
# Introducing Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm

The proposed development would include the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of a grid connected solar farm facility.

Located between Felsted and Bartholomew Green, the site would have the capacity to generate up to 98 MW of electricity, enough to power over 45,000 typical family homes per year.*

The emissions savings are equivalent to removing over 15,000 cars from the roads, or over 32,000 tonnes of CO2e.**

**This project is in its early stages, and we have undertaken extensive surveying and planning work to-date. We are committed to ensuring our proposals are sensitive to the local area and the environment.**

*Presuming a 15% capacity/load factor across a single year based upon average domestic electricity consumption per home (temperature corrected) as per Energy Consumption in the UK (published September 2024, Table C9 of ECUK: Consumption data tables).
**This assumes no emissions associated with the solar PV generation.


# What changes have we made to the project?

*Follow this QR code to find out more on the changes to the NSIP threshold.*

Following the increase to the threshold for solar Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) from 50MW to 100MW, effective from 31st December 2025, TotalEnergies has taken the decision to move from the Development Consent Order (DCO) regime and instead seek consent for our proposals via the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA).

Seeking consent via the TCPA regime means the application will be decided locally, by Uttlesford District Council and Braintree District Council, rather than by Government in Westminster. It also allows for more tailored and proportionate community consultation, giving parish councils and residents a stronger voice and ensuring local feedback can more directly shape our final plans.

We will of course be taking into account all feedback received to date from both the CLG and from local residents.

Further details on the changes to the NSIP threshold may be found at **https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/solar-roadmap/solar-roadmap-united-kingdom-powered-by-solar-accessible-webpage**.

## Why 'Hedgehog Grove'?

Our name, 'Hedgehog Grove', reflects our strong commitment to protecting this much-loved species. From the outset, the design has included measures to safeguard hedgehog habitats and create opportunities for wildlife, ensuring that the solar farm delivers environmental benefits alongside clean, renewable energy.

Hedgehogs are experiencing a steep and well-documented decline nationally and locally. Across rural Britain, populations have fallen by 30% in the last ten years, and there are currently believed to be less than 1 million left in the UK.*

Habitat fragmentation and road traffic have been identified as major pressures on hedgehog populations, along with extensive use of land for agricultural purposes.

At Hedgehog Grove, we're committed to generating clean energy in a way that also safeguards and improves the environment – ensuring that hedgehogs and other much-loved species can thrive alongside our project. We are currently exploring a wide range of initiatives to help the hedgehog population in the area. Please get in touch with any ideas you may have at: **feedback@hedgehoggrovesolarfarm.co.uk**

*According to The Wildlife Trusts.

# Our Hedgehog Commitment

As part of our solar farm proposals, we want to ensure the land supports both clean energy and thriving local wildlife. That's why we're setting out the following commitments for hedgehogs, which aim to make the solar farm not only a source of renewable energy, but also a place where hedgehogs can thrive again.

1. **Hedgerow Highways:** We will introduce new native hedgerow corridors across the site, creating safe routes that link habitats together and help hedgehogs and other mammals move more freely.
2. **Nesting & Shelter:** We will provide hibernation boxes and log piles in sheltered corners and ensuring that these areas are not disturbed through land management activities in the winter months when hedgehogs hibernate.
3. **Habitat Planting:** The significant increase in biodiversity on site will include larger areas of suitable habitats for hedgehogs, which enjoy a diversity of habitats including brambles (which provide shelter from predators), tussocky grassland, scrub, and wildflowers, which support populations of their food sources. The ecological management of the site will be carried out with hedgehog livelihood in mind.
4. **Insect Hotels:** We will incorporate additional design elements to encourage the insect populations (which hedgehogs feed on), which will include bug hotels and the installation of log stacks across the site.
5. **Detoxification:** We will keep the site free from pesticide use and chemical pest controls such as slug pellets, which can undermine hedgehog food sources and can be harmful to hedgehogs themselves.
6. **Expert & Community Involvement:** We will involve hedgehog organisations, charities, local experts or community groups to ensure the site remains a hedgehog haven for the duration of the development.
7. **Education:** Through our engagement with national, regional and local groups we will support improved local understanding of the ecological benefits of solar farms to hedgehogs and other species, including offering school science visits to the site.


# About us

## About TotalEnergies

TotalEnergies is a global integrated energy company that produces and markets energies: oil and biofuels, natural gas and green gases, renewables and electricity. Our more than 100,000 employees are committed to providing as many people as possible with energy that is more reliable, more affordable and more sustainable. Active in about 120 countries, TotalEnergies places sustainability at the heart of its strategy, its projects and its operations.

## About TotalEnergies in the UK

TotalEnergies has been present in the UK for more than 60 years, employing more than 1,600 people across the energy value chain.

We are one of the country's leading oil and gas operators, operating around 27% of the UK Continental Shelf's gas production, with average daily equity production of 121,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day (boe/d) in 2024.

We're diversifying our energy offering to provide low-carbon and renewable energies to our customers, while continuing to provide the oil and gas they need today.

We are making major investments in solar and are developing projects across England and Wales, amounting to around 1 GW of power. We have also invested in several offshore wind developments in the UK which will have the capacity to deliver about 5GW of renewable power, including Seagreen (1.1GW) which became fully operational in 2023, West of Orkney (2GW) and Outer Dowsing (1.5GW).

We are one of the UK's largest suppliers of gas and electricity to businesses and the public sector. We also offer electric vehicle charging solutions and market petroleum products including lubricants, aviation fuel, bitumen and specialty fluids.

# The need for solar

Solar power forms a critical part of the UK's strategy to achieve net zero by 2050 and to deliver energy security. As set out in its Clean Power 2030 Action Plan, the Government has ambitions for 45-47 GW of domestic solar production by 2030. Ground-mounted solar projects play a key role in achieving these aims, having been established as a critical national priority due to the energy security, decarbonisation and affordability benefits that they deliver.

The average house used 3,302 kWh of electricity in 2023.

1 MW = 1,000 kilowatts (kW). This means a 1 MW appliance running for one hour would be 1,000 kWh.

Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm would produce around 128 million kWh per year.


A kilowatt-hour (kWh) is the amount of energy used by a 1 kW appliance running for one hour (e.g. a microwave for 1 hour).

Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm is a 98 MW solar farm. This doesn't mean it will produce 98 MW continuously, it depends on sunlight. In the UK, solar farms operate on a 15% capacity load – this is the percentage of time a solar farm generates electricity at its maximum output.

This means we can supply up to 45,000 homes annually with clean energy*.

Solar provides a low-carbon, renewable energy source that is cheaper and faster to deploy than alternatives. Solar is one-ninth the cost of gas and less than one-third of nuclear energy, making it essential for reducing emissions and provididing affordable energy as well as boosting the UK's energy independence.

Solar power is already making a significant impact. Between June and August 2024, it provided up to 8% of the UK's electricity, according to the Government's Energy Trends renewables tables (ODS)**.

Solar farms currently account for around 0.1% of the total land area of the UK. The Government targets for a fivefold increase in solar would result in 0.3% of the UK land area being used by solar (Carbon Brief, 2022). This is the equivalent to around half of the space currently used by golf courses.

*Presuming a 15% capacity/load factor across a single year based upon average domestic electricity consumption per home (temperature corrected) as per Energy Consumption in the UK (published September 2024, Table C9 of ECUK: Consumption data tables).
**Energy Trends December 2024, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/energy-trends-section-6-renewables)

# How will we be consulting?

We are now undertaking our consultation for Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm.

**February – June 2025**
Initial consultation via the Community Liaison Group

**8 September - 6 October 2025**
Consultation Period

**Drop-in Consultation Event 1**
Monday 22 September, 11.00 - 16.00 at Felsted Memorial Hall

**Drop-in Consultation Event 2**
Tuesday 23 September, 13.00 - 17.45 at Rayne Parish Hall

**October - December 2025**
Consideration of feedback and preparation of an application

**Early 2026**
Application submission

## Community Liaison Group

We have been undertaking regular meetings with the Community Liaison Group (CLG) to provide updates and seek feedback on our evolving project design.

The CLG brings together representatives from the community including your ward councillors, parish councils, and other local political stakeholders and community groups. The aim of the CLG is to provide an ongoing forum for the exchange of information and a platform through which representatives of the community can contribute to the design and integration of Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm into the local community.

Membership of the CLG is on an invitational basis. We will extend invitations to community representatives, who may have an interest in the project's approach and delivery. Residents will be able to provide comments directly via the methods outlined at the end of this brochure.

Meetings with the CLG will occur regularly throughout the consultation period.

The role of members of the CLG is to act as a two way conduit for the community to access the development team. Any issues and concerns can be raised through the CLG during the consultation period. If you are part of a group which would be interested in joining our CLG, please email us at **clg@hedgehoggrovesolarfarm.co.uk**

## Consultation Period

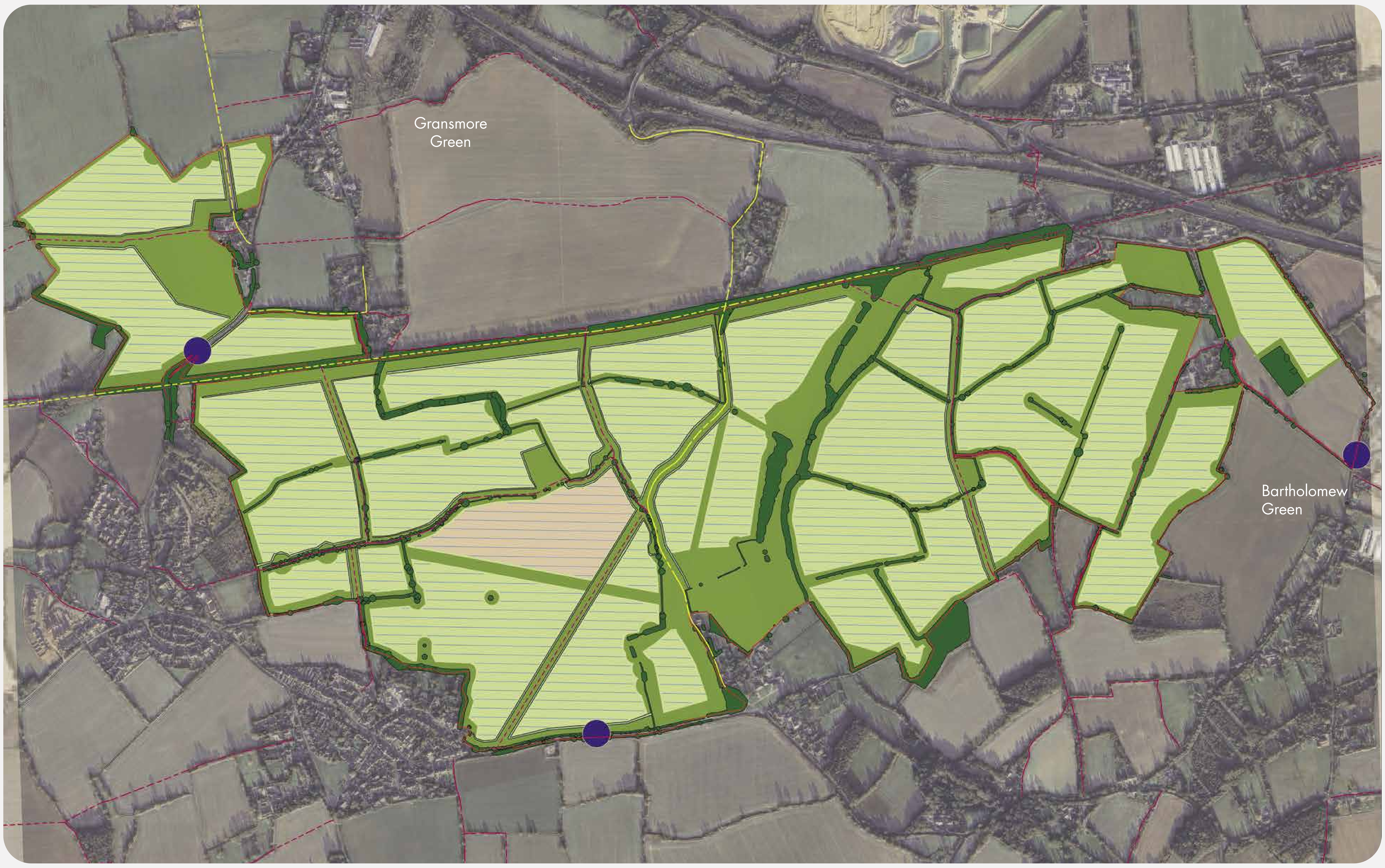
We are currently consulting on our proposals, which will run until 6th October 2025.

# Our proposals

Our indicative site layout shows our current proposals for the Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm. This shows where the solar panels and key infrastructure could be located within the project boundary, as well as land we anticipate using for biodiversity and other environmental designations. The site has been designed to minimise impacts on existing trees, hedges, woodlands, and Public Rights of Way (PRoW).

During the consultation, we are seeking feedback on this masterplan, including the proposed site layout and electricity connection*, with the aim of reducing potential impacts of the project on the local area.

*We are currently exploring cable route options.




KEY

- Potential site boundary
- Potential Solar Panels and Associated Infrastructure
- Potential substation area
- Potential Landscape and mitigation Enhancement
- Existing Public Rights of Way Network
- Indicative Access Points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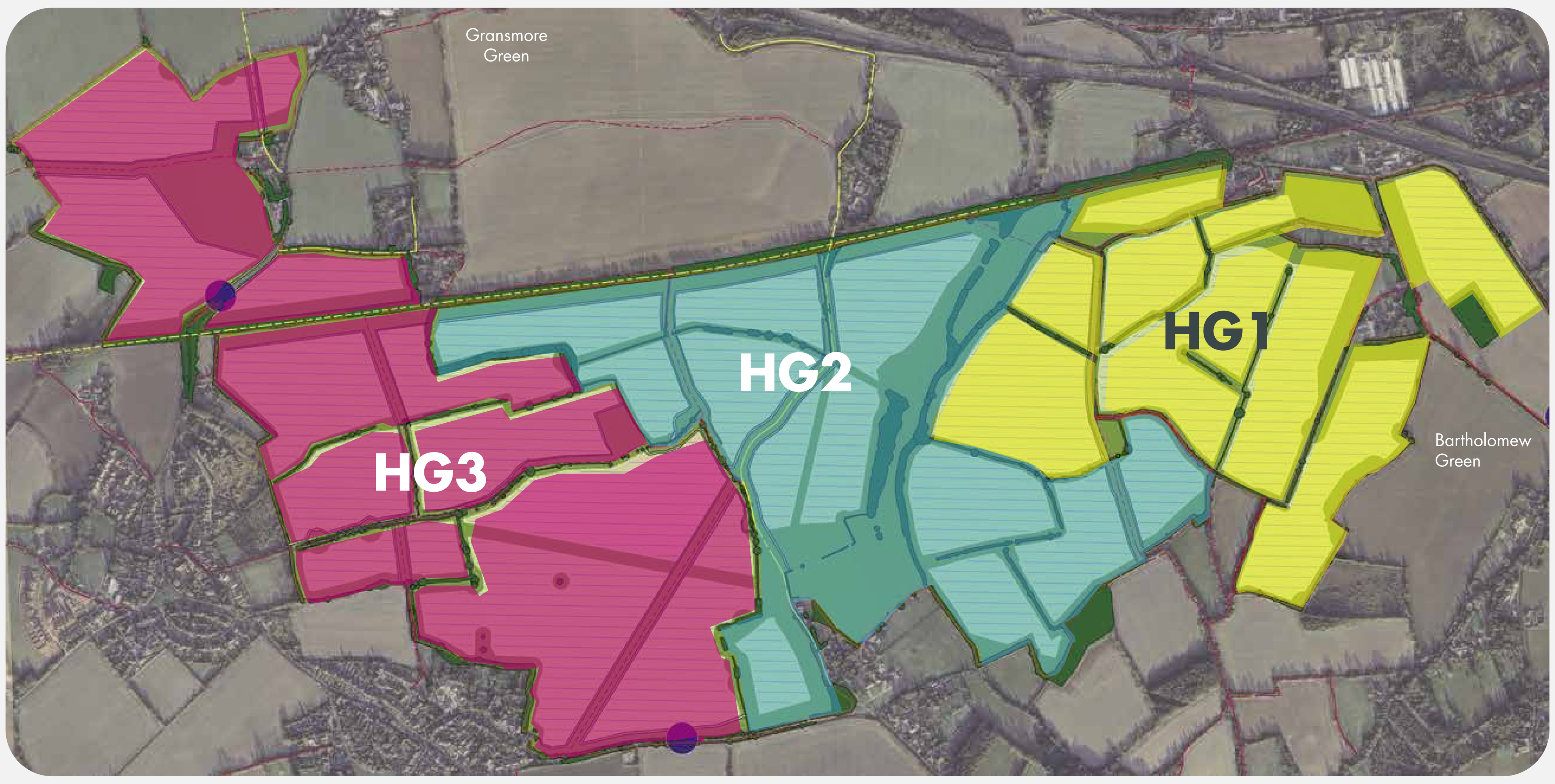


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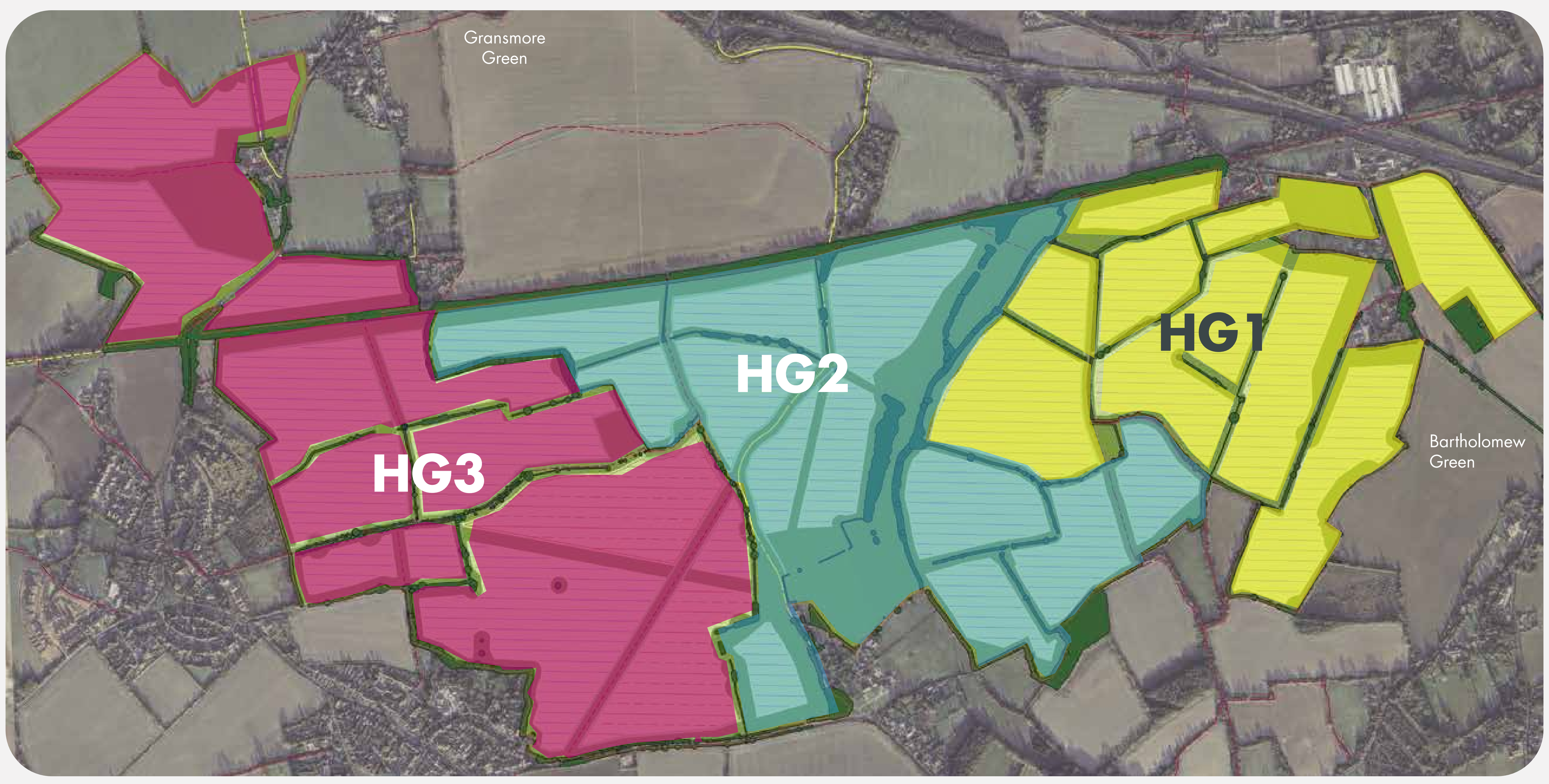

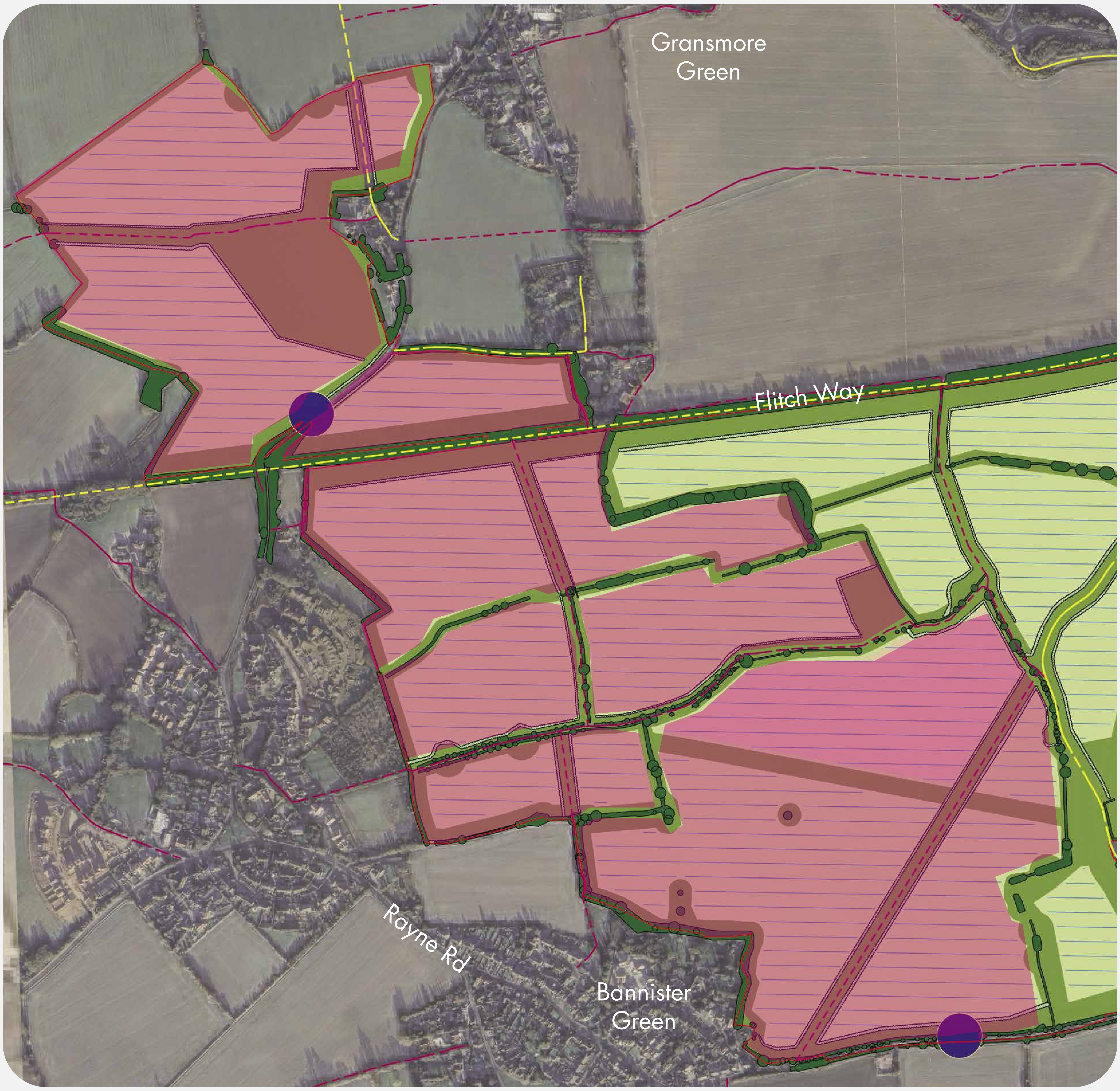


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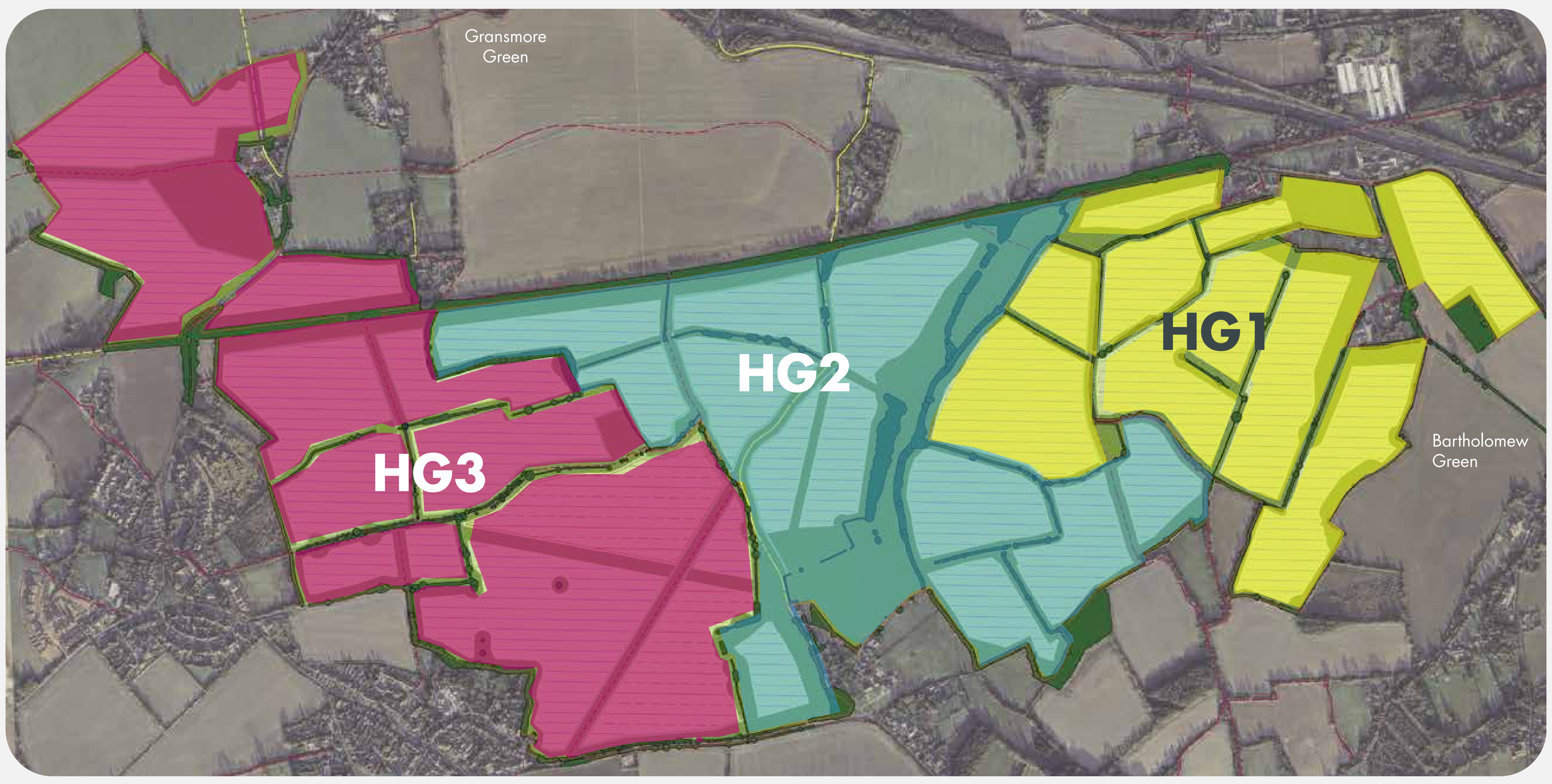


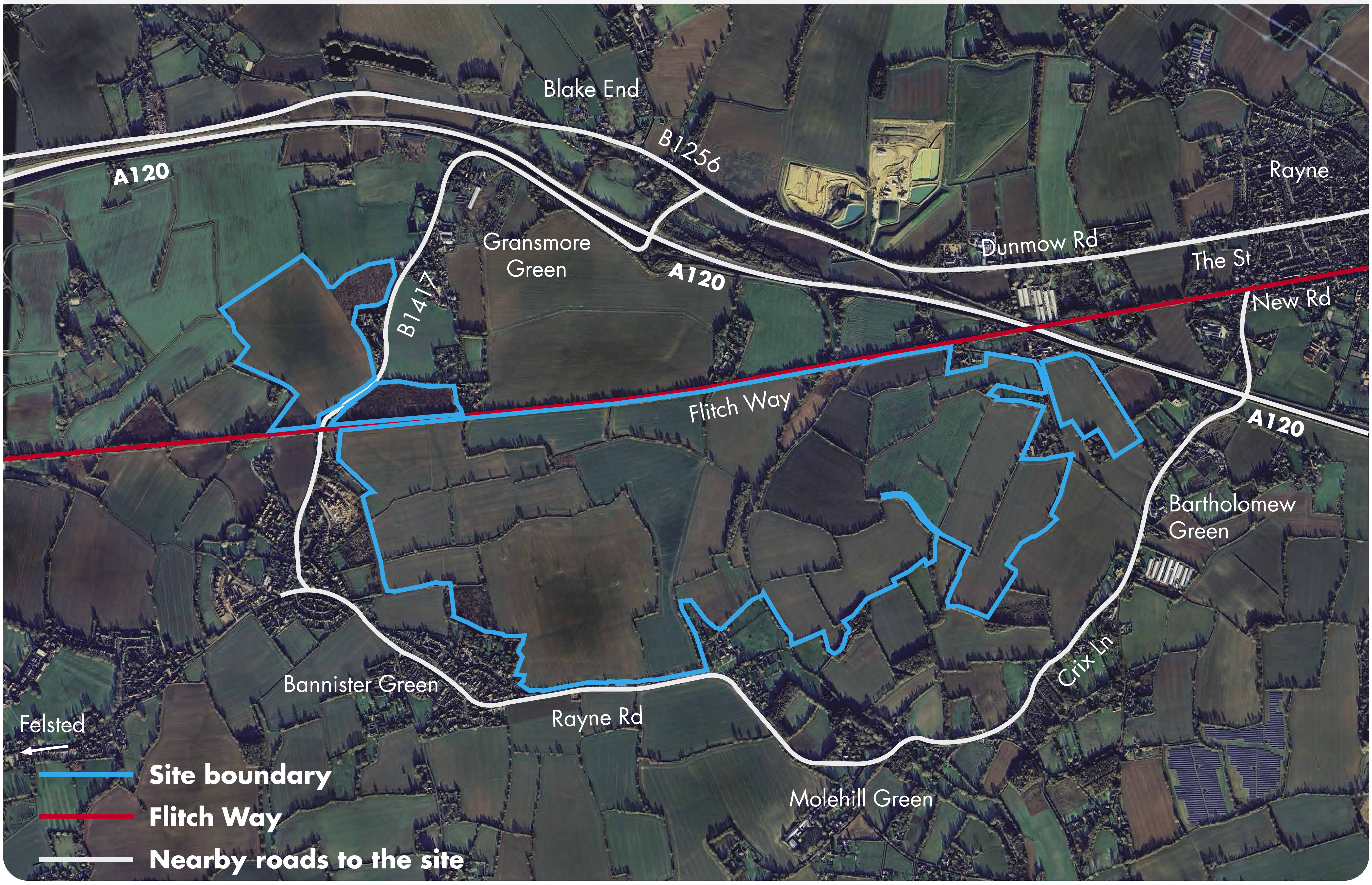
# Why Here?

When selecting a location for a solar farm, there are three important factors: suitability of the land, access to the electricity grid, and minimising environmental effects.

The land at Hedgehog Grove has been carefully assessed through detailed feasibility studies, to ensure the fields are suitable for solar development. This includes finding areas which aren't immediately proximate to significant heritage assets, flood risk areas, or the highest quality farmland.  Where certain fields within the site might be considered unsuitable for solar panels, these have been retained within the project boundary to allow for new planting, habitat creation, and biodiversity improvements. This approach ensures that the project delivers clean energy while also allowing us to incorporate positive environmental gains. The land at Hedgehog Grove is also available through voluntary agreements with local landowners, which has enabled the project to bring together a coherent site rather than scattered parcels.

This site is situated close to the Braintree substation, providing a direct and efficient point of connection to the grid. Without such a connection, renewable energy cannot be delivered to homes and businesses. We are currently developing the cable corridor route to ensure a minimum impact on local residents.

The site at Hedgehog Grove has also been selected as it allows us to integrate a solar farm into the local landscape and community. Larger pieces of infrastructure, including the on-site substation, can be located in existing well-screened areas, and the layout can be designed to avoid a sprawling, multi-parcel site. Consideration has also been given to public rights of way and nearby settlements to minimise disruption and, where possible, provide enhancements. Hedgehog Grove has been carefully chosen due to these key factors, and can therefore allow us to make a meaningful contribution to tackling climate change while respecting the character of the area.



# Components of Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm

Hedgehog Grove will include the necessary components listed below, along with a range of environmental mitigation and enhancements, as well as new community assets.

## Solar panels and mounting infrastructure

The panels proposed would reach a maximum height of 3.5 metres and will be made of a frame, glass, silicon solar cells and copper wiring - all of which can be reused or recycled.

Hedgehog Grove will use single-axis tracking panels, which gently follow the sun from east to west throughout the day.

This movement allows each panel to capture more sunlight than fixed panels, by producing more clean energy from the same amount of land.

Other infrastructure includes:

- Supporting equipment on-site including inverters, transformers and switchgears.
- An on-site substation to connect the solar panels to the electricity network.
- Underground cabling connecting the solar panels to the nearby substation.
- Access tracks, gates and fencing, lighting, drainage infrastructure and storage containers.

# Construction, Operation and Decommissioning

We are still in the process of agreeing the most suitable components and technology for Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm. Solar and associated technology is developing rapidly. At this stage, our assessment is based on a conservative approach to ensure a robust evaluation of the proposals. In reality, we will probably use more advanced technology to minimise impacts. We will determine the technology to be used during the procurement stage, which which will take place if the project receives consent.

## Construction

We are currently assessing how construction vehicles would access the site to minimise impacts on local roads and communities. We will complete a Transport Assessment (TA) as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, in order to understand how the project would impact local traffic and develop plans to minimise impacts. Further information on our construction traffic routing will be available at our consultation events.

We will also be preparing a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP), which will focus on commitments to best practice construction and environmental protection. The CEMP will also include details on construction traffic, water management, noise and vibration measures, dust and construction management, and communication strategies to keep communities informed throughout the construction process.

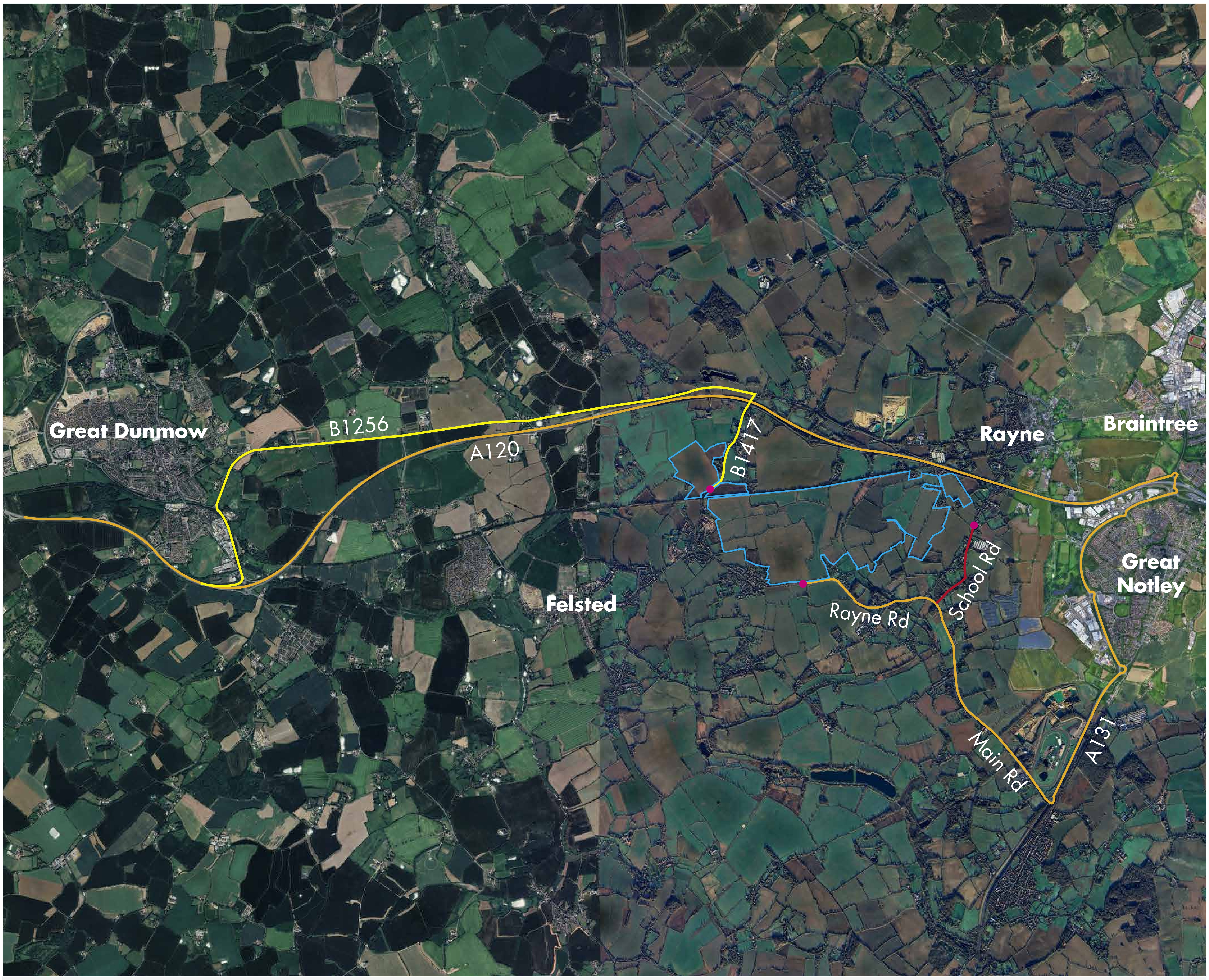
## Operation

We anticipate limited traffic to and from the site, in order to operate and maintain the solar farm. We  intend to use local labour where possible to carry out any maintenance work. We also anticipate an annual visit by a team to clean the panels, as well as regular visits by ground workers to maintain landscaping around the site.

## Decommissioning

At the end of the solar farm's 30 year lifespan, the site will be fully decommissioned, with all infrastructure removed, and the land restored to its original use.

Decommissioning is expected to take between 18-24 months and could be undertaken in phases. The effects of decommissioning are usually similar to or less impactful than construction effects, and details will also be included within our application.




# Construction & Access

The above map shows our anticipated Construction routes for the proposals, and the indicative site access points.

The Construction phase of the development is expected to last between 18-24 months. During the operational phase, there is anticipated to be between 1-2 maintenance visits each month. These will typically be made by light van, SUV or 4x4 type vehicles. Construction access options are still being considered, with the aim of avoiding traffic through the nearby villages.

We currently anticipate using primarily the A120 or A131 for the construction route.

Site entrance points are still under consideration, however we anticipate potentially accessing the site via the B1417, Rayne Road, or School Road.

# Project benefits

While Hedgehog Grove will ensure a significant contribution to the UK's national energy goals, we also want to ensure that there are diverse local benefits from the proposals.

## Community benefit fund

Hedgehog Grove are pleased to a community benefit fund of £70,000 per annum for the duration of the site's lifespan, which is 30 years. The fund will therefore provide a total of £2,100,000 across the duration of the project, beginning at the start of the construction period.

The fund will target the following social and environmental causes:

- Climate and Environmental Improvements
- Youth Inclusion and Education
- Road Safety
- Cultural Dialogue and Heritage

If you have a suitable project that you would like to be considered, please get in touch at **feedback@hedgehoggrovesolarfarm.co.uk**.

**We also welcome any suggestions using the sticky notes below.**

# Project benefits

## Environment and biodiversity

The solar farm provides the opportunity to keep the land free from intensive farming practices and chemicals, allowing species to thrive and soil quality to improve.

Biodiversity net-gain will be achieved by new and improved hedgerow, habitats, and tree planting. These enhancements will include:

- New planting to support a diverse range of critical invertebrate species and encourage new species along the site boundary;
- Wildlife corridors and the installation of bat and bird nesting boxes, woodpiles, and beehives along the site boundary;
- Additional measures including new hedgerows to improve connectivity and reinforcement of existing field boundary hedgerows where required.

We anticipate that these measures will result in a biodiversity net gain beyond the 10% mandatory requirement. We anticipate a biodiversity net gain of over 20% on this site.

Speak to our team members at the consultation events for further details on the biodiversity enhancements the project will provide.

# Supporting Local Wildlife, Including Hedgehogs

The solar farm is expected to create a quieter, low-traffic environment over much of the site, which can offer a more hospitable setting for local wildlife. Once operational, areas around and beneath the solar panels are typically left undisturbed for long periods, allowing vegetation to regenerate and creating a calmer landscape that may be well-suited to species such as hedgehogs.

By removing intensive land uses from the site, the development could help provide more connected, low-disturbance green spaces that some wildlife species might find beneficial.

The name “Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm” reflects TotalEnergies’ strong commitment to biodiversity, highlighting a dedicated conservation programme on site aimed at protecting the hedgehog species, currently facing significant decline across the UK. The company is working in partnerships with local and national stakeholders to deliver tangible biodiversity improvements, including new and enhanced hedgerows, habitats, and tree planting to create safe spaces for hedgehogs.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Will you be using fencing around the panels?

Yes, we will be using deer fencing around the panels for both human and deer safety. It is necessary to exclude deer from the full solar area for the safety of both animals and equipment – this will be assured through the construction of deer fencing around blocks of solar panels. Deer may also be excluded from areas of new planting (BNG) which is required to 'bed in' over a defined period. It is not expected that any off-site works would be necessary to mitigate impacts on deer.

## Will animals be able to graze under the panels?

It is possible for animals to graze under the panels, however this is not necessarily the best way to manage wildlife. We will be submitting a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) as part of our application, which will address potential approaches to agrivoltaics in more detail.

## Will there be setbacks from the panels?

Yes, we are including set backs from all footpaths, bridleways and Public Rights of Way (PRoWs). These will be up to 15 metres from the centre of each path, which will then be followed by planted hedgerows and fencing around the panels. The panels will be set back 5 metres from the fences.

We are also introducing a 50 metre setback along the entirety of the Flitch Way, in recognition of its importance to the local area, as well as offsets around nearby residences to the proposals.

## Are solar farms noisy?

No, solar panels have no moving parts and emit no sound. Inverters and transformers can emit very low-level sound, but these are sited away from houses and cannot be heard from more than a few metres away. A full noise assessment has been conducted for the site and the project design will consider potential mitigation, if necessary.

## Will public footpaths be closed?

No. Public footpaths will be kept open for the full duration of the construction and operation of the solar farm. Paths may require temporary rerouting during the construction phase.

## Will the solar farm harm wildlife?

Wildlife thrives within solar sites when managed sensitively. We are committed to a significant biodiversity net gain through the enhancement of existing landscape features and habitats, creation of skylark plots and new habitats to provide opportunities for local wildlife and improved connectivity across the site.

## How long will the solar farm be in operation?

The Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm is only temporary and will be decommissioned and returned to full agricultural land once it's come to the end of its useful life, in approximately 30 years.

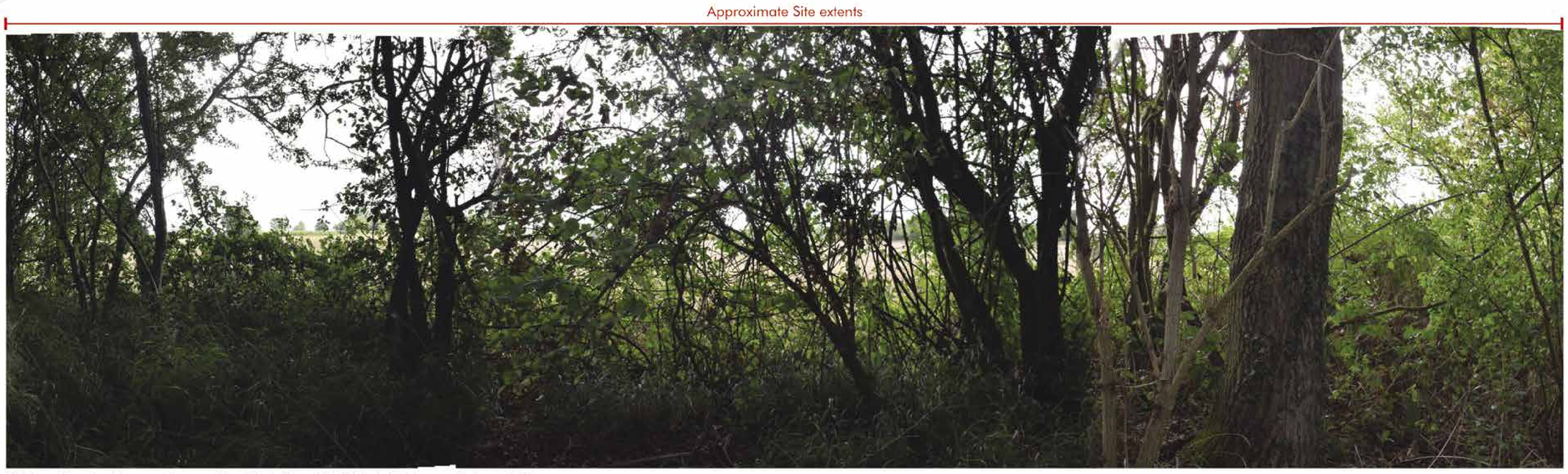
## Will the solar farm change the land classification?

The solar farm is a temporary development and will not change the land classification from agricultural greenfield to commercial/industrial brownfield. When the solar farm has been decommissioned, we will be required to restore the land to sole agricultural use.

# Viewpoints

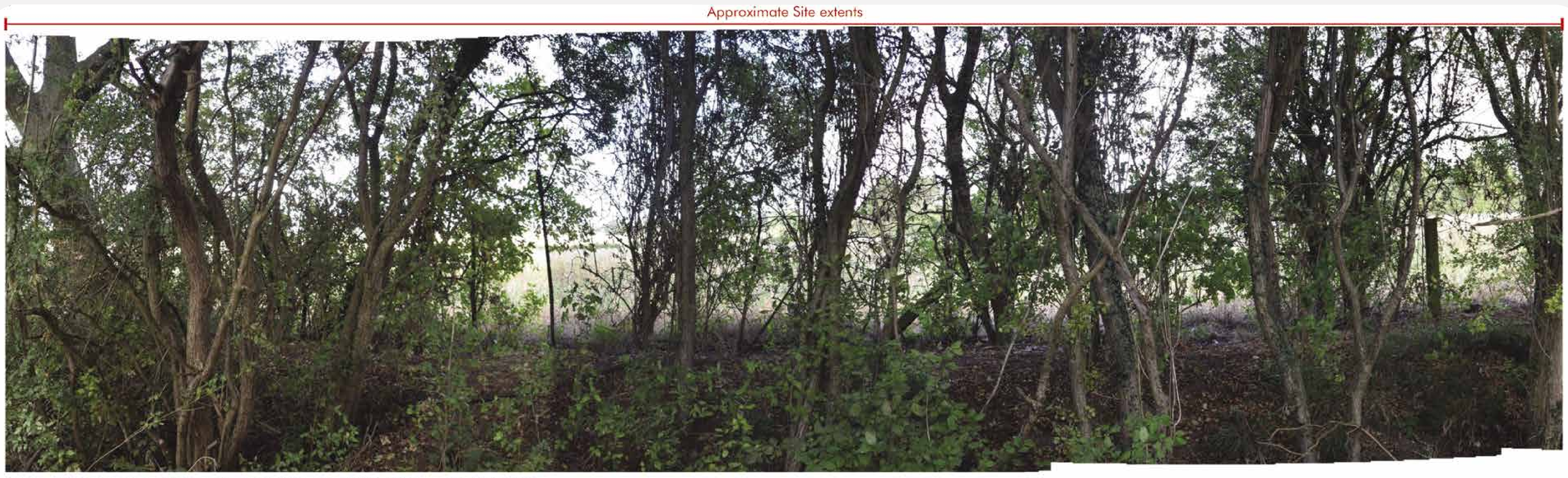
The following selection of viewpoints have been provided to highlight current visibility of the Site. As part of our application, we will be submitting detailed photomontage images with CGI overlays of the proposals once constructed, to show where screening will be placed around the Site. These will be made available in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) in the submitted application.


Approximate Site extents



VP 1a - View looking south from The Flitch Way / NCN 16, (Bridleway Felsted 130)

Approximate Site extents



VP 1a - View looking north from The Flitch Way / NCN 16, (Bridleway Felsted 130)

Approximate Site extents

VP 1b - View looking south on The Flitch Way / NCN 16, (Bridleway Felsted 130)

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VP 1c - View looking south on The Flitch Way / NCN 16, (Bridleway Felsted 130)


VP 1d - View looking southwest from The Flitch Way / NCN 16, (Bridleway Felsted 130) on foot bridge over A120


VP 2 - View looking west from Bridleway Felsted 20

# Viewpoints

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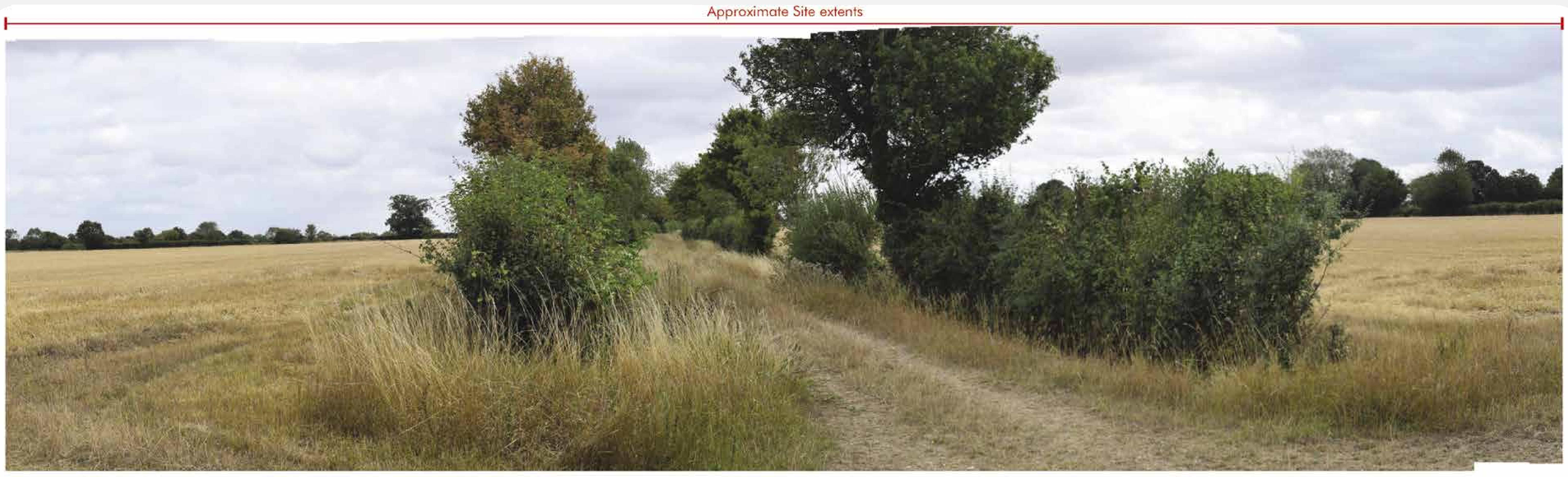
VP 2 - View looking east from Bridleway Felsted 20




VP 3 - View looking east from Bridleway Felsted 20 entering the Site near Frenches Farm.


VP 4 - View loking north from Rayne Road adjoining the southern Site boundary

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Approximate Site extents

VP 5 - View looking northeast from the southwestern corner of the Site adjacent to Stevens Lane

Approximate Site extents

VP 6 - View looking south from Footpath Rayne 39 adjacent to Fenton's Farm

Approximate Site extents

VP 7 - View looking northeast from Footpath Rayne 22 near junction with School Road, Bartholomew Green

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VP 8 - View looking north from Footpath Felsted 71 as it crosses an area of higher ground 600m south of the Site, northwest of Helpestones Manor


VP 9 - View looking southeast from Footpath Felsted 15


VP 10 - View looking south from Footpath Felsted 52 100m north of the Site to the south of Straits Farm, west of Gransmore Green

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VP 17 - View looking south from Bridleway Felsted 20 parallel to the A120