Arrow Valley Solar Farm Project Update

Report for Parish Council consideration and public information

Date of briefing: Monday 27 July
Subject: Arrow Valley Solar Farm Project update and consultation arrangements

Executive Summary

This report summarises the briefing provided by the Arrow Valley Solar Farm Project Team to Salford Priors Parish Council and other affected parish councils. The proposed project remains at the pre-application stage, with public consultation expected to begin at the end of September and a potential application to the Planning Inspectorate anticipated in late April 2027.

The Parish Council has requested that consultation events are held in the communities most directly affected by the proposal, so residents can review information locally and provide informed feedback. The Council is continuing to take a careful, evidence-led approach, including scrutiny of technical, environmental, agricultural, public safety and community impacts.

The Council is also seeking to produce appropriate evidence and assess any proposed mitigation measures that may require further challenge. This work will inform the Council's response to the public consultation process and any final representation it may submit to the Planning Inspectorate.

1. Purpose of this report

This report provides a public-facing summary of the briefing attended by members of Salford Priors Parish Council and representatives of other affected parish councils in relation to the proposed Arrow Valley Solar Farm. It also records the Parish Council's current areas of focus as the project moves towards formal consultation and potential submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

2. Briefing attended by parish council representatives

Members of Salford Priors Parish Council, together with representatives from other affected parish councils including Bidford, Wixford and Abbots Morton, attended a briefing in Alcester with the Arrow Valley Solar Farm Project Team. The briefing provided an update on the proposed scheme and outlined the anticipated public consultation process.

3. Public consultation arrangements

The Project Team advised that the public consultation is expected to run for five weeks, beginning at the end of September. Six public engagement events are planned, including two weekend events.

The Chairman of Salford Priors Parish Council requested assurances that consultation events would be held in the communities most directly affected by the proposal. Particular locations raised included Salford Priors, Bidford, Broom and Wixford, so that residents can attend locally, ask questions, review information and provide feedback.

The Project Team also indicated that separate briefings are expected for parish, district and county councillors, Members of Parliament and affected landowners.

4. Technical and environmental matters reported

The following matters were reported or noted during the briefing and related discussions:

- Surveys are being undertaken in relation to ancient woodland, traffic, environmental habitats and biodiversity.
- The developer has indicated that a site selection report will be produced, setting out the assessment of alternative locations and the reasons for selecting the proposed area.
- Public Rights of Way corridors are expected to include a 15-metre buffer zone on each side of a route.
- Ancient woodland is expected to include a 30-metre buffer zone.
- Host authority planning officers have been consulted for advice on local policy and context, with officer time funded by the developer.
- The developer has advised that it has opened consultations with Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.
- The developer has also indicated that it has considered the emerging South Warwickshire Local Plan.
- The developer has advised that grid connection arrangements have been secured at Feckenham and that the project has priority connection rights as a nationally significant project.

5. Planning process and anticipated timeline

The developer is currently expected to submit an application to the Planning Inspectorate in late April 2027. Following submission, the Planning Inspectorate has 28 days to decide whether the application meets the required standard to proceed to formal examination.

The project is understood to be progressing through the pre-application stage, during which the developer prepares technical reports, responds to scoping requirements and undertakes consultation before any formal examination, decision and post-decision stages.

6. Parish Council response and areas of focus

The Parish Council is continuing to take a careful, evidence-led and methodical approach to the proposal. This includes reviewing relevant planning considerations, seeking specialist input where appropriate and engaging with other councils and bodies that have experience of similar Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

Key areas of focus include landscape and natural heritage, agricultural land classification and food production, hydrology, pollution, environmental habitats and biodiversity, physical and mental wellbeing, Public Rights of Way, battery storage, traffic impacts and public safety.

The Council has also noted the importance of understanding the proportion of Grade 1 and Grade 2 agricultural land affected, crop yields from the land concerned, and the position of relevant fire and rescue services in relation to public safety and cross-border operational cover.

The Parish Council is also seeking to produce appropriate evidence and to scrutinise any proposed mitigation measures where it considers these require further challenge. This work will

inform the Council's response to the public consultation process and any final representation it may submit to the Planning Inspectorate.

7. Specialist advice and procurement

The Council has explored options for obtaining specialist multidisciplinary advice to support its consideration of the proposal. Given the anticipated cost of this work, any appointment will need to be managed in accordance with the Council's procurement obligations and applicable public procurement requirements.

Work is also being undertaken to identify relevant experience from other parish councils and local authorities involved in similar Development Consent Order processes, including learning from recent Planning Inspectorate decisions and the common issues considered during examination.

8. Public engagement

Residents are encouraged to attend one or more of the public consultation events when details are confirmed. The consultation period will provide an important opportunity for residents to hear directly from the developer, review the information presented and submit comments so that local views are properly recorded.

9. Council position

The Parish Council recognises the importance of considering the proposal carefully and objectively. Its role is to represent the interests of the local community, scrutinise the evidence, seek appropriate professional advice and ensure that local impacts are fully understood and properly considered through the formal process.

Date of Issue: 29th July 2026