposed scattered native tree and shrub planting
- Proposed improved grassland and native grass seed mix
- Proposed biodiversity enhancement areas, including species rich grass, wildflower planting and biodiversity corridors
- Proposed native hedgerow planting

Managing potential impacts





The planning application is accompanied by a full suite of technical reporting, through which all potential impacts of the scheme have been assessed in full. Where relevant, appropriate mitigation has been proposed to avoid significant impacts. The technical assessment has covered the following environmental issues:

- Ecology and Ornithology
- Drainage and flood risk
- Landscape and Visual Impacts
- Heritage and Archaeology
- Transport impacts during construction and operation

All reporting can be viewed via the planning application page on the council’s website (once submitted) or via the project website.






Environmental Benefits

-  Delivers green energy
-  Allows for agricultural use
-  Delivers a net gain in biodiversity
-  Between 10-15 thousand homes powered

Social Benefits

-  Applicant offers to deliver package of Community Benefit Scheme to support locally defined projects
-  Improvements to Public Rights of Way.
-  Supports sustainable farm diversification
-  Supports Energy Security

Economic Benefits

-  Construction and operational jobs created
-  Estimated economic output of over £745,000 GVA over 14 months.
-  Over £112,000 per annum business rate income over the life of the project

The Planning Process

2022

- Site selection exercise carried out to identify suitable site

2022-2023

- Technical survey work carried out to assess potential impacts and design suitable landscaping

November
2023

- Public exhibition held to provide an opportunity for local people to provide feedback on proposals

Winter
2023

- Submission of Planning Application

Winter
23 / 24

- Statutory consultation with key stakeholders and technical consultees

Spring
2024

- Determination of planning application

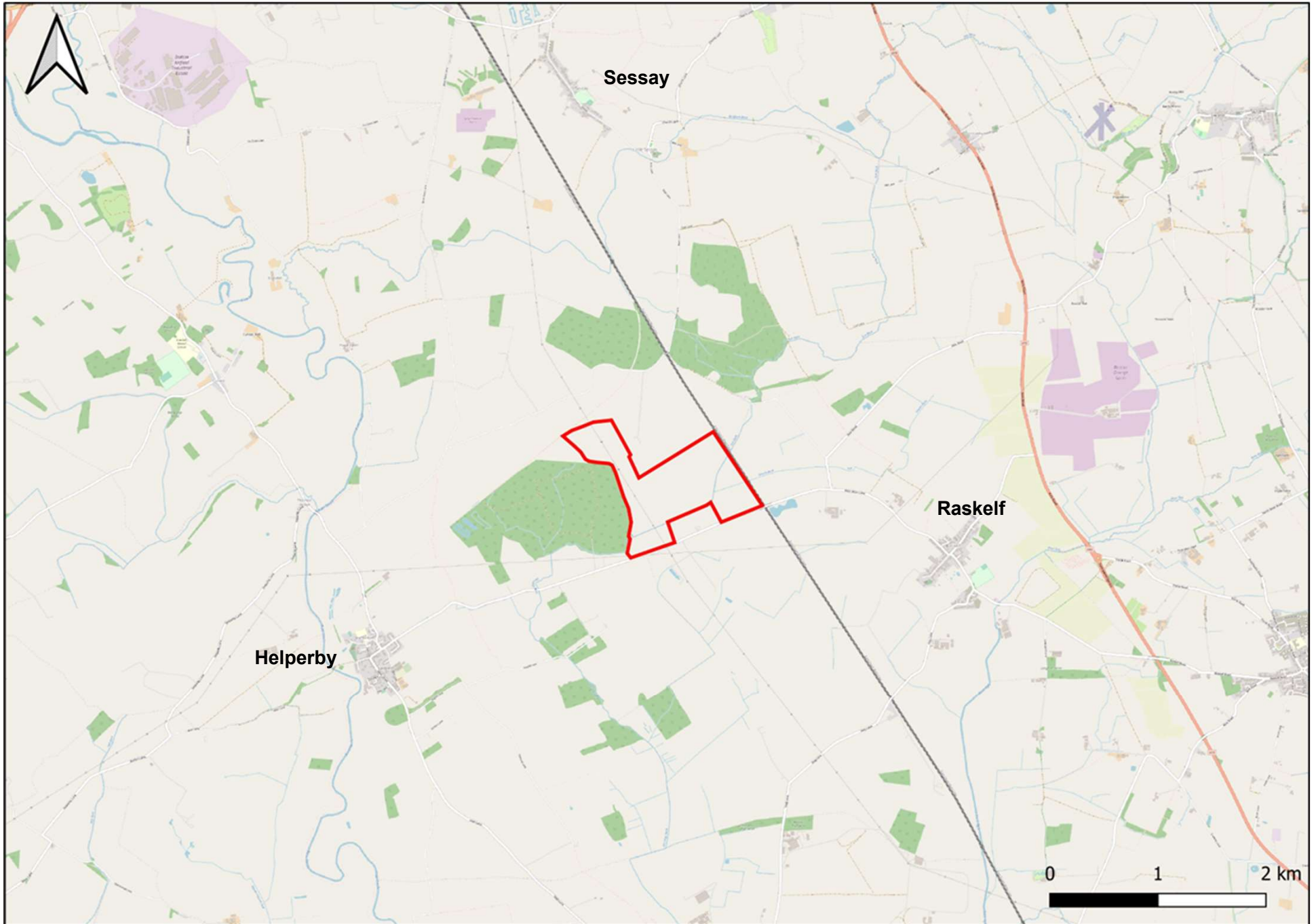
Spring
2024

- Discharge of Planning Conditions to agree further details

2025/
2026

- Commencement of construction

Site shown within surrounding area



Site Selection 1/5

1. Map showing AONBs and National Parks

Paragraph 176 of the NPPF states:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty which have the highest status of protection and in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

Paragraph 177 of the NPPF states:

“When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.”



Site Selection 2/5

2. Map also incorporating BMV and Urban land

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

b) Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.”

In commercial terms solar farms cannot compete with the yields of alternative forms of development which are directed towards brownfield sites or other urban locations.

Solar Farms must therefore be located on lower grade agricultural land



Site Selection 3/5

3. Map also incorporating Green Belt

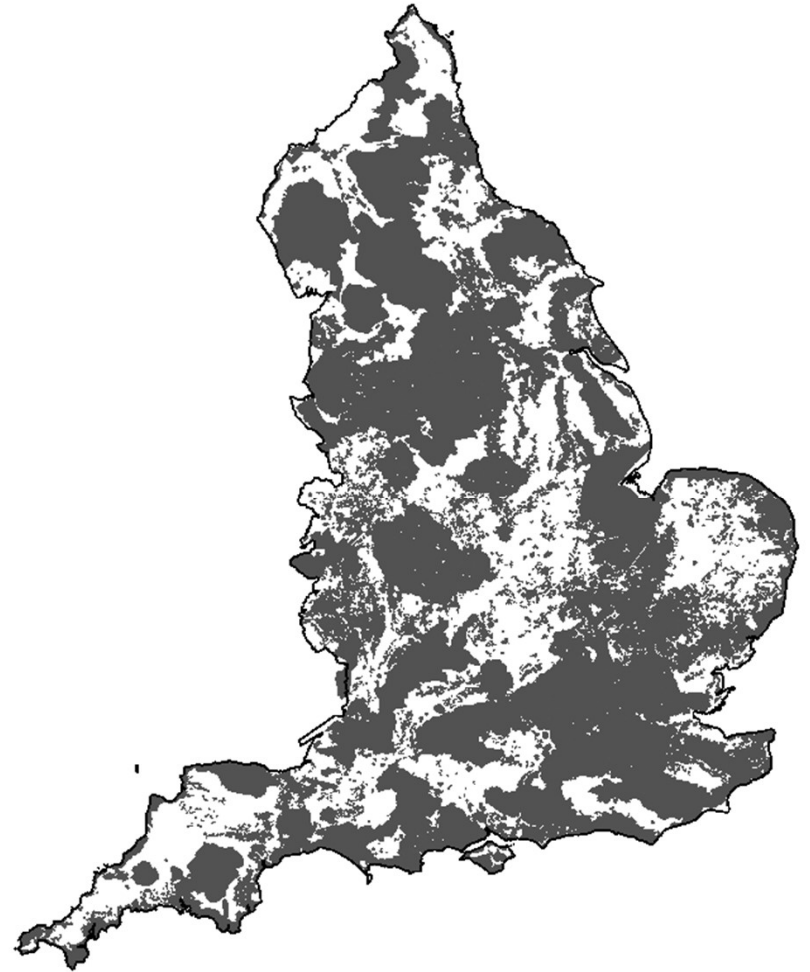
Having regard to proposals affecting the Green Belt, the NPPF states:

“147. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

148. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

Having regard to renewable energy projects the NPPF states:

“When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources”



Site Selection 4/5

4. Map also incorporating Ancient and Deciduous Woodland

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

b) Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.”

Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states:

“development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists;”



Site Selection 5/5

5. Map also incorporating SSSI, SPA, SAC and Ramsar Sites

Paragraph 181 of the NPPF states:

“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

b) Development on land within or outside a Site of Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Scientific Interest.”

Paragraph 181 states:

“The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;*
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and*
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.*



National Scale

Restricted Solar Development Areas:

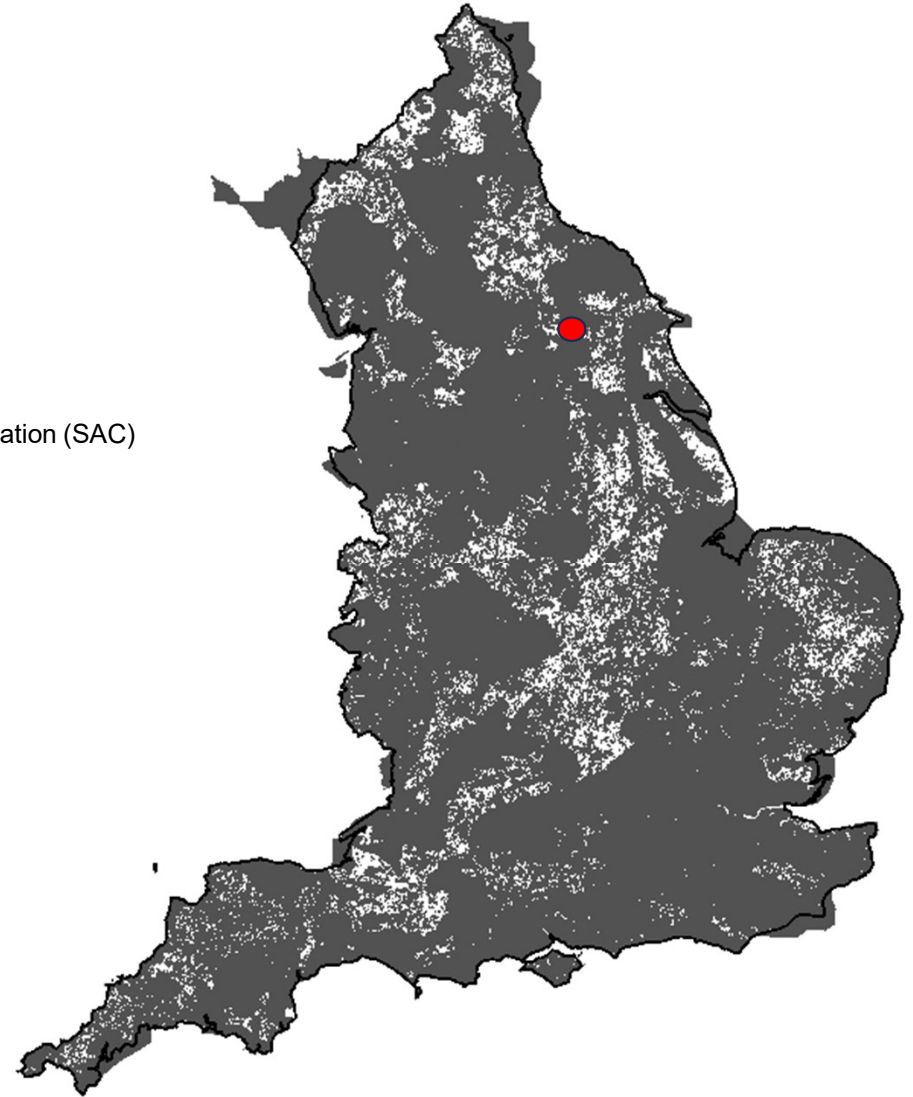


- National Parks
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Site Location

(not subject to any of the above constraints)



ALC

ALC Grade

Grade 2

Heritage

Conservation Areas

Scheduled Ancient Monument

Listed Heritage Assets

Ecology

Site of Special Scientific Interest

Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory

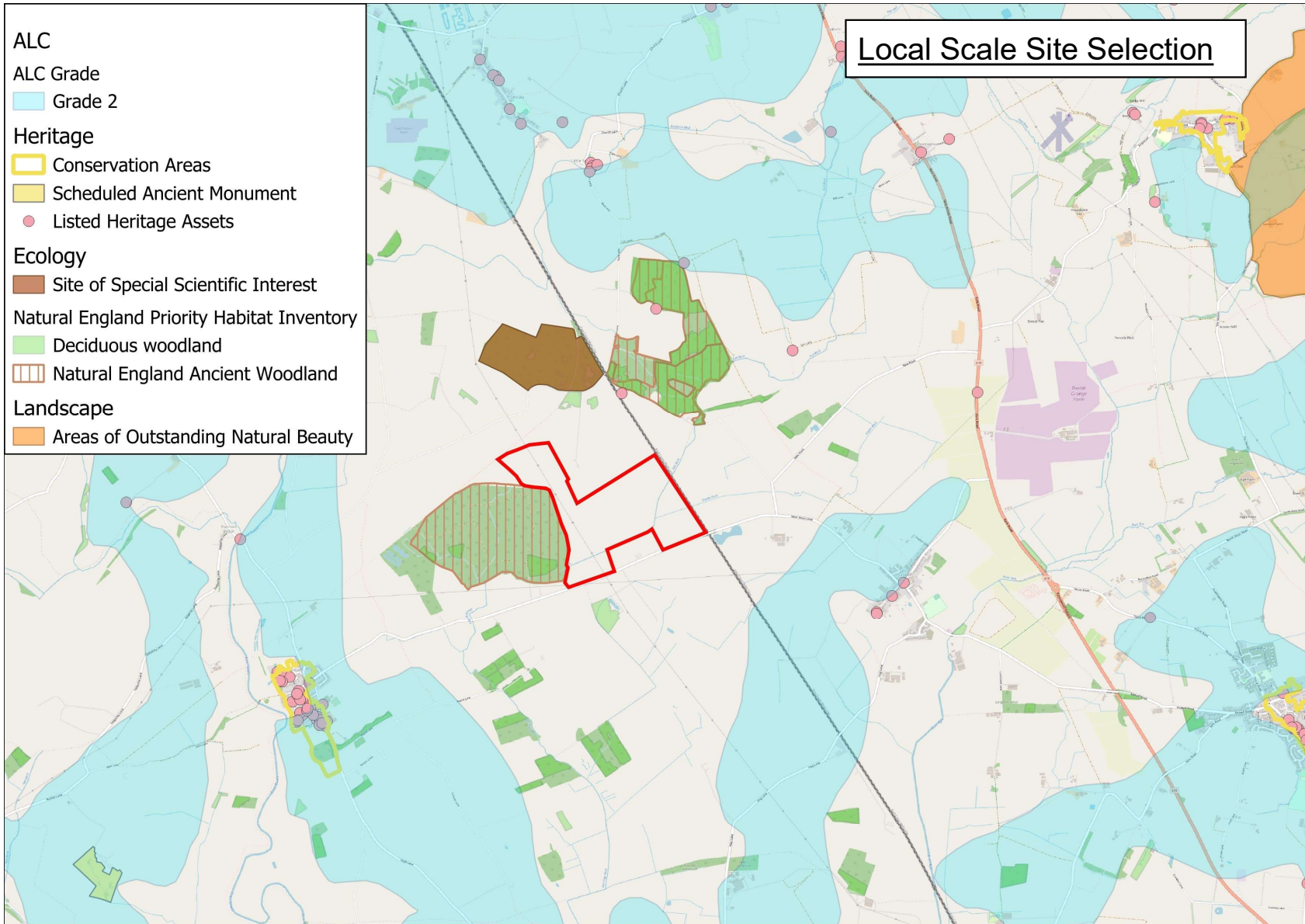
Deciduous woodland

Natural England Ancient Woodland

Landscape

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Local Scale Site Selection







Photograph towards the site showing overhead lines and woodland beyond



Photograph looking across the site showing railway embankment to the right hand side



Photograph looking south across the site showing overhead lines



Prospective View – Once panels are installed and proposed landscaping has established



[Project Website: pilmooarsolarfarm.co.uk](http://pilmooarsolarfarm.co.uk)

- Website will host all project related materials
- It will allow feedback to be submitted to the developers
- It will remain live for the duration of the planning process

