

Draft Statement of Community Consultation

3 August 2020

Introduction

Sunnica Ltd is inviting feedback from the local community on its proposals for Sunnica Energy Farm.

What is this document?

This document, known as a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), sets out how we plan to consult with the local community. It includes:

- The background to our proposals
- The planning process we must follow
- How we have developed our approach to consultation
- How we will be consulting the local community
- How we will publicise the consultation
- How people in the local community can find out about our proposals
- How people in the local community can respond to the consultation
- What we will do with feedback from the consultation

Why are we publishing this document?

We are legally required to publish this document because of the type of development we are proposing. The proposed Sunnica Energy Farm is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008. This is because its proposed generating capacity exceeds 50 megawatts (MW). As the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm constitutes an NSIP, we must apply to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for our proposals.

The Planning Act 2008 sets out a duty to consult with the local community, statutory consultees, landowners and local authorities before submitting an application for a DCO to the Secretary of State. The part of the Planning Act 2008 that requires us to consult with the local community is known as section 47 – it also requires us to publish this SoCC.

The planning process

We are developing the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm under the Planning Act 2008. This requires us to submit an application to the relevant Secretary of State to obtain a DCO for our proposals. We anticipate submitting our application in spring 2021.

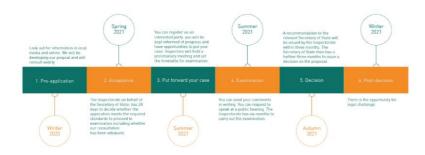


Figure 1: The planning process

The Planning Act 2008 and consultation

The Planning Act 2008 also sets formal requirements for how we must consult on our proposals before submitting a DCO application. We are at the stage in developing our proposals where we will consult to meet this requirement – this is known as a statutory consultation. We will use the feedback that we receive during the statutory consultation to help us develop our final proposals for Sunnica Energy Farm before submitting our DCO application.

As part of our DCO application, we will submit a Consultation Report detailing our approach to consultation, the feedback that we received during the statutory consultation, and how we have had regard to it. When considering our DCO application, the Secretary of State must consider whether the consultation that we have undertaken has been adequate.

Environmental impact assessment

The proposed Sunnica Energy Farm is considered to be 'EIA development' for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') Regulations. As a result, an Environmental Statement ('ES') reporting the EIA will be submitted alongside the DCO application. As part of the statutory consultation, we will be seeking feedback on a preliminary environmental information report ('PEIR'), which will set out our preliminary findings from the EIA.

More information

You can find more information about the Planning Act 2008, the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and their role and how to participate in the DCO process on the PINS National Infrastructure Planning website - https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/, or by calling PINS on 0303 444 5000.

The proposed Sunnica Energy Farm

About us

Sunnica Energy Farm is being brought forward by Sunnica Ltd. This is a joint venture between two established solar energy specialists, Tribus Energy and PS Renewables. Both Tribus Energy and PS Renewables are highly experienced in the development of solar energy and energy storage projects both within the UK and abroad, including at Eveley and Oakfield in Hampshire. Together, the partners behind Sunnica Energy Farm already contribute nearly 1GW of clean energy to the UK national electricity transmission system.

Sunnica Energy Farm

Sunnica Energy Farm is a proposed new solar energy farm and battery storage facility connecting to the Burwell National Grid Substation in Cambridgeshire that will allow for the generation, storage, import and export of up to 500MW of electrical capacity.

It would be located across four separate sites: Sunnica East A, Sunnica East B, Sunnica West A and Sunnica West B. Each of these sites would be connected to each other, and the National Grid substation, using underground cables. These will be accompanied by landscaping, biodiversity areas and a range of associated infrastructure including access tracks, construction compounds and offices.

The proposed Sunnica Energy Farm would use ground-mounted photovoltaic (PV) panels to generate electricity from the sun. It will also include two battery energy storage systems, which will allow it to store, import and export electricity to and from the national electricity grid.

Further details of the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm will be included in materials published as part of the consultation.

Commented [PP1]: We will add a scheme plan below once it has been agreed for consultation.

Developing our approach to consultation

We have undertaken early engagement with stakeholders to develop our approach to community consultation.

This has included meeting with officers and members at the local authorities that the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm is located within, relevant statutory advisers, potentially affected land interests, parish and town councils, and relevant members of Parliament. We also conducted a period of non-statutory consultation between 17 June 2019 and 28 July 2019.

During the non-statutory consultation, we held a series of public consultation events in the vicinity of the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm. We also made consultation materials available at a number of public information points and online at the Sunnica Energy Farm website: www.sunnica.co.uk. We considered feedback from the host local authorities in developing our approach to non-statutory consultation.

Through the non-statutory consultation, we invited feedback on our early proposals for Sunnica Energy Farm, our approach to environmental impact assessment, and our approach to consultation.

The ways in which our early engagement has influenced our approach to consultation include:

- Ensuring consultation activity includes Snailwell and Kennet
- Targeted advertising through the local press including adverts in the Ely Standard and East Anglian Daily Times
- Engagement with parish and town councils in the vicinity of the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm between periods of consultation
- Consulting with groups that have a particular interest in public rights of way such as The Ramblers and bridleways groups

We are required to consult with host authorities as defined by section 43(1) of the Planning Act 2008 on the development of this SoCC. We consulted these authorities between 3 August 2020 and 1 September 2020. Table 1 below summarises feedback from this consultation and our responses to it.

Commented [PP2]: We will be adding a table summarising the feedback received and how we have responded to it.

Consulting the community

We are inviting the community living in the vicinity of the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm to take part in the statutory consultation and provide feedback on our developed proposals.

We want to make sure that those potentially affected by our proposals have the opportunity to understand them and provide their views. To support this, we have already undertaken a period of non-statutory public consultation to engage with the community and wider stakeholders at an early stage in the development of the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm.

We are now sharing details of our advanced design proposals at a statutory public consultation to provide the community with further information about the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm and the opportunity to further influence our design proposals.

Consulting during the COVID 19 pandemic

We are consulting at a time when the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic means there are restrictions on holding public meetings and events.

We are aware of how important it is to make sure that anyone in the community who wants to find out more or share their views on the proposals can do so. We have developed a consultation programme designed to allow people from across the community to respond while complying with Government requirements in relation to COVID 19. As such, this document sets out a variety of different ways to find out more information and provide feedback.

In preparing our approach to consultation, we have considered Government guidance on COVID 19: www.gov.uk/coronavirus. We have also considered advice from the local authorities where the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm is located, the results of non-statutory consultation, and best practice guidance such as the National Infrastructure Planning Association's paper Development Consent Orders and the Coronavirus Pandemic (21 April 2020).

It is possible that the Government's advice regarding the COVID 19 pandemic may change during the consultation on our proposals or between the publication of this document and the beginning of the consultation. Therefore, we have set out below the different approaches that we propose to take if the Government's COVID 19 alert level changes.

What will be consult on?

During the statutory consultation, we will be asking for views on:

- The proposed Sunnica Energy Farm
- The short term and long term impacts of the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm includina:
 - Construction impacts
 - o Environmental impacts

- Operational impacts
- o Impacts from decommissioning
- The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR): this report builds upon
 the findings of our Scoping Report and the feedback received during the nonstatutory consultation. It will incorporate the results of the environmental surveys
 that we have carried out to date and will set out our preliminary conclusions on
 the potential significant effects of the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm on the
 environment.

Environmental impacts

We are in the process of carrying out an EIA for the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm. The proposed Sunnica Energy Farm is an EIA development, and therefore we will be publishing a PEIR as one of our consultation materials.

The PEIR gives information about the potential significant environmental effects of the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm and the measures proposed to reduce or avoid those effects to assist respondents in making well-informed responses to the consultation.

Who will we consult?

We will consult widely in accordance with this SoCC and encourage participation in the consultation from any person or group who is interested in the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm. Please see Table 2 below for the geographic areas within which we will consult.

We have defined a series of 'zones of consultation' for the purpose of publicising the consultation directly to the local community. This recognises the fact that levels of potential impact and interest are likely to vary with geography.

These zones are set out in Table 2 below alongside maps of the zones of consultation. For consultation zone 1, this comprises a buffer zone of at least 1 mile from the boundary of the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm, extended in places to reflect feedback from the non-statutory consultation and the EIA process.

Table 2: zones of consultation

Zone	Parameters
Zone 1	Any person or group likely to have a direct interest in the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm, as well as their political representatives (at a parish, district, county and Parliamentary level) as defined in Figure 3 below.
Zone 2	People living and working in the host local authorities of West Suffolk Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Suffolk County Council and Cambridgeshire County Council outside of consultation zone 1. Figure 4 below shows the location of these authorities.
Zone 3	Neighbouring districts including:

- Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
- Breckland Council
- Mid Suffolk District Council
- Babergh District Council
- Braintree District Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Fenland District Council

Neighbouring counties and unitary authorities including:

- Norfolk County Council
- Essex County Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Bedford Borough Council
- Northamptonshire County Council
- Peterborough City Council
- Lincolnshire County Council

The location of these authorities is shown in Figure 5 below.

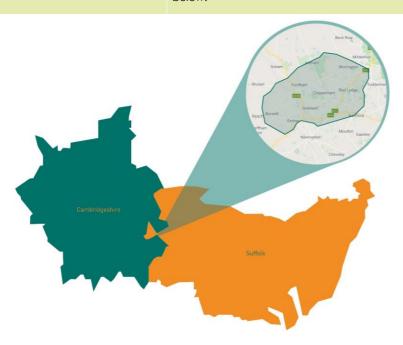


Figure 3: area of consultation zone 1 (source: Geolist)



Figure 4: area of consultation zone 2 (source: Ordnance Survey)

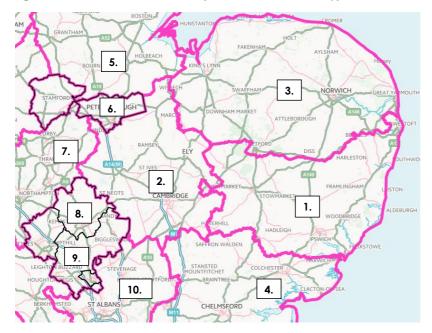


Figure 5: area of consultation zone 3 (source: Ordnance Survey)

Key:

- 1. Suffolk
- 2. Cambridgeshire
- 3. Norfolk
- 4. Essex
- 5. Lincolnshire

- 6. Peterborough
- 7. Northamptonshire
- 8. Bedford
- 9. Central Bedfordshire
- 10. Hertfordshire

We will also consult and continue our engagement with a range of statutory consultees as set out by Section 42 and Section 48 of the Planning Act 2008 and additional organisations that we recognise to have an interest in the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm. These groups include:

- Economic interest groups and organisations such as local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), chambers of commerce and representatives of the horse racing industry.
- Heritage consultees including Historic England and the National Trust
- Environmental consultees including Natural England and the Environment Agency
- Conservation groups such as the RSPB and Suffolk Wildlife Trust

How will we be consulting?

We will use a range of techniques to consult the community. These are designed to allow people with different needs across the community to take part in the consultation in a way that is convenient to them while complying with Government guidance on COVID 19. These are set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3: consultation publicity and techniques

Zone How we will publicise consultation within Writing to all addresses within consultation Sending a copy of a consultation zone 1 booklet providing a non-technical Writing to elected representatives, parish overview of the proposed Sunnica councils and community groups within the Energy Farm, the EIA process, the zone with details of the consultation consultation and planning process, how to take part in the Sharing a consultation information pack designed to support stakeholders promoting consultation, and proposed next consultation through their own existing steps to all addresses in communication channels such as social consultation zone 1. media feeds with local authorities, parish Inviting enquiries and responses councils and community groups within the online through the consultation website, by freephone, freepost or Publicising the consultation in the following email. This will provide a variety of newspapers circulating in the consultation means for consultees to respond in zone: the Newmarket Journal, the a way convenient to them. Cambridge News, Bury Free Press, the Ely Hosting a virtual public exhibition Standard and the East Anglian Daily Times. on the consultation website. Publicising the consultation via the following Hosting webinars which will include broadcasters: BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, a presentation regarding the BBC Suffolk, BBC Look East proposals and an opportunity to Advertising the consultation on social media ask auestions.

2	 Publishing details of the consultation online at www.sunnica.co.uk Writing to all district and county councillors at West Suffolk Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Suffolk County Council and Cambridgeshire County Council Writing to all parish councils within the consultation zone Sharing a consultation information pack designed to support stakeholders promoting consultation through their own existing communication channels such as social media feeds with local authorities, parish councils and community groups within the zone Publicising the consultation in the following newspapers circulating in the consultation zone: the Newmarket Journal, the Cambridge News, Bury Free Press, the Ely Standard and the East Anglian Daily Times Publicising the consultation via the following broadcasters: BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, BBC Suffolk, BBC Look East 	 Inviting elected representatives to take part in briefings through a webinar. Inviting residents of consultation zone 1 to book an individual appointment to discuss the proposals by telephone. Contacting community and voluntary organisations within consultation zone 1 to offer direct engagement. Publication of consultation information online at the consultation website. Compliance with the most up to date legal requirements in relation to public deposits. Hosting webinars which will include a presentation regarding the proposals and an opportunity to ask questions. Hosting a virtual exhibition on the consultation website. Inviting elected representatives to take part in briefings through a webinar. Publication of consultation information online at the consultation website. Inviting enquiries and responses online through the consultation website, by freephone, freepost or email.
	 Advertising the consultation on social media Publishing details of the consultation online at www.sunnica.co.uk 	
3	 Writing to the Leader and Chief Executive of local authorities within the zone Publicising the consultation in the following newspapers circulating in the consultation zone: the Cambridge News, the East Anglian Daily Times and Eastern Daily Press Publicising the consultation via the following broadcasters: BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, BBC Suffolk, BBC Look East Advertising the consultation on social media Publishing details of the consultation online 	 Publication of consultation information online at the consultation website. Hosting a virtual exhibition on the consultation website. Inviting enquiries and responses online through the consultation website, by freephone, freepost or email.

at www.sunnica.co.uk

These consultation techniques have been developed to comply with the current COVID 19 alert level set by the Government. At the time of publication, this is Level 3 – the pandemic is in general circulation. We recognise that the alert level may change during the consultation period, but that it is also important to provide certainty to consultees about how they will be consulted.

If the alert level is changed to Level 4 or Level 5, all contact will need to continue to be remote. If the alert level is changed to Level 1 or 2, we will consider holding public events at physical locations on a voluntary basis in consultation with local authorities. This would require time to organise and therefore we would assess on 27 October 2020 whether the alert level would permit them. If the alert level remained as 3 or higher on this date, we would not consider it possible to deliver this additional voluntary activity within the consultation period.

We will publicise any change in consultation arrangements by:

- Writing to all addresses and elected representatives within consultation zone 1
- Writing to all district and county councillors at West Suffolk Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Suffolk County Council and Cambridgeshire County Council
- Writing to all parish councils within consultation zone 2
- Publicising the change of arrangements in the Newmarket Journal, the Cambridge News, Bury Free Press, the Ely Standard and the East Anglian Daily Times
- Publicising the change of arrangements on social media

We will also need to consider how we will meet statutory requirements to place information on public deposit if public buildings are closed. The Government's view is that deposit requirements can be met by making documents available for inspection online. If public buildings are open to the public then deposit locations will be utilised, but if this is not possible, we will use our website to meet this statutory requirement.

Depending on the outcome of the consultation, we may conduct further, targeted, consultation on a voluntary basis.

Consultation information

We will produce a range of materials providing information as part of the consultation, including:

- A consultation booklet providing a non-technical overview of the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm, the EIA process, the consultation and planning process, and proposed next steps
- A virtual exhibition setting out information about the proposals and how to take part in the consultation
- A presentation to be given as part of webinars
- The PEIR, accompanied by a non-technical summary
- A consultation questionnaire designed to collect responses to the consultation

Copies of consultation information will be made available for review online at www.sunnica.co.uk and at public information points where possible. Hard copies of documents will also be made available on request.

Collection of responses

To capture participants' feedback, we will produce a consultation questionnaire inviting comments on the different elements of the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm. The questionnaire will be made available by direct mail to people living in consultation zone 1, online through the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm website, www.sunnica.co.uk, at public information points, and on request.

Consultees will be able to respond by completing a questionnaire online or returning a completed questionnaire using the contact details set out in this document during the consultation period.

Seldom heard audiences

It is important to ensure that consultation is inclusive and enables participation from a wide range of audiences, including those who are seldom heard in public consultation such as young people, seasonal workers and those for whom English is not a first language. We will do this by:

- Holding webinars at a variety of times, including evenings and weekends, to
 enable participation by people with different time commitments and making
 recordings of webinars available afterwards.
- Making provision for people who do not have access to the internet through the
 consultation programme. This will include sending a copy of the consultation
 booklet and consultation questionnaire to every address in consultation zone 1,
 offering one-to-one telephone appointments and making hard copies of
 consultation materials available on request.
- Choosing accessible venues for public information points if these are to be utilised.
- Producing our consultation materials in accordance with Government guidance on accessibility (available at: www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-touse-your-service/making-your-service-accessible-an-introduction#meetinggovernment-accessibility-requirements).
- Contacting community and voluntary organisations within consultation zone 1 to
 offer direct engagement and sharing a consultation information pack designed
 to support them in promoting consultation through their own existing
 communication channels such as social media feeds.
- Providing a variety of communications channels including a Freephone number, email address and Freepost address for those seeking information.

Consultation arrangements

How to take part in the consultation

The statutory public consultation for Sunnica Energy Farm will take place between 22 September 2020 and 2 December 2020.

Consultees can find out more by:

- Viewing a series of webinars we will give about the proposals online. These will
 offer the opportunity to ask questions about the proposals. These will include the
 following webinars:
 - o XXXX on XX/XX/XX: Introducing the consultation
 - o XXXX on XX/XX/XX: Sunnica West A and B
 - o XXXX on XX/XX/XX: Sunnica East A and B
 - o XXXX on XX/XX/XX: The grid connection
 - o XXXX on XX/XX/XX: Environmental impact assessments
 - o XXXX on XX/XX/XX: Construction and operations
 - o XXXX on XX/XX/XX: Repeat of Introducing the consultation
 - o XXXX on XX/XX/XX: Repeat of Sunnica West A and B
 - o XXXX on XX/XX/XX: Repeat of Sunnica East A and B
 - o XXXX on XX/XX/XX: Repeat of the grid connection
 - o XXXX on XX/XX/XX: Repeat of Environmental impact assessments
 - o XXXX on XX/XX/XX: Repeat of Construction and operations
- We will publish details of any additional webinars at www.sunnica.co.uk.
- Viewing a virtual public exhibition on our website, www.sunnica.co.uk, which will be available to view at any time from the start of consultation on 22 September 2020 to the close of the consultation at 5pm on 2 December 2020.
- Booking an appointment to speak with members of the project team about our proposals individually. You can book an appointment using the contact details provided below.
- Reading a booklet summarising our proposals. We will send a copy of the booklet
 to all addresses in consultation zone 1. The booklet will also be available from our
 website, www.sunnica.co.uk, and on request.
- Reviewing the PEIR and other consultation documents by going to our website, www.sunnica.co.uk, or one of the deposit points in Table 4 below. Hard copies of consultation documents will also be available on request. The availability of public information points may change during the consultation period due to the COVID 19 pandemic. In circumstances where the public information point becomes unavailable the consultation documents will not be available for inspection at that location and the consultation documents will need to be viewed either at an alternative public information point (if available) or via our website. You should check with the venue before visiting.
- Contacting us on 08081687925 or info@sunnica.co.uk.

Table 4: Public information points

Location	Opening hours
Mildenhall Library, Chestnut Close, Mildenhall IP28 7NL https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/visit/locations-and-times/mildenhall-library/	By appointment only – please contact the Library via its website
Newmarket Library, 1a, The Guineas, Newmarket CB8 8EQ https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/visit/locations-and-times/newmarket-library	By appointment only – please contact the Library via its website
Burwell Library, Village College, Cambridge CB25 0DU https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/directory/listings/burwell-library	Monday: 2:00pm – 5:00pm Tuesday: 10:00am – 5:00pm Wednesday: closed Thursday: 12:00pm – 7:00pm Friday: 2:00pm – 5:00pm Saturday: 10:00am – 1:00pm
The Beeches, Isleham 32 Mill St, Isleham, Ely CB7 5RY http://www.thebeechesisleham.co.uk/contact.html	Sunday: closed Monday: 9:00am – 3:00pm, 6:00pm – 8:00pm Tuesday: 9:00am – 3:00pm, 6:00pm – 8:00pm Wednesday: 9:00am – 3:00pm, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

	Thursday: 9:00am – 3:00pm, 6:00pm – 8:00pm Friday: 9:00am – 3:00pm, 6:00pm – 8:00pm Saturday: 9:00am – 1:00pm Sunday: 9:30am – 1:00pm
Soham Library,	Monday: 9:00am -
7 Clay St, Soham, Ely CB7 5HJ	5:00pm
https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/directory/listings/soham-library	Tuesday: 9:00am – 1:00pm
iisiary	Wednesday: Closed
	Thursday: 9:00am – 5:00pm
	Friday: 2:00pm – 5:00pm
	Saturday: 9:00am – 1:00pm,
	Sunday: Closed
La Hogue Farm Shop and Café, La Hogue Road, Chippenham, Ely CB7 5PZ	Monday: 9:00am – 5:00pm
https://www.lahogue.co.uk/	Tuesday: 9:00am – 5:00pm
	Wednesday: 9:00am – 5:00pm
	Thursday: 9:00am – 5:00pm
	Friday: 9:00am – 5:00pm
	Saturday: 9:00am – 5:00pm
	Sunday: 10:00am – 4:00pm

In addition, all of the consultation materials and the consultation questionnaire will be made available on the consultation website: www.sunnica.co.uk. Hard copies of consultation materials will be made available on request.

Responding to the consultation

We welcome feedback on our proposals for Sunnica Energy Farm. Anyone can share their views by:

- Completing a consultation questionnaire online at www.sunnica.co.uk
- Returning a questionnaire to FREEPOST reference RTRB-LUUJ-AGBY, c/o Newgate Communications, 50 Basinghall Street, London EC2V 5DE or info@sunnica.co.uk
- Submitting their comments by email to info@sunnica.co.uk or in writing to the above Freepost address.

Responses must be received by the consultation deadline of 2 December 2020.

How we will consider the responses

Following the statutory consultation, we will consider all the views that we receive and continue to develop our design for the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm ahead of submitting our DCO application to the Secretary of State. Our DCO application will include a Consultation Report setting out how we have had regard to all responses received.

Any comments received will be analysed by Sunnica Ltd and any of its appointed agents. Copies may be made available in due course to the Secretary of State, the Planning Inspectorate and other relevant statutory authorities so that feedback can be considered as part of the DCO process. We will request that any personal details are not placed on public record and will be held securely by Sunnica Ltd and its agents in accordance with the data protection law and will be used solely in connection with the consultation process and subsequent DCO application and, except as noted above, will not be passed to third parties.

The Planning Inspectorate has also published details of how it manages comments received in a Privacy Notice available on its website:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879604/Privacy_Notice_Final_15042020.pdf

Further information

For further information, please contact us by:

- Visiting the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm website: www.sunnica.co.uk
- Calling 08081687925 (9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday)
- Emailing info@sunnica.co.uk
- Writing to the project team at: FREEPOST reference RTRB-LUUJ-AGBY, c/o Newgate Communications, 50 Basinghall Street, London EC2V 5DE