Kirknewton Solar Farm and BESS Pre-application consultation report

Prepared by McDaid PR, November 2025

CONTENTS

Executive summary

TRIO Power Limited (the applicant), the project company of Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust, (ORIT) and managed by BLC Energy, is applying to West Lothian Council for Kirknewton Solar and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Farm, subject to the consenting procedures outlined in the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

The proposed development comprises around 83,000 individual solar panels and a BESS with an estimated export capacity of up to 40MW, supported by a BESS with 9MW capacity. The site is approximately 1.5km southwest of Kirknewton village, on land off Leyden Road, and falls entirely within West Lothian Council's boundaries.

This report outlines the community consultation activities undertaken by BLC Energy and its consultants from April 2025 to November 2025.

The programme was designed to create meaningful engagement as outlined in SG PAN 3/2010, and meet the requirements of West Lothian Council, the Planning Act and associated regulations.

The document sets out the outcomes of the consultation process and how the applicant responded to the community's feedback.

The purpose of the community consultation was:

1. To explain the following to local people and community representatives:
    - the proposed solar and BESS farm: location, size, scale and its features
    - the benefits of solar energy: how much renewable energy could be generated, contribution to local and national net zero targets and local biodiversity
    - The benefits of BESS: how they support renewable energy technologies and the National Grid
    - The potential impact of the solar farm and BESS on the landscape, traffic, hydrology, heritage and land use

2. To strengthen the involvement of local people and the local community at an early stage. This gave the project team more opportunity to provide information, answer queries and take account of local views before the submission of the planning application.

Summary of activity

- Neil Lindsay met with Kirknewton Community Council on 13 May 2025 to provide them with advance notice of BLC Energy's proposals.
- A Proposal of Application Notice was submitted to West Lothian Council on 22 May 2025.

- Email notification was sent to East Livingston and East Calder ward councillors, the constituency MSP and MP and regional MSPs in May 2025. They were provided with an overview of the project, contact details for the project team, details of the first public exhibition and the offer to meet with BLC Energy at a time convenient to them.
- A project webpage was launched (www.blcenergy.com/projects/kirknewton) which included a project overview, location, maps, an enquiry box and a project timeline. As the project progressed, material from the public events was added and news updates were linked on the page.
- Four public events were held for people to find more information and ask questions of the project team. An in-person public exhibition on 12 June 2025 was followed by a virtual exhibition on 16 June. A second public exhibition took place on 25 September, followed by a second virtual exhibition on 29 September.
- The events were advertised in the local media at least one week before. Adverts included a description and location of the proposed development; where to find further information; dates and locations of the public events; how and when to submit comments to the applicant and a statement that comments to the applicant were not formal representations to West Lothian Council.
- A press release was issued to the West Lothian Courier ahead of the second public exhibition.
- A leaflet invitation was delivered to 188 households within 2km of the site at least one week before both in-person public exhibitions.
- Feedback forms were provided at public events, a QR code took people to an online feedback form and the project webpage had an enquiry form for people to send in their comments.
- The team exchanged emails with several members of the community - these are summarised in the feedback analysis section and redacted for data protection.
- BLC Energy has had regular contact with Kirknewton Community Council throughout the consultation process.

Community consultation activity

All consultation activity was carried out by the applicants or consultants McDaid PR.

Kirknewton Community Council

- The team made early contact with the community council to introduce themselves and the project.
- Neil Lindsay gave a presentation to Kirknewton Community Council on 13 May 2025 and provided an overview of the project (see appendices). He answered questions and agreed to keep the community council and its associated development trust updated with projects. He asked for their recommendations on venues and timings for the public exhibitions.
- The community council was invited to the public exhibitions and kept updated throughout the consultation period.
- Following the second public exhibition, and before submission of the planning application, Neil Lindsay gave an update presentation to the community council on 14 October 2025 (see appendices).

Other elected representatives

- An introductory email was sent to East Livingston and East Calder ward councillors, the constituency MSP and MP and regional MSPs for the site. They were provided with an overview of the project and the details of the first public exhibition and offered more information and a meeting with the project team should they like one.
- An email was sent to the same stakeholders ahead of the second event to encourage their attendance.
- Sue Webber, MSP for Lothian region, attended the second exhibition and publicised the event and the proposed development on her Facebook page.

Project website

A project website, www.blcenergy.com/projects/kirknewton, went live to coincide with stakeholders and neighbours being informed about the proposed development. The webpage had details of the proposed development, including a location map and details about the number of solar panels and maximum output, as well as an enquiry form where people could submit their feedback or ask questions. The webpage was updated throughout the consultation period - exhibition materials and layout maps were added, along with a project timeline. Links to news about the project were also added, so that visitors to the webpage could easily find updates and any new information.

Public exhibitions

The applicant held four public events - two in person and two virtually - to allow the local community to find out more about the project, ask questions of the project team and provide feedback.

June events

In person

- An in-person exhibition was held on Thursday 12 June, 4-8pm in Kirknewton Village Hall.
- Around 40 people attended.
- The venue was recommended by Kirknewton Community Council, and the dates and timings were selected by the applicant to maximise attendance and avoid school holidays.
- The BLC Energy team included: Neil Lindsay, Andrew Bright, Andrew Ramand, Kitty Lindsay, Carolyn Davie and Sophia Cockell and Jo Kerr from SLR Consulting.
- Materials available for people to view included pop up banners with project information (see appendices), photomontages, zones of theoretical visibility maps and project layout maps. A 3D model was also available, which allowed residents to 'see' the proposed development from different locations in the vicinity.
- Attendees were encouraged to fill in a feedback form (see appendices).

Online

- A virtual event was held on Monday 16 June, 6.30-7.30pm.
- 10 people attended. People were asked to register via the BLC Energy website and were sent an email link before the event.
- Neil Lindsay presented and answered questions, supported by Sophia Cockell from SLR Consulting.
- Attendees were invited to fill in the feedback form online; some provided comments in the chat.

September events
In person

- A second in-person exhibition was held on Thursday 25 September, 4-8pm in Kirknewton Village Hall.
- 34 people attended.
- The BLC Energy team included: Neil Lindsay, Andrew Ramand, Kitty Lindsay, and Gavin Spowage and Jo Kerr from SLR Consulting.
- Materials available for people to view included pop up banners with project information (see appendices), photomontages, zones of theoretical visibility maps and project layout maps. A 3D model was also available, which allowed residents to 'see' the proposed development from different locations in the vicinity.
- Attendees were encouraged to fill in a feedback form (see appendices)

Online

- A virtual event was held on Monday 29 September, 6.30pm-7.30pm.
- Three people attended and the sign up procedure was the same as the first online event.
- Neil Lindsay presented and answered questions.
- Attendees were invited to fill in the feedback form online; some provided comments in the chat.

Promotion of public consultation events

Adverts

June: An advert appeared in the West Lothian Courier on 5 June 2025, seven days before the event (see appendices). The advert included a description and location of the proposed development; where to find further information; the dates and location of the public event; how and when to submit comments to the applicant; and a statement confirming that comments provided to the applicant would not constitute formal representations to West Lothian Council.

September: An advert appeared in the West Lothian Courier on 24 August 2025, more than seven days before the event. The advert contained the same information as listed above.

Poster

Printed copies of both adverts were sent to the community council ahead of the public events. These were displayed in the village shop.

Invitations to neighbours

June: A C5 flyer was posted to 188 residences within 2km of the proposed development and was timed to arrive more than seven days before the public event. The invitation included a description and location of the proposed development; where to find further information; the dates and location of the public event; how and when to submit comments to the applicant; and a statement confirming that comments provided to the applicant would not constitute formal representations to West Lothian Council.

September: A C5 flyer was posted to the same 188 residences within 2km of the proposed development and was timed to arrive more than seven days before the public event. The invitation included the same information as listed above.

Press release

A press release (see appendix) was issued to the West Lothian Courier, the Edinburgh Evening News and Edinburgh Live two weeks before the second public exhibition.

Feedback analysis

Feedback forms

Five feedback forms were collected throughout the consultation. The first question asked whether respondents had attended the exhibition - all had.

Q2. Do you support the use of solar energy in Scotland?
Very supportive — 3
Supportive — 1
Neutral — 1

Q3. Which of the following do you think would be a benefit of Kirknewton Solar and BESS farm?
(NB. Respondents ticked more than one answer)
Creating a reliable supply of renewable energy — 4
Relatively low visual impact — 1
Contribution to local and national net zero targets — 4
Low maintenance, little noise — 1

Q4. Do you have any concerns about the proposals?

All responses included verbatim

- *None, other than that Kirknewton may not benefit but the proposals say the village will*
- *I would like to thank BLC Energy for their first public consultation and providing the opportunity for initial feedback on the proposals.*
- *As a neighbour directly to the north of the project (<<address redacted for data protection>>), it would be helpful to see the detail of landscaping proposals once progressed with the landscape impact assessment. We would welcome the enhancement of the existing sparse tree belt along the northern boundary of the proposed eastern phase of the proposed scheme between Leyden Road and Overton Wood to minimise the visual impact of the development.*
- *Once the transport assessment has been conducted it would be welcomed if the proposed construction management plan / basic principles of access and egress during construction specifically can be made available with reassurances for neighbours that this has been reviewed. Leyden Road is a rural, untreated in the winter with a significant topography difference adjacent to the site and is constrained by a restricted height railway bridge / blind bend into and out of Kirknewton village via the A71. The alternative access to the site is via the A70 with relatively poor visibility, with a recent fatality at the Kirknewton / A70 junction occurring on 2nd May 2025 has compounded local concerns about the safety of this road.*
- *As an aside, it would be helpful to be clearer on the reasons why this location. I do not object to the principle of the solar farm, however would welcome more transparency on the location choice beyond the commerciality in the absence of Local Development Plan allocation within the greenbelt i.e. adjacent to a significant high voltage power line, in proximity to a primary substation, X distance from a settlement/neighbours.*

- *Yes, how will the solar farm impact my ham radio station with RF interference? I was told you could monitor this.*
- *It's on farmland and its impact on wildlife. Waiting to see outcome of wildlife studies.*
- *Where are all components manufactured? Do storage units release any gases?*

Q5. Do you have any suggestions for how the associated community benefit fund could be used locally?

- *"... some kind of benefit for more locally-affected homeowners directly disturbed by the development."*
- *"Use it to rent a property in the village as a doctor's surgery, like we used to have."*
- *"Improved areas for teens - such as basketball court, an area like a café with support or paid staff/locals to Balerno."*
- *"Please direct to community council"*
- *"To lobby main companies to reduce prices of utility bills"*

Other sources of feedback

The BLC Energy team received feedback from local residents by email, telephone, in person at the public exhibition and during the online exhibitions.

We tracked all of this feedback and, as some of it is based on address-specific concerns and could compromise respondents' personal data, we have summarised the predominant themes. Several written responses were received from residents living near the proposed site boundary at Newlands. The main points raised are summarised below.

- **Awareness and consultation**
  One household close to the site said they had only recently become aware of the proposals. They requested proactive communication with those living closest to the site.

- **Proximity and amenity impact**
  Residents directly adjoining the proposed site boundary raised significant concerns about the close proximity of solar infrastructure to their properties. They felt this would result in loss of amenity and a major change to the character of their immediate surroundings.

- **Visual impact and property value**
  Submissions argued that the proposed 100-metre buffer zone was insufficient to protect residential amenity. Respondents cited potential visual intrusion and referred to reports suggesting reduced property values near large solar farms. Concerns were also raised that new planting would take time to establish and may not be effective year-round. Requests were made for detailed visual impact assessments from nearby viewpoints and clarity on landscaping timescales and maturity.

- **Construction phase disruption**
  Residents requested detailed information on construction activities, including working hours, traffic movements, compound locations, and project duration. They asked that a full construction management and mitigation plan be shared with affected residents prior to planning submission. There were particular concerns about construction traffic and access routes.

- **Environmental and biodiversity considerations**
  Some respondents questioned the applicability of biodiversity research cited in project materials and requested access to full ecological and ornithological survey results once completed. There was also a request for clarification on whether a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be undertaken.

- **Wider energy strategy and reliability**
  One submission asked whether there is a broader strategy in place to improve the reliability and resilience of solar energy generation, suggesting interest in how this project aligns with national or regional energy policy and wider efforts to ensure consistent renewable power supply.

- **Carbon and environmental credibility**
  Submissions requested a carbon lifecycle assessment for the scheme, including emissions from panel manufacture, transportation, installation, and operation. Respondents also asked for details of the carbon payback period and the embedded carbon associated with the proposed battery storage units.

- **Supply chain transparency**
  Requests were made for full disclosure of the origin, manufacture and sourcing of all key components. Respondents sought assurance that the applicant's suppliers would comply with relevant sustainability and human rights standards, such as the UK Modern Slavery Act and EU Green Deal provisions.

- **Information requests**
  Key documents requested by residents included:

    - A construction management plan
    - A carbon lifecycle assessment
    - Biodiversity and ecological survey results
    - Full component and supply chain disclosure
    - Visual impact assessments from nearby viewpoints
    - Details of landscape planting and screening measures

Developer's response to feedback

We identified eight themes regarding concerns or issues about the proposal, from the different sections of feedback forms, letters, emails and conversations with local people and representative groups.

This feedback has helped shape and evolve the layout and design of the proposed solar farm and BESS, alongside the various technical surveys undertaken.

Where consultees have raised potentially significant issues, we have adapted the layout where possible and/or provided more information to help allay concerns or address misunderstandings.

More information on the evolution of the layout can be found in Chapter 3 of the EIA report, which accompanies this planning application.

The key issues raised are summarised in the table below, with commentary on how BLC Energy has responded to or addressed the concern.

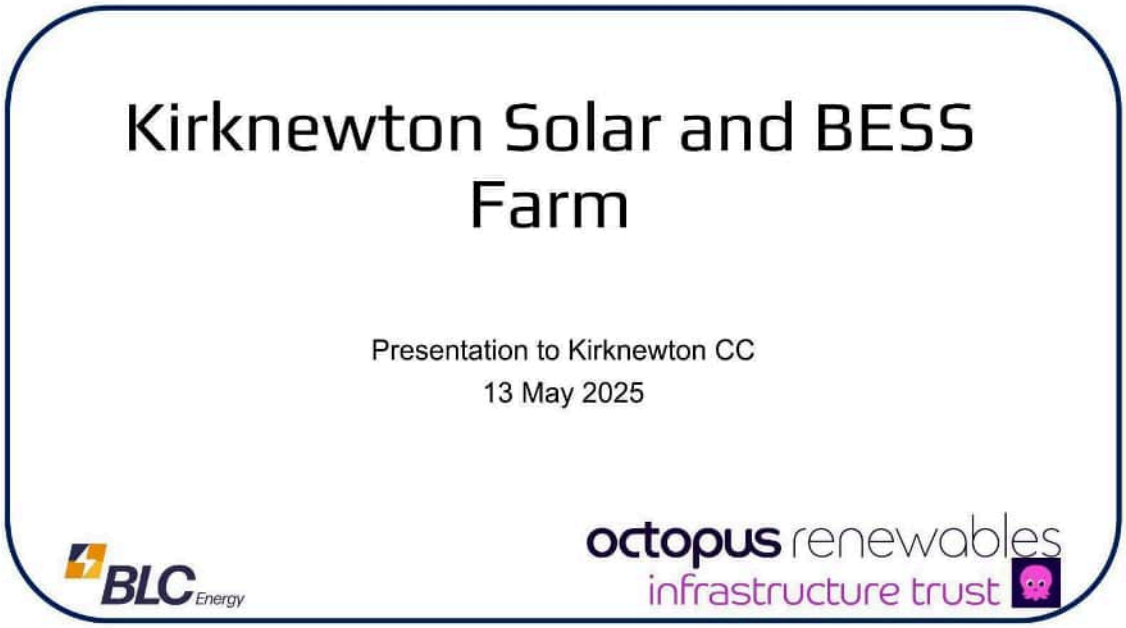
Issue	Developer's response/ mitigation
Awareness and consultation - one household said they hadn't been made aware	All households within 2km of the site received a leaflet invitation and the public exhibitions were advertised in the local newspaper. Local elected representatives, including the community council and ward councillors, had also been informed and encouraged to share information. We agreed to take extra care that this property would receive all information in a timely manner and have established email communication with them.
Proximity, visual impact, amenity impact and property value	A full Landscape and Visual Impact report is included in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The report found no significant impacts. The applicant has left a significant buffer (100m) from the nearest houses to solar panels. In this space, new hedgerows and planting will provide screening and support biodiversity. Sheep will graze around the panels. The BESS component of the project will be around 850m from the nearest property and screened. A noise assessment was conducted and found that the predicted operational noise is not significant, and no additional mitigation is required. Evidence on solar farms' impact on property prices is mixed: some research shows a slight boost to

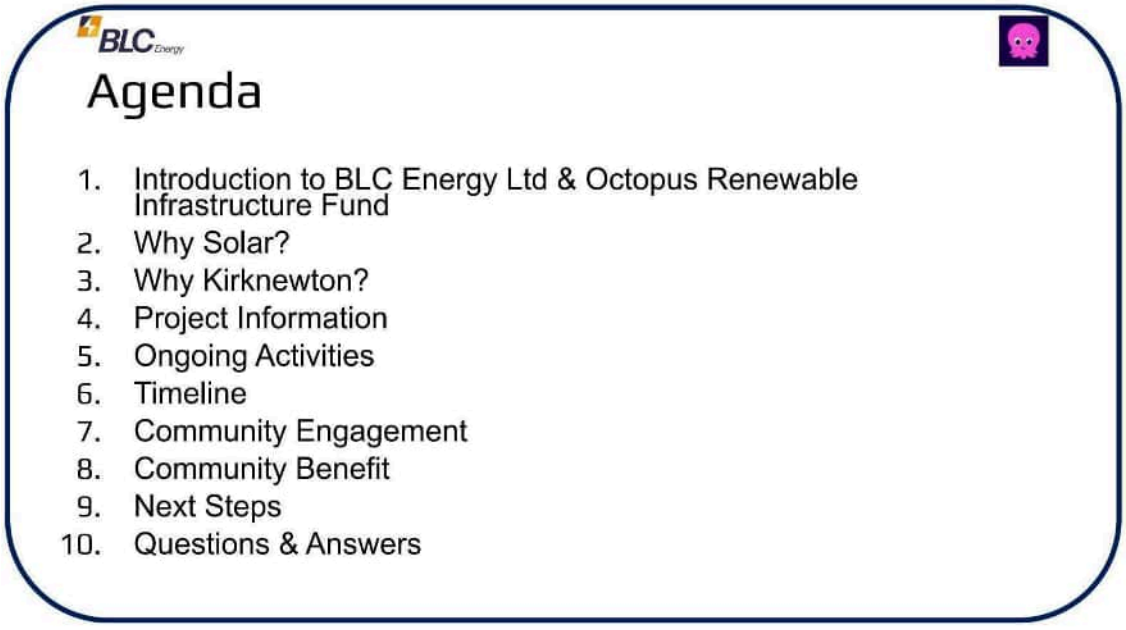
	property values in some areas, other research shows a neutral or negative effect.
Construction phase disruption	Construction should take eight to 12 months, depending on weather conditions. The developer will work with West Lothian Council on a construction management plan. In response to residents' concerns about safety on Leyden Road, all construction traffic will access the site from the A70 to the south. In addition, temporary signage will be provided in the vicinity of the A70/Leyden Road junction, and a banksman will be employed to ensure vehicles reversing into the site will do so under supervision.
Environmental and biodiversity considerations	A full ecological impact assessment was conducted and is submitted as part of the EIA.
Supply chain transparency, carbon and environmental credibility	BLC Energy and Octopus Energy Generation are signatories to the UK Solar Industry Supply Chain Statement (https://solarenergyuk.org/supply-chain-statement/). Solar panels and associated electrical components will be sourced from Tier 1 suppliers, ensuring full traceability of environmental and social impacts. All manufacturing facilities are independently assessed, and both. It is anticipated that much of the infrastructure will be manufactured in Asia.
Wider energy strategy and reliability	The applicant has included a BESS in the proposal to tackle the intermittency of solar. The BESS will export electricity to the grid when it is needed and store it when it is not.
Information requests ● Key documents requested by residents included: ○ A construction management plan ○ A carbon lifecycle assessment ○ Biodiversity and ecological survey results ○ Full component and supply chain disclosure	● A Construction Environmental Management Plan will be provided post-consent. ● Carbon lifecycle assessment is not required. ● Biodiversity and ecological survey results are included within the application. ● Full component and supply chain disclosure is not included and is not typical within this sort of application. However, the developer is a signatory to the UK Solar Industry Supply Chain Statement (see above). ● Visual impact assessments included. ● Landscaping included within the LVIA.

○ Visual impact assessments from nearby viewpoints ○ Details of landscape planting and screening measures	

APPENDICES

Presentation to Kirknewton Community Council (13 May 2025)





BLC Energy Ltd & Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust (ORIT)

- BLC Energy was set up in 2022 to develop solar and BESS projects in the UK. The 3 partners have over 60 years experience of developing renewable energy projects and have secured planning consent for 3 solar projects in Scotland.
- We are a Scottish company based in Perthshire with offices and team members in Aberuthven and Edinburgh.
- 2 partners also, directors in SLR a leading environmental and engineering consultancy with 4000 staff, will be providing specialist input into the planning process
- We are currently developing 11 Solar and Bess projects throughout the UK of which 5 are in Scotland
- In 2023 we entered into a development partnership agreement with Octopus Energy (via Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust- ORIT) and work with them on an exclusive basis.

BLC Energy Ltd & Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust (ORIT)

- Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust (ORIT) is one of the funds managed by Octopus Energy Generation dedicated to operating renewable energy projects in the UK, Europe and Australia.
- ORIT has a market capitalisation of £378m and as part of the Octopus Energy Generation group, has £6.7bn assets under management and a total generating capacity of 802MW (47% of which is Solar) This equates to 362,000 homes powered by its renewable energy each year
- Octopus Energy is now the largest domestic energy supplier in the UK.

Why Solar?

- It is the cheapest and fastest way to create new energy production in the UK.
- Provides Scotland and UK with better energy security from local generation
- Dependable generation and proven technology
- Does not need any Govt support to build or operate- no follow on cost to consumers
- Has minimum impact on land, environment and neighbours.
- Has potential to significantly improve local biodiversity and soil health

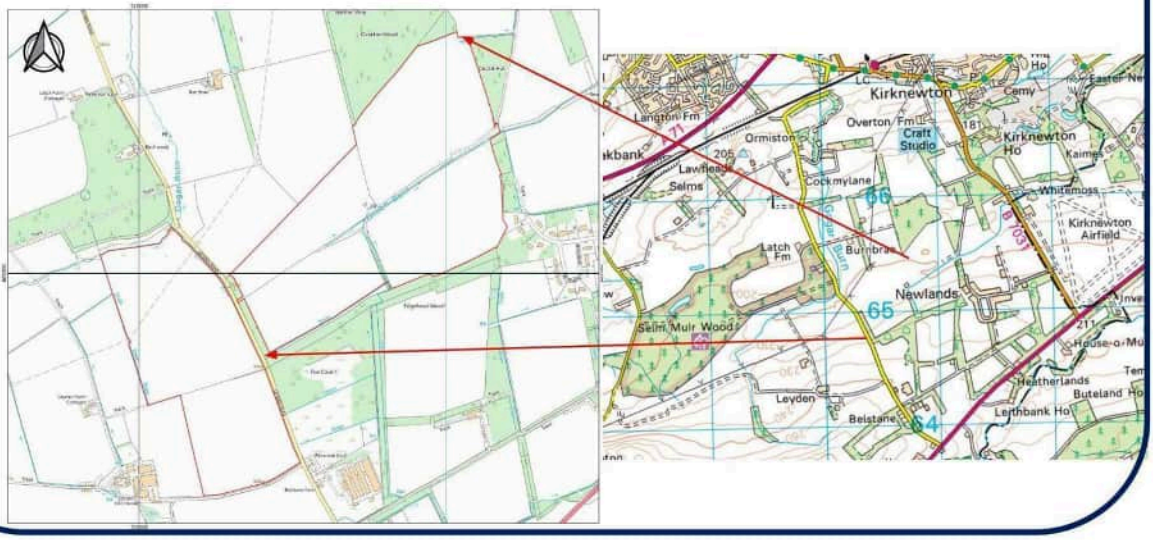
Why Kirknewton?

- No obvious environmental constraints on the site- no designations
- Viable grid connection to Currie via underground cabling
- Access directly off public road with minimal disruption to local community
- Predominantly Grade 3 & 4 agricultural land classification
- Opportunity to buffer from neighbouring properties
- Supports Government targets for both Renewable Energy and Solar Generation

Project Information

- 40MW Solar, 9MW Battery grid connection to Currie GSP
- c51k MWh generation or c51m units of electricity each year (equivalent to annual electricity needs of 18,888 houses- Livingston)
- Current design based on 700w panels and 2MWh battery
- Application will go to the West Lothian Council as under 50MW

Project Location



Ongoing Activities

- Environmental studies March - October 25
- Design Freeze Oct 25
- 1st Public Exhibition June 2025
- 2nd Public Exhibition October/ November 2025
- Planning submission to W Lothian Council November-December 2025

Community Engagement

- Community Council – Kirknewton
  - Suggest a liaison group made up of 2 councillors from CC to meet regularly to get updates on project activity .
- As it is a major application to W Lothian Council, 2 public exhibitions are required at least 14 days apart- these will be advertised in the press, via the website, via the CC & by a local mailshot- suggest a 2km radius from the site centre.
  - 1st exhibition June 2025.
  - 2nd exhibition will be once final design is fixed and will show project plans, environmental studies, visualisations, 3D model of the project in the local area etc. Feedback forms will be provided. Suggested date October/November 2025
- Web pages will be created to provide information on the project, dates of key meetings, etc.
- Will engage with other local interest groups

Community Benefit

- BLC Energy & ORIT will set up a community benefit fund to support local initiatives in the area.
- The design and value of this fund to be worked on with the CB working group
- These funds are not linked to the planning determination in any way.
- Community Benefit good guidance is being prepared by Solar Energy UK and once published will be forwarded to the CB working group. It is likely to suggest a minimum donation of £400 per Solar MW per annum for the duration of the project life.
- BLC Energy & ORIT would like to offer £500 per MW per annum split into 2 funds. One to support local projects, one to be given as grants to local households struggling with cost of living increases, loss of winter fuel payment etc

Next Steps

- Environmental Surveys
- Public Exhibition June 2025
- Review of Feedback
- Report back to Community Council

Questions & Answers

Thank you

BLC Energy Ltd
www.blcenergy.com
info@blcenergy.com
Tel: 0131 3804985

Advert (West Lothian Courier, 5 June 2025)

Children supported through payment

Over 12,000 children were supported through the Scottish Child Payment by families in West Lothian.

The Scottish Child Payment - currently £27.15 per week for each eligible child under 16 - is a key part of the Scottish Government's mission to eradicate child poverty.

Independent analysis shows that child poverty in Scotland is four percentage points lower than it would be without this targeted support.

Almond Valley MSP Angela Constance said: "Under John Swinney's leadership, the Scottish Government has made tackling child poverty its top priority - and it's working. Scotland is the only part of the UK where child poverty is expected to fall directly because of government policy.

"In Almond Valley, this support is not just numbers on a page - it's food on the table, shoes on growing feet, and breathing space for families who are doing their very best.

"Here in Scotland we're focused on getting help to those who need it most."

Win a £25 gift card to spend at The Centre

Dressed to impress Pick up the latest summer fashions at Primark based at The Centre, Livingston

STAFF REPORTER

The Centre, Livingston, which is one of Scotland's largest shopping centres, has over 150 great stores to choose from including H&M, New Look, River Island and M&S and lots of brilliant places to enjoy a bite to eat including Nando's, Five Guys, wagamama and Las Iguanas.

With the first official day of summer on June 20 almost upon us, it's time to ditch the heavy woollies and replace them with lighter and brighter attire that's mood-boosting and eye-catching in colour trends like yellow, orange, red and powder pink.

Primark have a huge selection of summer wardrobe staples and statement pieces which will see you through every occasion this season from work and holiday wear to celebrations and festivals.

There's a great range of accessories too including suitcases, travel pillows, handheld fans and bags covering all sizes, colours and styles to suit everyone like cross body, bucket and totes.

If you are planning to spruce up your summer footwear, check out the latest range of footbed, flip flops and sliders for men, women and kids.

To be in with a chance of winning a £25 Gift Card to spend at The Centre, Livingston, simply send your answer to the competition question below to ross.thomson@reachplc.com by Monday, June 9.

When does summer officially start?

A – June 20
B – June 25
C – June 27

Treat your dad with an £800 makeover with The Centre, Livingston competition. See Page 16 for more info.

For full details of all the activities and events within The Centre, check out www.thecentrelivingston.com.

BLC Energy

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm: Pre-application Consultation Public Events

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 7

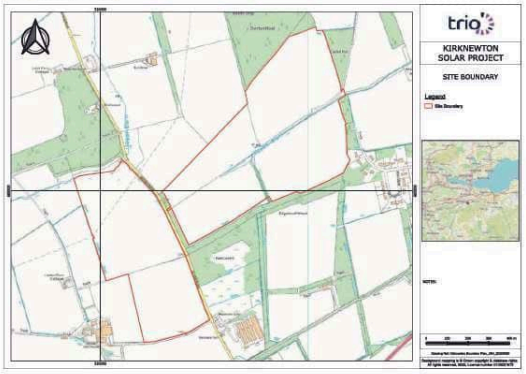
Proposal

Development of a solar farm consisting of ground-mounted photovoltaic (PV) solar modules with an estimated export capacity of up to 40MW, supported by a 9MW battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated infrastructure on land 1.5km south of Kirknewton, at Leyden Road, East Calder, EH27 8DQ.

BLC Energy is holding public exhibitions as part of its pre-application community consultation for this development proposal. A second set of public events should be held in autumn/ winter 2025.

Events will be held at:
Kirknewton Village Hall, 2 Main Street, Kirknewton, EH27 8AH
Thursday 12 June 2025, 4pm-8pm
A virtual event will take place on:
Monday 16 June, 6.30pm-7.30pm
Further information can be found at the QR code or by emailing info@blcenergy.com

Site boundary



You can make comments on the proposals directly to the developer at this stage, either at the above events, by emailing the above address or filling in a feedback form at www.blcenergy.com. We kindly ask for comments by Tuesday 1 July.

Please note that comments made to BLC Energy at this time are not representations to the planning authority, West Lothian Council. Formal representations can be made to West Lothian Council once a planning application has been submitted.

Invitation to neighbours (delivered from 27 May 2025)

BLC Energy

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm: First public exhibition

We have the pleasure of inviting you to attend the first public exhibition for the proposed Kirknewton Solar and Battery and Energy Storage System (BESS) Farm on land 1.5km south of Kirknewton, at Leyden Road, East Calder, EH27 8DQ.

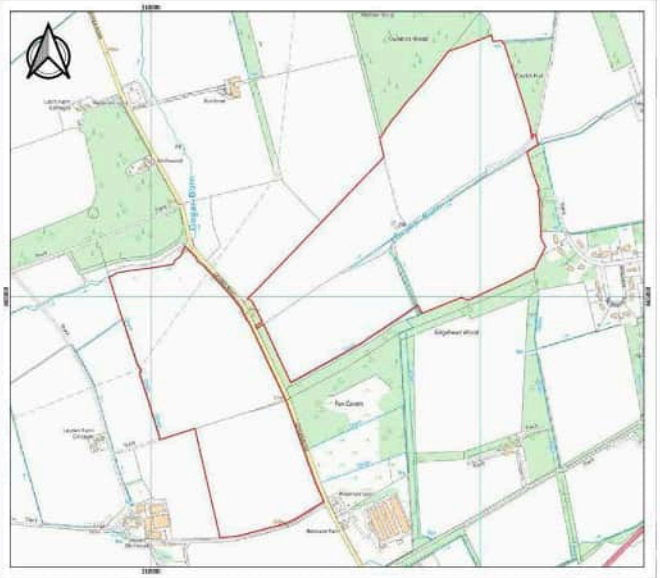
Join us at the public exhibition:

Thursday 12 June 2025
4pm-8pm

Kirknewton Village Hall, Main Street, Kirknewton, EH27 8AH

An online presentation will take place on **Monday 16 June, 6.30pm-7.30pm**

These events are being held by BLC Energy Ltd.



About Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm will comprise approximately 83,000 individual solar panels with an export capacity of 40MW and a Battery and Energy Storage System (BESS) with a capacity of 9MW. The development will supply power directly to the National Grid via the Currie substation.

The project will generate enough energy to provide the equivalent electricity needs of over 12,500 homes per year.

Kirknewton Solar and BESS will generate an annual community benefit fund worth £500 for every megawatt (MW) of export capacity on site, for the 40-year project life.

We welcome your feedback

This exhibition is an opportunity to see up-to-date plans for the project, including photomontages and a 3D model, ask the project team questions and provide feedback on our proposals.

The information boards and the availability to provide feedback on the proposal will also be available on the website.

You can comment on the proposals directly to the developer at this stage, either at the public exhibition or by emailing **info@blcenergy.com**.

We kindly ask for comments by **Tuesday 1 July**.

Please note that comments made to BLC Energy at this time are not representations to the planning authority, West Lothian Council. Formal representations can be made to West Lothian Council once a planning application has been submitted.

Further information about the project can be found on the website **www.blcenergy.com**

If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback, please email us at **info@blcenergy.com**

About us

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm is being developed by BLC Energy and owned by TRIO Power Limited. TRIO is owned by the Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust (ORIT), a fund managed by Octopus Energy Generation (OEGEN). OEGEN is one of the largest renewable energy investors in Europe, managing more than 230 large-scale green energy projects with a combined capacity of 3.25GW.

Exhibition boards (Thursday 12 June)

Landscape and environmental considerations

We'll be undertaking a series of assessments and studies across the site and its boundaries. Some of these are already underway.

Assessments

- Landscape and visual
- Landscape and ecological mitigation
- Preliminary ecological appraisal
- Outline biodiversity enhancement management plan
- Flood risk and drainage
- Transport
- Noise
- Glint & glare
- Cultural heritage
- Outline battery safety management plan

Ecology surveys

- UK habitat classification survey
- Protected mammals
- Great Crested Newt habitat suitability index
- Daytime bat walkover
- Ground-level tree assessment
- Breeding bird surveys
- Wintering bird surveys
- Terrestrial mammal
- Bat emergence surveys
- Otter and vole suitability assessment
- Badger monitoring

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website

Biodiversity net gain

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity following national and local guidance.

Bats

We aim to be bat-friendly. To support bats around the site, we will

- follow the most recent NatureScot guidance about bats and solar farms;
- create commuting corridors, stand-off distances from suitable habitat, and we'll supplement vegetation and hedging to support connectivity with woodland stands; and
- undertake ground-level tree assessments to look for trees with potential roost features and buffer these where appropriate.

Birds

To benefit breeding birds and species like the yellowhammer, lapwing and wrens, we will:

- seed a wildflower and grass mix within the site that is appropriate to the local area; and
- create a strip between the solar panels and fencing, ideally around four metres wide, and leave it mostly unmanaged. This will create different heights of grasses, which is good for hunting.

Trees and hedgerows

We will maintain existing and plant new trees and hedgerows to improve screening, as well as create new wildlife corridors.

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website

BLC Energy

INDICATIVE IMAGE

Battery Energy and Storage System (BESS)

Why does the site include a BESS?

Battery storage, or battery energy storage systems (BESS), are devices that enable energy from renewables, like solar and wind, to be stored and then released when the power is needed most.

Battery storage technology has a key part to play in ensuring homes and businesses can be powered by green energy, even when the sun isn't shining or the wind has stopped blowing.

BESS Features

- **Cells and containers:** We'll have approximately 96 battery cells housed within six containers. The exact model and manufacturer will be determined later, but they will be a maximum height of 2.6m.
- **Layout:** The containers will be placed on a raised platform, with 0.5m between each container.
- **Security:** The BESS will be secured by 2.4m tall fencing.
- **Monitoring and control:** Each of the containers will have early warning sensors.
- **Safety:** Each of the cells/ containers will be fitted with a water suppression system.
- **Location:** We've placed the BESS in a part of the site where visual impact is minimised and it is over 500m from any property.
- **Access:** The BESS will have two access points for vehicles.

According to the National Grid

Every day engineers at National Grid and electricity grids worldwide must match supply with demand. Managing these peaks and troughs becomes more challenging when the target is to achieve net zero carbon production. Fossil-fuel fired plants have traditionally been used to manage these peaks and troughs, but battery energy storage facilities can replace a portion of these so-called peaking power generators over time.

The UK government estimates technologies like battery storage systems – supporting the integration of more low-carbon power, heat and transport technologies – could save the UK energy system up to £40 billion by 2050, ultimately reducing people's energy bills.

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website

BLC Energy

Community benefit fund

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm will generate an annual community benefit fund worth £500 for every megawatt (MW) of export capacity on site.

This equates to £20,000 per annum for the 40-year project life, to be split between local initiatives and grants to local households.

We would like to work with Kirknewton Community Council and Kirknewton Community Development Trust to decide how best to distribute the fund.

£500 per MW
value of annual community benefit

£20,000 pa
for the 40 year project lifespan

Tell us your ideas

What are your priorities for the local area? Where do you think this fund could do the most good? Please inform a member of the team or fill in one of our feedback forms.

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website

BLC Energy

Next steps

Today's event is part of the public consultation being undertaken by BLC Energy to provide information and collect feedback about our proposal for Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm.

Your comments will help improve the quality of our planning application and inform related proposals for a community benefit fund.

We will hold another event in winter 2025, and hope to submit a planning application in late 2025 to West Lothian Council.

We'd like your feedback

We'll use the thoughts and comments you provide today to shape our proposals. Fill in a feedback form today or use our online form. Please provide all comments by **Tuesday 1 July.**

Thank you for coming today

Please note that comments made to BLC Energy at this time are not representations to the planning authority. There will be an opportunity to make representations to West Lothian Council once a planning application has been submitted.

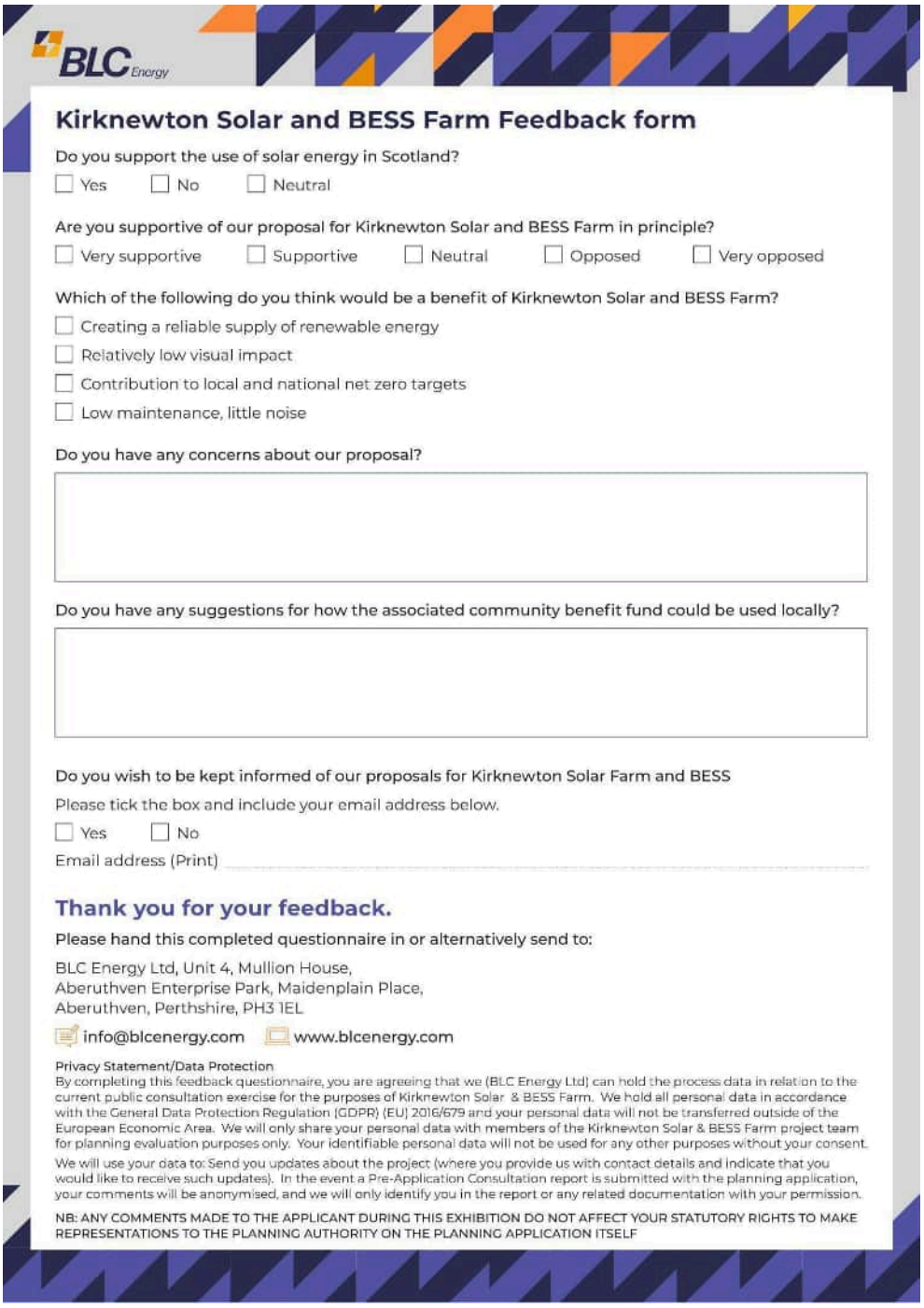
Stay in touch

Further information about the project can be found on the website **www.blcenergy.com**

If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback, please email us at **info@blcenergy.com**

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website

Feedback form (June 2025)



BLC Energy

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm Feedback form

Do you support the use of solar energy in Scotland?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Neutral

Are you supportive of our proposal for Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm in principle?

☐ Very supportive ☐ Supportive ☐ Neutral ☐ Opposed ☐ Very opposed

Which of the following do you think would be a benefit of Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm?

☐ Creating a reliable supply of renewable energy
☐ Relatively low visual impact
☐ Contribution to local and national net zero targets
☐ Low maintenance, little noise

Do you have any concerns about our proposal?

Do you have any suggestions for how the associated community benefit fund could be used locally?

Do you wish to be kept informed of our proposals for Kirknewton Solar Farm and BESS

Please tick the box and include your email address below.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Email address (Print) .....

Thank you for your feedback.

Please hand this completed questionnaire in or alternatively send to:

BLC Energy Ltd, Unit 4, Mullion House,
Aberuthven Enterprise Park, Maidenplain Place,
Aberuthven, Perthshire, PH3 1EL

info@blcenergy.com www.blcenergy.com

Privacy Statement/Data Protection

By completing this feedback questionnaire, you are agreeing that we (BLC Energy Ltd) can hold the process data in relation to the current public consultation exercise for the purposes of Kirknewton Solar & BESS Farm. We hold all personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679 and your personal data will not be transferred outside of the European Economic Area. We will only share your personal data with members of the Kirknewton Solar & BESS Farm project team for planning evaluation purposes only. Your identifiable personal data will not be used for any other purposes without your consent.

We will use your data to: Send you updates about the project (where you provide us with contact details and indicate that you would like to receive such updates). In the event a Pre-Application Consultation report is submitted with the planning application, your comments will be anonymised, and we will only identify you in the report or any related documentation with your permission.

NB: ANY COMMENTS MADE TO THE APPLICANT DURING THIS EXHIBITION DO NOT AFFECT YOUR STATUTORY RIGHTS TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE PLANNING AUTHORITY ON THE PLANNING APPLICATION ITSELF

Advert (West Lothian Courier, 4 September 2025)

Have your say on boundary changes

The views of West Lothian residents are set to be sought over plans to change both primary and secondary boundaries in Bathgate and the north of West Lothian from August next year.

A consultation has been launched to change a number of school catchments , with the aim of making sure they fit better with local community ties as well as community council and natural geographic boundaries.

One of the key aims of the proposals is to address longstanding community wishes for the whole of the Wester Inch area in Bathgate to be part of the catchment for Simpson Primary and Bathgate Academy. Other changes would see the Standhill and Inchcross areas moved from the Windyknowe Primary and Armadale Academy catchments

The proposed changes would not impact on any pupils currently attending West Lothian schools.The consultation runs until October 10 and to take part visit the council website.

Make your voice heard at choir's open evening

All smiles Members of Linlithgow RFC Male Voice Choir

ROSS THOMSON

Members of Linlithgow RFC Male Voice Choir are making preparations for their new 2025/26 musical programme.

Ahead of that, the choir are inviting prospective new members to come along and meet them at an open evening at Linlithgow Rugby Club on Monday, September 8, starting at 7.45pm.

Choir chairman Jim Carlin is hoping for a good turnout on the open night.

He said: "We had a wonderful 2024/25 season, which ended with a hugely enjoyable tour to Denmark in May.

"We also continued to raise funds for many good causes - including bursting the £20,000 barrier for cumulative funds raised for CHAS (Children's Hospices Across Scotland) and taking the total to £20,615.

"New members joining the Choir is extremely important to make sure we have the flexibility and capacity to meet increasing performance demands, so new singers are always extremely welcome."

In recent years the choir has seen a healthy growth in numbers and so is well used to welcoming and supporting new members.

Events organiser Chris Thomas added: "We're very much a community-based choir, but we've always also enjoyed our overseas tours and have performed with other choirs at some wonderful venues including the Royal Albert Hall in London and the Usher Hall in Edinburgh.

"Keeping high performance standards alongside the great camaraderie and fun we have together is extremely important - as are our fundraising efforts.

"New members are always very welcome, so if you enjoy singing - and perhaps have been considering joining a choir for some time.

"Why not come along and meet us?

"We're a very friendly bunch!"

The choir open evening will take place on Monday, September 8, at 7.45pm at Linlithgow Rugby Club.

For more information on the choir visit the website at https://www.linlithgowrfcmalevoicechoir.co.uk. Alternatively visit the choir's Facebook page.

Invitation to neighbours (delivery started 2 September 2025)

BLC Energy

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm: Second public exhibition

We have the pleasure of inviting you to attend the second public exhibition for the proposed Kirknewton Solar and Battery and Energy Storage System (BESS) Farm on land 1.5km south of Kirknewton, at Leyden Road, East Calder, EH27 8DQ.

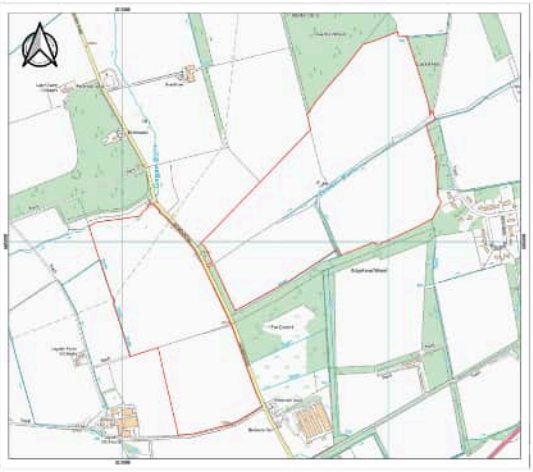
Join us at the public exhibition:

25 September 2025, 4pm-8pm

Kirknewton Village Hall, Main Street, Kirknewton, EH27 8AH

An online presentation will take place on **29 September 2025, 6.30pm-7.30pm**

These events are being held by BLC Energy Ltd.



About Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm will comprise approximately 83,000 individual solar panels with an export capacity of 40MW and a Battery and Energy Storage System (BESS) with a capacity of 9MW. The development will supply power directly to the National Grid via the Currie substation.

The project will generate enough energy to provide the equivalent electricity needs of over 12,500 homes per year.

Kirknewton Solar and BESS could generate an annual community benefit fund worth £500 for every megawatt (MW) of export capacity on site, for the 40-year project life.

What to expect

The project has now finished environmental surveys leading to the final design freeze. We look forward to sharing how the feedback from the first exhibition has been incorporated into this design, along with the results from surveys, including visual impact, noise and wildlife assessments.

The information boards and the availability to provide feedback on the proposal will also be available on the website.

Community Benefit Fund

We will also provide more information on a new initiative BLC Energy is proposing alongside TRIO. This could see 50% of the Community Benefit Fund go directly to local households, with another 50% going to community projects and initiatives.

This does not form part of the planning application and is being offered voluntarily by BLC Energy in partnership with TRIO.

We kindly ask for comments by 7 October 2025

Please note that comments made to BLC Energy at this time are not representations to the planning authority, West Lothian Council. Formal representations can be made to West Lothian Council once a planning application has been submitted.

Further information about the project can be found on the website www.blcenergy.com

If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback, please email us: **info@blcenergy.com**

About us

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm is being developed by BLC Energy and owned by TRIO Power Limited. TRIO is owned by the Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust (ORIT), a fund managed by Octopus Energy Generation (OEGEN). OEGEN is one of the largest renewable energy investors in Europe, managing more than 230 large-scale green energy projects with a combined capacity of 3.25GW.

Exhibition boards (Thursday 25 September)

BLC Energy

Welcome

Welcome to the second public exhibition for the proposed Kirknewton Solar Farm and Battery and Energy Storage System (BESS) development, located on land south of Kirknewton, at Leyland Road, East Calder, EH27 8DQ.

Your feedback

We have used the feedback from our first exhibition, held in June 2025, as well as other correspondence and conversations with local people, to inform and update our proposal. We have made changes to the layout, added information about the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), the community benefit scheme and more.

Thank you for all your comments so far, and we look forward to hearing further suggestions from you today.

We believe this is an excellent site for a solar farm because

- Good irradiance
- Viable National Grid connection
- No obvious environmental or technical constraints

About us

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm is being developed by BLC Energy, a Perthshire-based renewable energy developer, on behalf of TRIO Power Limited. TRIO Power is owned and funded by the Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust (ORIT), a fund managed by Octopus Energy Generation (OEGEN) and part of the Octopus Energy Group. OEGEN is one of the largest renewable energy investors in Europe, managing more than 230 large-scale green energy projects with a combined capacity of 3.25GW.

BLC Energy | octopus renewables infrastructure trust | octopus energy generation

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website.

BLC Energy

Updated layout

We have made changes to the proposed layout of Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm based on the feedback received at the first public exhibition and the results of environmental surveys.

We have altered the layout so that the solar farm and BESS have a minimal impact on the local neighbourhood and environment, while ensuring the development remains viable.

PREVIOUS SITE LAYOUT

We have...

- Moved the BESS further north, slightly downhill, to create a 50m buffer from the watercourse on the site's southern edge
- Increased the buffer between the solar panels and the houses at Newlands to allow space for additional planting to reduce views of the project from those houses.
- Included new hedgerows and tree planting to reduce views from the north and west.
- Included an easement of 10m along the water main that crosses the site to comply with Scottish Water guidance.
- Adjusted the fence line in the eastern land parcel to ensure that walking access around the field perimeters remains open.

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website.

Your feedback and questions from the first round of consultation

Using land for agriculture or renewable energy

Several people raised concerns over using prime agricultural land for energy production.

Our response

The land capability for agriculture rating for this site is 3.2 and 4.2: it is not prime agricultural land.

Class 3.2 - Land capable of average production, though high yields of barley, oats and grass can be obtained. Grass leys are common.

Class 4.2 - Land capable of producing a narrow range of crops, primarily on grassland with short arable breaks of forage crops.

This aligns with Scottish Government NPF4 guidance, which states that renewable energy projects should not be restricted due to agricultural land use classification.

If the solar farm is consented, the land will be used for sheep grazing, which is an ongoing agricultural use. Both farms currently have flocks of sheep.

Climate change poses a significant threat to food security in the UK, as it disrupts growing seasons, affects crop yields and increases the frequency of extreme weather events like floods and droughts.

Farming businesses need to diversify to remain viable. Land is already used for many non-food purposes, from tree planting and environmental schemes to pony paddocks, campsites and crops for the distilling industry. Renewable energy is another part of that mix. This project will allow the landowners to reinvest in their farming businesses.

With a recent study warning that over a third of farms could go out of business within five years, projects like this provide a vital lifeline.

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website.

Your feedback and questions from the first round of consultation

Transport, vehicular access and construction

We were asked how construction might affect local people, how the site would be accessed and the number of vehicles that would be using it. Additionally, we were asked whether we could access the site via the A70 instead of Leyden Road.

Our response

- All vehicular transport will access the site from the south via the A70 and onto Leyden Road.
- This follows feedback suggesting that access from the north via Kirknewton would not be suitable due to the narrow bridge gap and blind bends.
- A Transport Statement will support the application for the proposed development. This will provide the details of deliveries and any traffic management measures required.

Sourcing the panels, equipment and infrastructure

We were asked where the of the solar farm components would be manufactured.

Our response

The vast majority of the world's solar panels are manufactured in China.

Both BLC Energy and Octopus have signed up to the Solar Energy UK Supply Chain Statement. This includes a commitment to minimise and reduce the impact of extracting raw materials, to conserve water and to lower carbon emissions across the value chain, and to ensure the industry is free of any human rights abuses, including forced labour, anywhere in the global supply chain, for any component.

Octopus is also a member of the Solar Stewardship Initiative, which means it will only source panels from tier one manufacturers that are independently assessed.

Find out more

www.solarenergyuk.org
www.solarstewardshipinitiative.org

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website.

BLC Energy

Your feedback and questions from the first round of consultation

Recreational access

People expressed concern that they might not be able to enjoy walking on this land once the solar farm is built.

Our response

All the common walking routes around the site will remain open. The solar farm will require some fencing, but it will be limited to around the solar panels and BESS. Grass strips of land will be left between the fence and field margins, which people can walk on.

We changed the site design to address these concerns - as you can see from the updated layout, we adjusted the fence lines in the eastern part of the site so that walking access around the field remained.

Tree planting and screening

The loss of mature trees and hedgerows, and the visual impact of the solar farm and BESS, were raised as concerns.

Our response

- No trees will be cut down to build and operate this scheme
- New hedgerows and native woodland will be planted to increase screening of the scheme while enhancing the natural habitat for birds, mammals and insects.
- We will add additional hedgerow planting alongside the panels to minimise visual impact from Kirknewton and other settlements. Please look at the computerised 3D model at this exhibition to get an idea of what this might look like.
- A habitat management plan will be developed with West Lothian Council to ensure the right tree species are used to maximise habitat benefit.

LANDSCAPE MITIGATION PLAN

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website.

BLC Energy

INDICATIVE IMAGE

Battery Energy and Storage System (BESS)

Why does the site include a BESS?

Battery storage, or battery energy storage systems (BESS), are devices that enable energy from renewables, like solar and wind, to be stored and then released when the power is needed most

The BESS part of our proposal comprises

- Approximately 96 battery cells and inverters are housed within six containers. The containers will have a maximum height of 2.6m.
- The containers will be placed on a raised platform, with 0.5m between each container.
- The BESS will be secured by 2.4m tall fencing.
- One water tank, approximately 2.2m high.

We moved the BESS in response to advice from hydrologists due to proximity to a Scottish Water asset – please see the **updated layout board**.

- It is over 500m from residential properties.
- It is close to the site access, with two dedicated entry points, should there be a need for emergency access.

Safety

A few people asked about the safety of the BESS part of our proposal after the first exhibition.

Our response

BESS safety is ensured via regulations, site-specific features and best practice.

The units include early warning fire detection and suppression, thermal management and best-in-class design, installation and maintenance. The units should not emit any gases.

We will conduct regular, preventative maintenance of the individual units to ensure the system performs well and the risk of any failures is minimised.

Our design will follow the most up-to-date guidance and requirements from the National Fire Chiefs Council.

A Battery Safety Management Plan will be submitted as part of our planning application.

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website.

BLC Energy

Community benefit fund

Kirknewton Solar & BESS Farm will generate an annual community benefit fund worth £500 for every megawatt (MW) of export capacity for its 40-year project life.

We have met with the community council and the Kirknewton Community Development Trust to discuss some possible uses for the community benefit fund, and we received suggestions from local people.

Your suggestions

- Use it to bring down energy prices
- Ensure benefits go to the houses closest to the development
- Make local housing stock more energy efficient
- Use the money to help bring a doctor's surgery to the area
- Create local amenities for teenagers and other age groups: a basketball court or a cafe

Our response

If the application is approved, we will work with the community council and local development trust to develop the fund and incorporate your suggestions.

We are happy to hear more thoughts and further suggestions for how the money could be invested locally - please tell us your priorities.

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website.

BLC Energy

Next steps

Thank you for attending the second and final public consultation on the Kirknewton Solar and BESS development.

An online presentation will be held on **Monday 29 September 2025 at 6:30pm.** If you would like to attend, please contact **info@blcenergy.com** or submit a request via the website using the QR code.

Please share your feedback in one of the forms provided or via our website by **Tuesday 7 October 2025.** Your comments will be gratefully received and will help to inform the final project submission and allocation of the Community Benefit Fund.

Timeline

We plan to submit the planning application to West Lothian Council towards the end of October 2025. We will continue to engage with the community council and other interested parties.

We currently have a grid connection date for 2030 and are working with the grid operators to advance this. Any new connection date will likely be known in early 2026, after which we can confirm our construction timetable.

We'd like your feedback

Please take the time to complete the feedback form and submit this to BLC Energy Ltd no later than **Tuesday 7 October 2025.**

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project, please talk to a member of the project team.

Please note that comments made to BLC Energy at this time are not representations to the planning authority, West Lothian Council. Formal representations can be made to West Lothian Council once a planning application has been submitted.

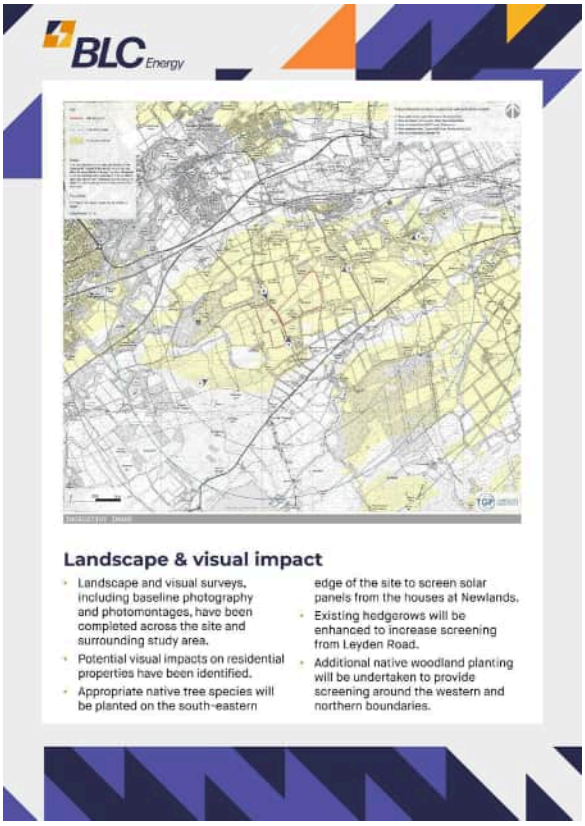
Thank you for coming today.

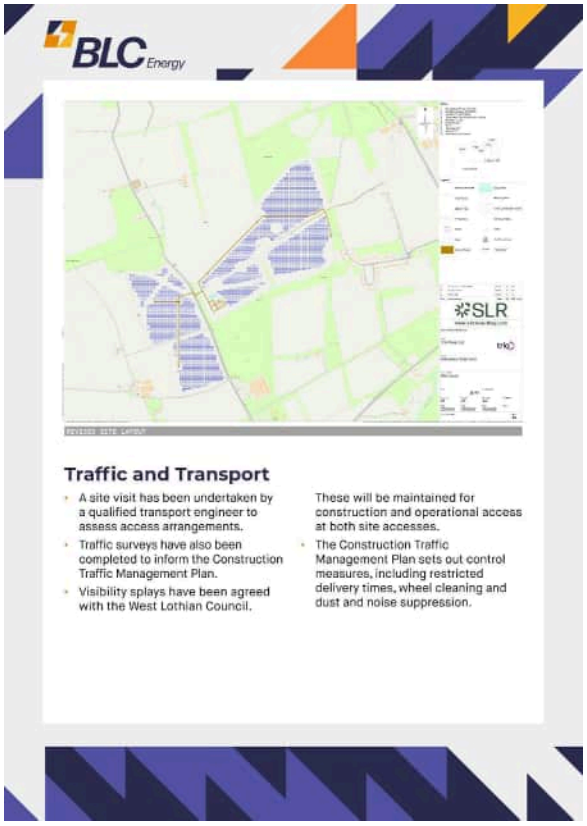
Further information about the project can be found on the website **www.blcenergy.com**

If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback, please email us at **info@blcenergy.com**

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of the project please talk to a member of the project team or visit our website.

A1 exhibition boards (Thursday 25 September)



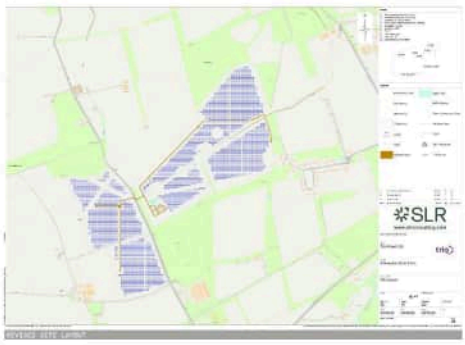


Arboriculture

- A tree survey was undertaken to assess the woodland around the site access points.
- The survey found that the woodland is of a type known as Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin. However, most of the trees are considered to be very low quality.
- Measures to preserve and enhance the quality of woodland within the site have been incorporated into the design of the development.
- Root Protection Areas will be maintained during construction and operation of the development.

Noise, Glint and Glare

- Baseline noise monitoring has been completed at key nearby sensitive residential receptors.
- There are no residential properties within 500m of the BESS and 100m of the solar panels and inverters.
- We are collaborating with technology providers to ensure operational noise complies with West Lothian Council guidance.
- Noise limits and working hours will be agreed with the council as part of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- The Glint and Glare assessment of the final design has confirmed that no significant impacts have been identified from the solar panels.

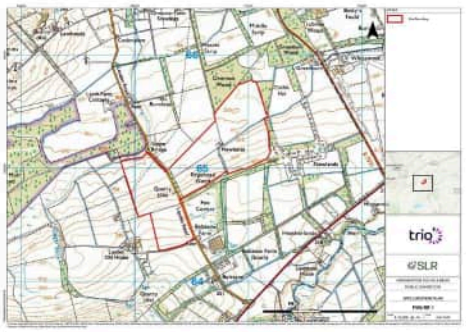


Hydrology

- A hydrology walkover survey has confirmed the location of watercourses within and around the site. The survey also considered any areas of potential localised flooding.
- Changes to water quality within these watercourses has been identified as a potential impact.
- Appropriate distances between the development components and watercourses has been incorporated into the design.
- A Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS), comprising a detention basin, filter drains and pipes has been incorporated into the design. The basin has been designed to retain any polluted runoff in the unlikely event of a fire at the battery units.
- A 10m buffer has been incorporated into the design, on either side of a Scottish Water mains pipe that runs under the site.

Ecology & ornithology

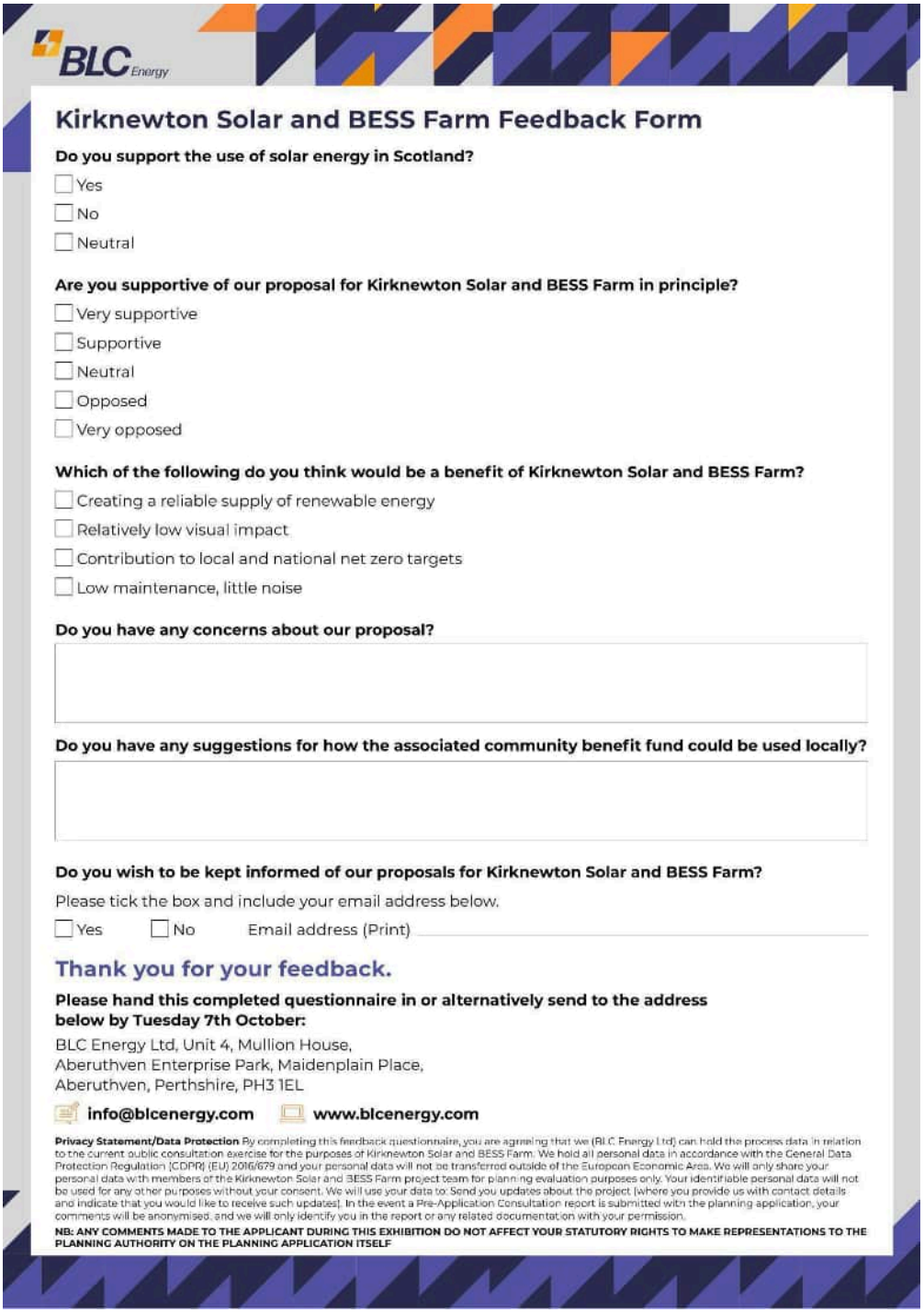
- A habitat survey has confirmed that the site consists of grasslands and arable land, surrounded by some woodland, hedgerows and gorse scrub.
- Potential disturbance to breeding birds, bats and other protected mammal species has been identified.
- Mitigation for bats has been incorporated into the design through appropriate buffers from vegetation and trees that provide suitable habitat for foraging and feeding.
- Impacts on protected mammal and bird species have been mitigated through appropriate habitat buffers within the design.
- No construction will take place near to suitable habitats during the bird breeding season.
- Wildflower meadows will be established and maintained and details of these will be included within the Landscape Mitigation Plan.



Cultural heritage

- Desk-based research and a walkover of the site has been undertaken by a chartered archaeologist.
- The research and walkover confirmed that the ruins of Newlands farmstead is located centrally within the site, on the northern bank of Green Burn. This feature has no protected designation.
- No additional known heritage assets have been identified within the site.
- No solar panels will be located within or in the vicinity of the former farmstead. Therefore, there will be no direct impact.

Feedback form



BLC Energy

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm Feedback Form

Do you support the use of solar energy in Scotland?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Neutral

Are you supportive of our proposal for Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm in principle?

- ☐ Very supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Opposed
- ☐ Very opposed

Which of the following do you think would be a benefit of Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm?

- ☐ Creating a reliable supply of renewable energy
- ☐ Relatively low visual impact
- ☐ Contribution to local and national net zero targets
- ☐ Low maintenance, little noise

Do you have any concerns about our proposal?

Do you have any suggestions for how the associated community benefit fund could be used locally?

Do you wish to be kept informed of our proposals for Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm?

Please tick the box and include your email address below.

☐ Yes ☐ No Email address (Print) _____

Thank you for your feedback.

Please hand this completed questionnaire in or alternatively send to the address below by Tuesday 7th October:

BLC Energy Ltd, Unit 4, Mullion House,
Aberuthven Enterprise Park, Maidenplain Place,
Aberuthven, Perthshire, PH3 1EL

info@blcenergy.com **www.blcenergy.com**

Privacy Statement/Data Protection By completing this feedback questionnaire, you are agreeing that we (BLC Energy Ltd) can hold the process data in relation to the current public consultation exercise for the purposes of Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm. We hold all personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679 and your personal data will not be transferred outside of the European Economic Area. We will only share your personal data with members of the Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm project team for planning evaluation purposes only. Your identifiable personal data will not be used for any other purposes without your consent. We will use your data to: Send you updates about the project (where you provide us with contact details and indicate that you would like to receive such updates). In the event a Pre-Application Consultation report is submitted with the planning application, your comments will be anonymised, and we will only identify you in the report or any related documentation with your permission.

NB: ANY COMMENTS MADE TO THE APPLICANT DURING THIS EXHIBITION DO NOT AFFECT YOUR STATUTORY RIGHTS TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE PLANNING AUTHORITY ON THE PLANNING APPLICATION ITSELF

Press release

PRESS RELEASE
15 September 2025

Kirknewton residents invited to view updated Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm plans

BLC Energy is holding a second public exhibition for its proposed solar and battery energy storage system (BESS) farm on land off Leyden Road, 2km southwest of Kirknewton village in West Lothian.

The event will take place from 4-8pm on Thursday 25 September at Kirknewton Village Hall, EH27 8AH.

An online presentation will take place from 6.30-7.30pm on Monday 29 September, for those who cannot attend in person.

The project team will be on hand to answer questions and share information.

They will also show the updated layout of the solar and BESS farm following feedback from the first exhibition, and share some of the preliminary survey results from the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Neil Lindsay, managing director of BLC Energy, said: “We have made changes to the layout in response to the various environmental surveys and feedback from neighbours and residents.

“We have increased the buffer between the solar panels and the houses at Newlands to allow space for additional planting, and included new hedgerows and tree planting to reduce views from the north and west.

“We have also adjusted fence lines to ensure that walking access around the field perimeter remains, and focused on biodiversity enhancement to help the local environment.

“We hope to see a lot of people at the event, and we would like to thank them for the local knowledge and the feedback they have passed on so far - it has really helped inform our proposal and had an impact on the design.”

Kirknewton Solar Farm and BESS will have an export capacity of 40MW of solar energy and 9MW of battery storage. The project will connect via an underground cable to the grid at Currie substation.

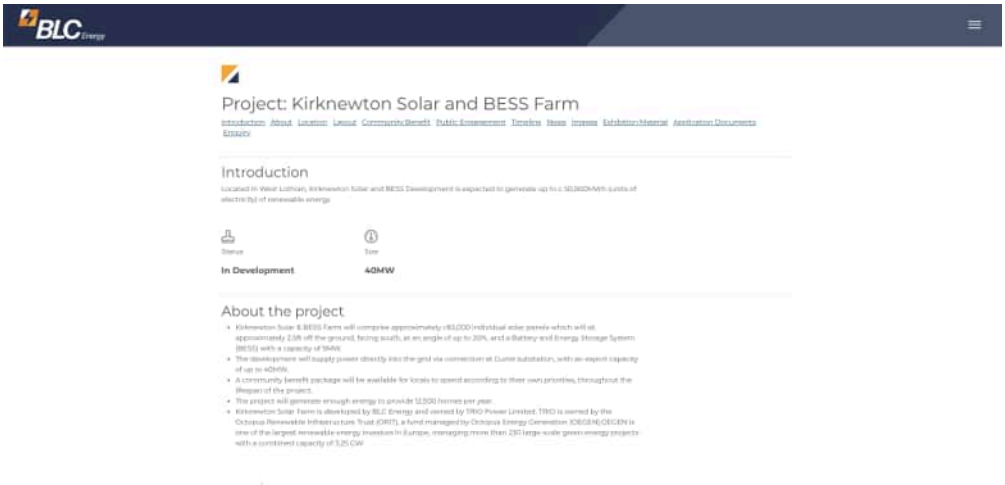
Kirknewton Solar & BESS Farm will generate an annual community benefit fund worth £500 for every megawatt (MW) of export capacity for its 40-year project life.
Neil Lindsay said: “We have already had some exciting conversations about how the community benefit fund could be used - including some really innovative suggestions. We hope to continue

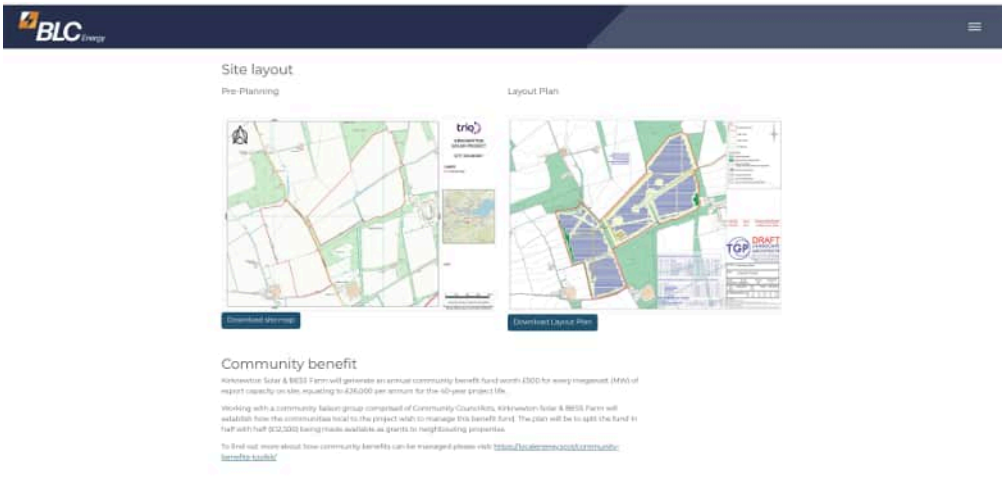
working with the local community council to progress those, but we are keen to hear from local people about their priorities for how the fund should be spent."

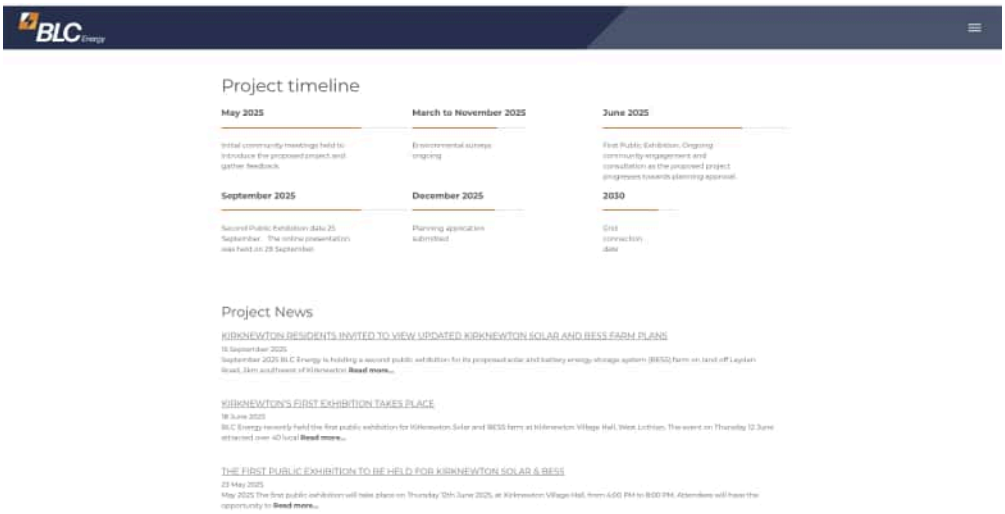
Visit https://www.blcenergy.com/projects/kirknewton/ for more information or to sign up for the online exhibition.

ENDS

Website assorted screenshots
(https://www.blcenergy.com/projects/kirknewton/)







Presentation to Kirknewton Community Council (14 October 2025)

Kirknewton Solar and BESS Farm

Presentation to Community Council

14 October 2025

BLC Energy

octopus renewables infrastructure trust

BLC Energy

Agenda

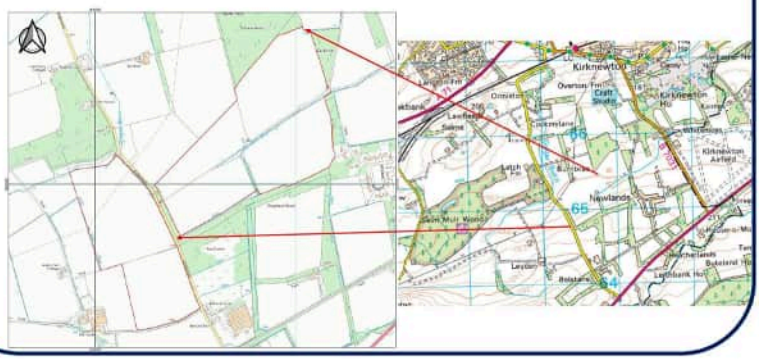
1. Project Information
2. Location
3. Project Design
4. Updated Design
5. Updated Layout
6. Buffers from Newlands
7. Landscape Mitigation Plan
8. Community Engagement
9. Next steps
10. Q&A

BLC Energy

Project Information

- 40MW Solar, 9MW Battery grid connection to Currie GSP
- c51k MWh generation or c51m units of electricity each year (equivalent to annual electricity needs of 18,888 houses- Livingston-19,000 in 2022 Census)
- Current design based on 760w panels and 2MWh battery
- Application will go to the West Lothian Council as under 50MW
- WLC has requested EIA (c 2week delay)

Project Location

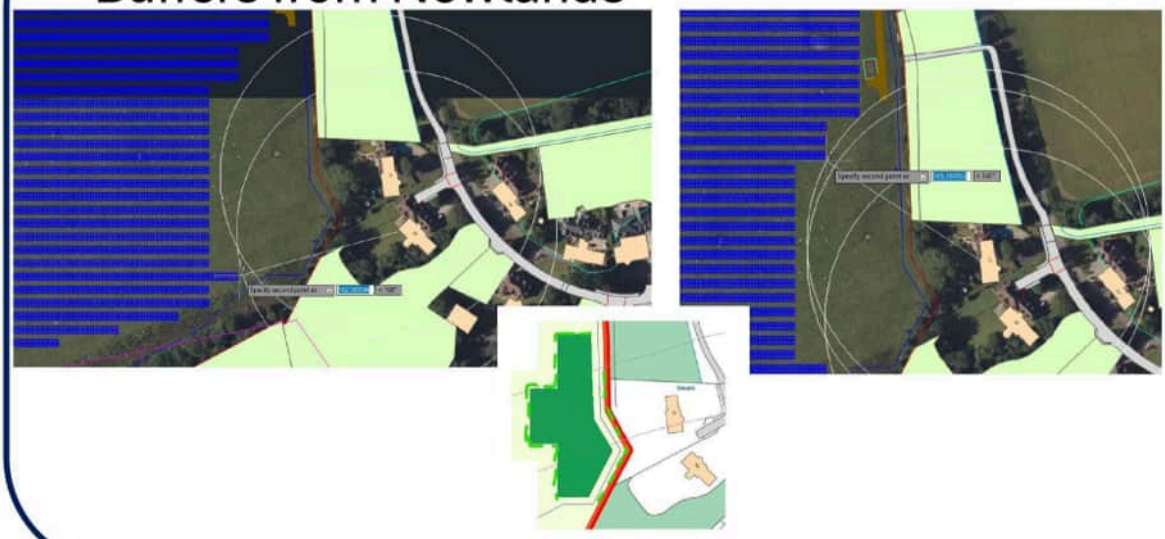


Starting Project Design

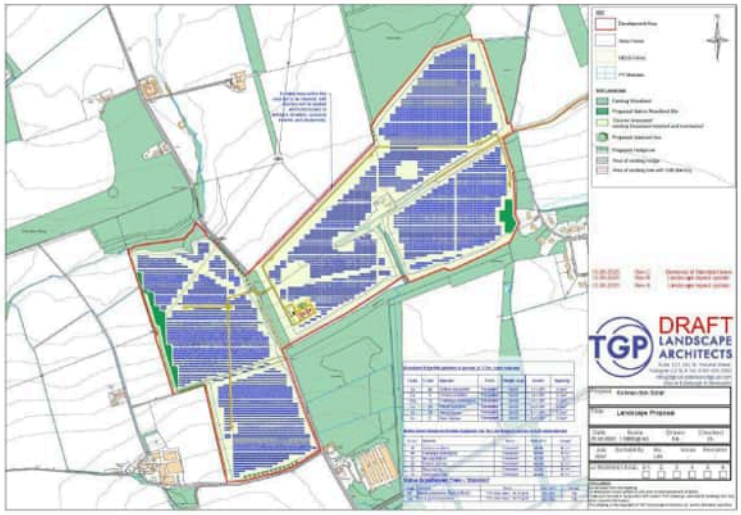
Updated layout

- 10m Stand Off from Scottish Water main
- Moved Bess slightly North to allow 50m buffer from watercourse
- Increased buffer between panels and Newlands properties
- New hedgerows and trees in North & West
- Amended fence line on East to ensure space for walking route

Buffers from Newlands



Landscape Mitigation Plan



Community Engagement

- Feedback so far

  1st Exhibition

  - 40 attended & registered (186 invited by post)
  - 5 feedback forms returned
  - 4 emails received (including 1 from MSP). All replied to. One wanting to lodge objection- Newlands resident
  - On-line presentation – 10 registered and joined

Exh. 1 Feedback Question	Do you support use of Renewable Energy in Scotland?	Are you supportive of our proposal for the Kirknewton Solar & BESS in principle?
	Yes - 5	Very Supportive - 3
	No - 0	Supportive - 1
	Neutral - 0	Neutral - 1
		Opposed -0
		Very Opposed -0

Community Engagement

- Feedback so far
  - 2nd Exhibition
    - 34 attended & registered (186 invited by post)
    - 5 feedback forms returned
    - 1 emails received & replied to.
    - On-line presentation – 7 registered 3 attended

Exh. 2 Feedback Question	Do you support use of Renewable Energy in Scotland?	Are you supportive of our proposal for the Kirknewton Solar & BESS in principle?
	Yes - 4	Very Supportive - 0
	No - 0	Supportive - 4
	Neutral - 1	Neutral - 1
		Opposed- 0
		Very Opposed -0

Next Steps

- Report back to Community Council
- Submit Planning Application end Oct/ early Nov 2025
- Grid Reform feedback Q1 2026
- 2029 Construction starts
- 2030 Current Grid connection date

Questions & Answers

Thank you

BLC Energy Ltd
www.blcenergy.com
info@blcenergy.com
Tel: 0131 3804985