

## JBM Solar

### Belvoir solar farm, land within the Belvoir Estate, Grantham Community Survey report

December 2022

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This report considers the community door-to-door survey undertaken regarding the proposal for a 49.9 MW solar farm at the Belvoir Estate, on land between Muston, Bottesford and Easthorpe.
- 1.2. There have been circa 130 letters of objection received thus far, with about 90 in support.
- 1.3. The survey took place across two days on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November on the doorstep in the residential areas close to the proposed development.
- 1.4. In total, 107 residents from across Muston, Bottesford and Easthorpe participated in this survey. Not every respondent answered every question. Therefore, percentage figures relate to the numbers who responded to each individual question, which varies.
- 1.5. The majority of the opposition to the solar farm came from residents in Muston on the road next to where the solar farm would be built, though it was noted that the further into the village and away from the site we got, views became more mixed with support for the proposals being received.

#### 2.0 Headline feedback to the community survey

- 2.1. The key findings were as follows:
- 2.2. 107 residents across Bottesford, Easthorpe and Muston participated in the survey and responded to the questions about the proposed solar farm. In the experience of Instinctif Partners, this represents a good take-up level.
- 2.3. Across the survey area 70%, a large majority of residents, had already heard of the proposals.
- 2.4. Across the survey area, 52% of residents were supportive (either chose supportive or fairly supportive options), 27% were neutral and 21% were opposed to the solar farm.

- 2.5. The majority of opposition to the scheme came from those closest to the site in Muston and Easthorpe.
- 2.6. In general support focused on the need for renewable, green energy, positivity about solar farms, that they were needed for the future and that more homegrown energy produced from solar was good for energy security and would help reduce energy prices.
- 2.7. Opposition, while less common, tended to relate to loss of agricultural land and the impact on food security, the perceived visual impact, people felt open countryside was the wrong place and that solar panels should be built on places like motorways, rooftops, car parks and brownfield land.
- 2.8. Across the survey area, there was overwhelming support for electricity generation from renewable sources, with 92% of those polled agreeing the UK needs to generate more energy from renewable sources.

### The approach to the door-to-door outreach survey

- 2.9. Using its expertise, Instinctif Partners analysed the detail of the project including the type of development, the location and history of the site and the composition of its neighbours.
- 2.10. Following this analysis, it was decided that the most effective way of understanding the views of the community would be through a door-to-door outreach survey programme.
- 2.11. We feel that it is fair to say that in general, people only tend to proactively respond to public consultation when they feel strongly about a planning application, hence views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of a community as a whole. It was felt that the outreach survey would be more likely to record the views of the 'silent majority' of people and those living closest to the site.
- 2.12. Instinctif Partners selected an area surrounding the site to focus its door-to-door engagement. A map detailing the roads that were included in the survey can be seen in Appendices 1 and 2.
- 2.13. The engagement took the form of a brief survey, designed to quickly capture the views of residents on the key issues. If a resident was not aware of the proposal, Instinctif Partners would explain the proposal.
- 2.14. The survey included the following questions:
  1. **Are you aware of the proposals? Y / N**
  2. **From 1 to 5, in principle how supportive are you of this proposed solar farm?**
    - Very Supportive

- Supportive
- No strong feelings either way
- Relatively Against
- Against

**3. What is the main reason for your views?**

**4. Do you agree we need to generate more electricity from renewable sources?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**5. Do you support renewable electricity generation from solar farms?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**6. Have your views around solar changed for the better or worse in the past two years?**

- Better
- Worse
- Unsure

**7. Solar is one of the cheapest forms of energy currently, do you accept solar power can help address energy security and lower bills?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**8. Are you supportive of plans to create new green infrastructure for the community and the provision of £180k community funding?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

2.15. Instinctif Partners conducted the survey over two days on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2022 with the aim of speaking to as many residents as possible.

2.16. As best practice dictates, this was carried out throughout the day and up until it got dark in the evening which was around 5pm. During the dusk hour it was decided to stay close to well-lit areas for safety reasons. It was decided to not continue the survey into the early evening for staff safety reasons and because the public tend not to welcome answering the door after dark.

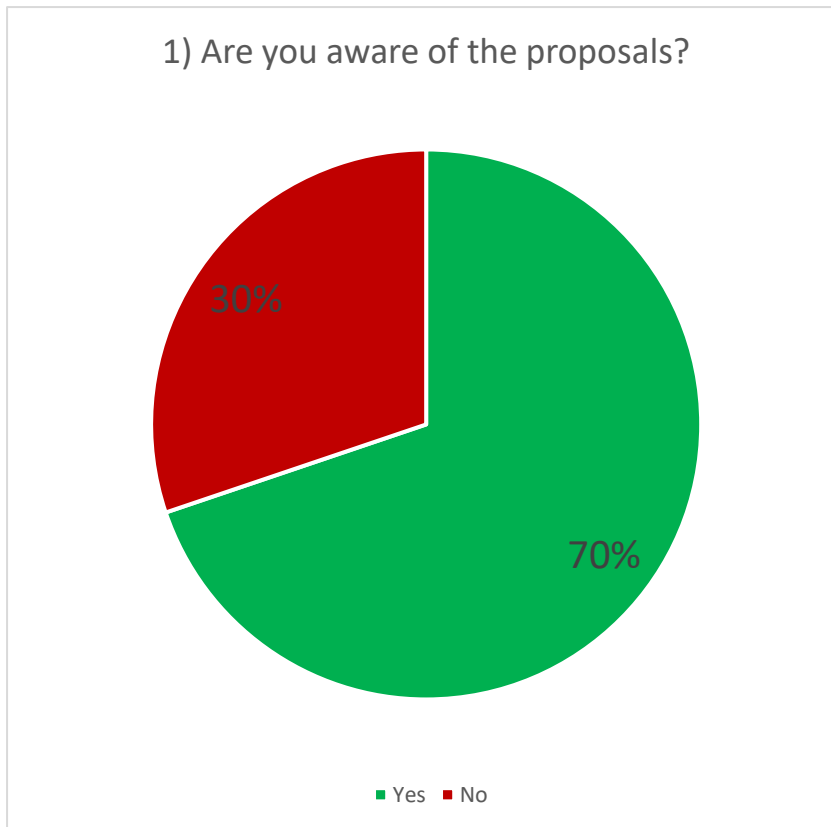
2.17. The vast majority, circa 90% of households which had a resident at home were willing to participate in the survey.

2.18. Instinctif Partners has conducted many surveys for a wide range of clients from both the public and private sector and can confirm that 107 respondents from a local area in a survey of this nature gives an accurate representation of very local views.

### 3.0 Door-to-door Outreach Results

#### Q1) Are you aware of the proposals?

3.1. In total, 106 residents answered this question. Overall, there was broad, though not universal awareness of the solar application with 74 (70%) residents having already heard of the proposal. 32 (30%) were not already aware.

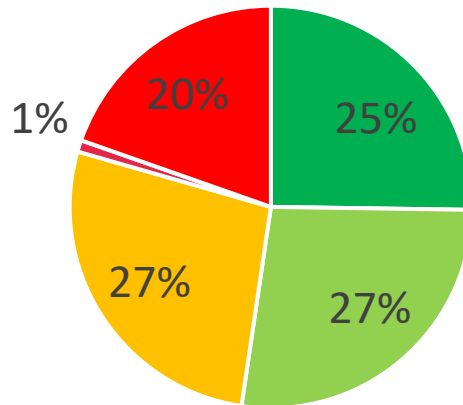


#### Q2) How supportive are you of this proposed solar farm?

3.2. 107 people answered this question. A majority, 56 residents (52%) said they were supportive of the proposals overall. Broken down as 27 people (25%) who selected 'very supportive' of the proposals and 29 people (27%) said they were 'supportive' overall.

3.3. There were 29 residents (27%) who were neutral towards the plans. This meant that 79% of residents were either supportive or were neutral towards the proposal. 22 residents (21%) of residents were opposed or relatively against the proposed solar farm.

2) From 1 to 5, in principle how supportive are you of this proposed solar farm?



■ Very supportive ■ Supportive ■ No feelings ■ Relatively Against ■ Against

**Q3) What is the main reason for this view?**

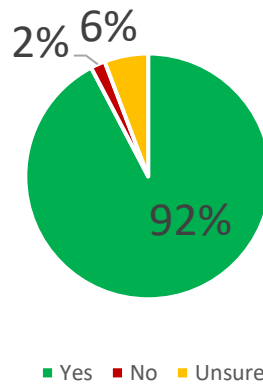
The most common reasons are below.

Comment	Frequency
Wrong location	19
Good for the environment/green energy is the future	17
Visual impact	13
Outright support	9
Concern about use of land not for food production	6
Good for energy security	4

**Q4) Do you agree we need to generate more electricity from renewable sources?**

3.4. 104 respondents gave a view on this question, with an overwhelming majority of 96 (92%) stating that they supported renewable energy. Six (6%) residents were unsure and there were two (2%) residents who disagreed that more renewable energy was needed.

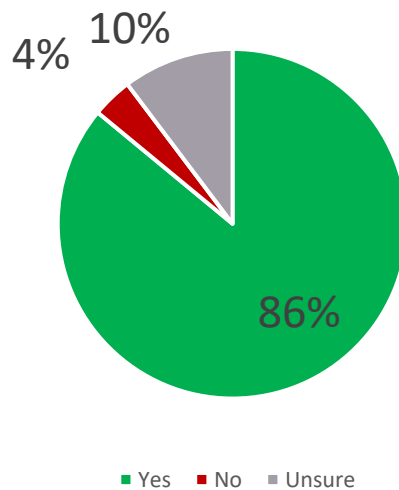
4) Do you agree we need to generate more electricity from renewable sources ?



### Q5) Do you support renewable electricity generation from solar farms?

3.5. 107 respondents gave a view on this question, with the results proving very similar to question four. An overwhelming majority of 92 people (86%) stated that they supported solar energy. 11 residents (10%) were unsure and there were four residents (4%) who did not support solar energy.

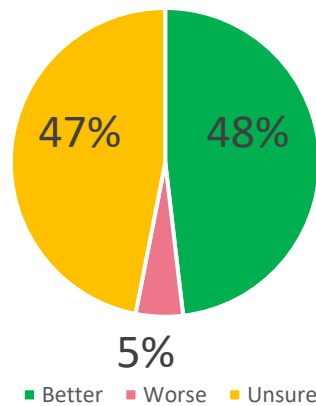
5) Do you support renewable electricity generation from solar farms?



### Q6) Have your views around solar changed for the better or worse in the past two years?

3.6. This question was answered by 81 respondents. The most common response was for residents to say their views around solar had changed for the better in the past two years, which was the view of 39 people (48%). There were 38 respondents (47%) who suggested that their views of solar had stayed the same. Four residents (5%) said that their views have got worse.

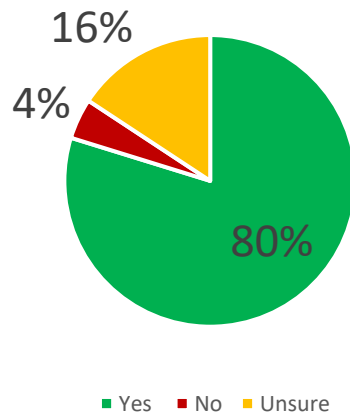
6) Have your views around solar changed for the better or worse in the past two years?



**Q7) Solar is one of the cheapest forms of energy currently, do you accept solar power can help address energy security and lower bills?**

3.7 This question was answered by 89 respondents. The overwhelming majority 71 (80%) respondents agreed with this statement that solar power can help address energy security and lower bills, with 14 people (16%) unsure whilst four people (4%) disagreed.

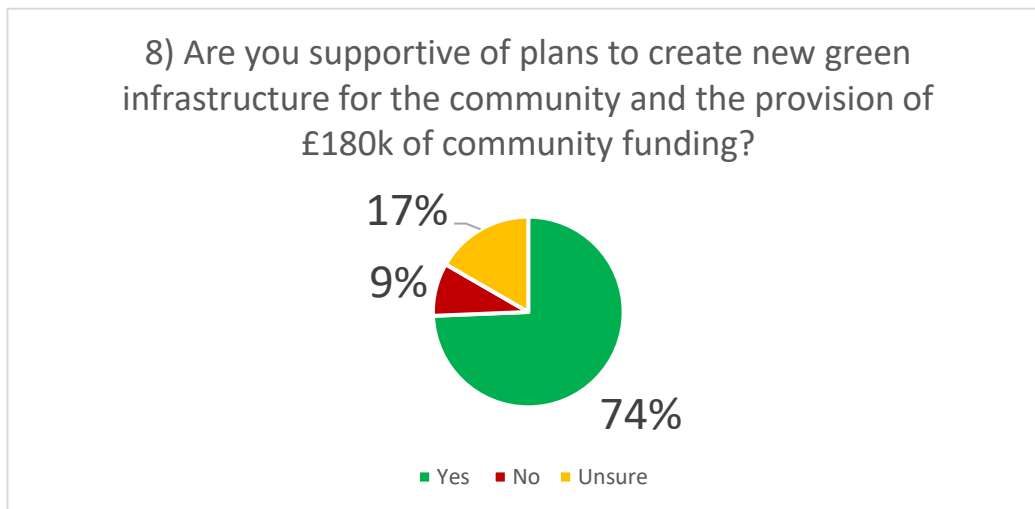
7) Solar is one of the cheapest forms of energy currently, do you accept solar power can help address energy security and lower bills?



**Q8) Are you supportive of plans to create new green infrastructure for the community and the provision of £180k of community funding?**

3.7. Residents were very supportive of the community benefits associated with the proposal, they welcomed the new footpaths and environmental improvements around the site and the community benefit fund. In total, 78 residents answered this question and 58 (74%) supported the proposed

community benefits. Seven (9%) opposed the community benefits and 13 residents (17%) were unsure.



## 4.0 Summary & Conclusions

4.1 107 residents participated in the survey and responded to the questions about the proposed solar farm, which is a good take-up level.

4.2 A large majority (70%) of residents had already heard of the proposals.

4.3 A majority of residents 56 (52%) can be classified as supportive of the proposals. A high majority of residents 85, (79%) stated that they were either supportive or were neutral towards the proposal. 22 (21%) of residents opposed the plans.

4.4 In general support focused on the need for renewable, green energy, that this was the future, positivity about the benefits of solar farms and a recognition that more domestic energy generation was needed given the current energy crisis. Also, supporters recognised solar could play a part in reducing energy bills in the future.

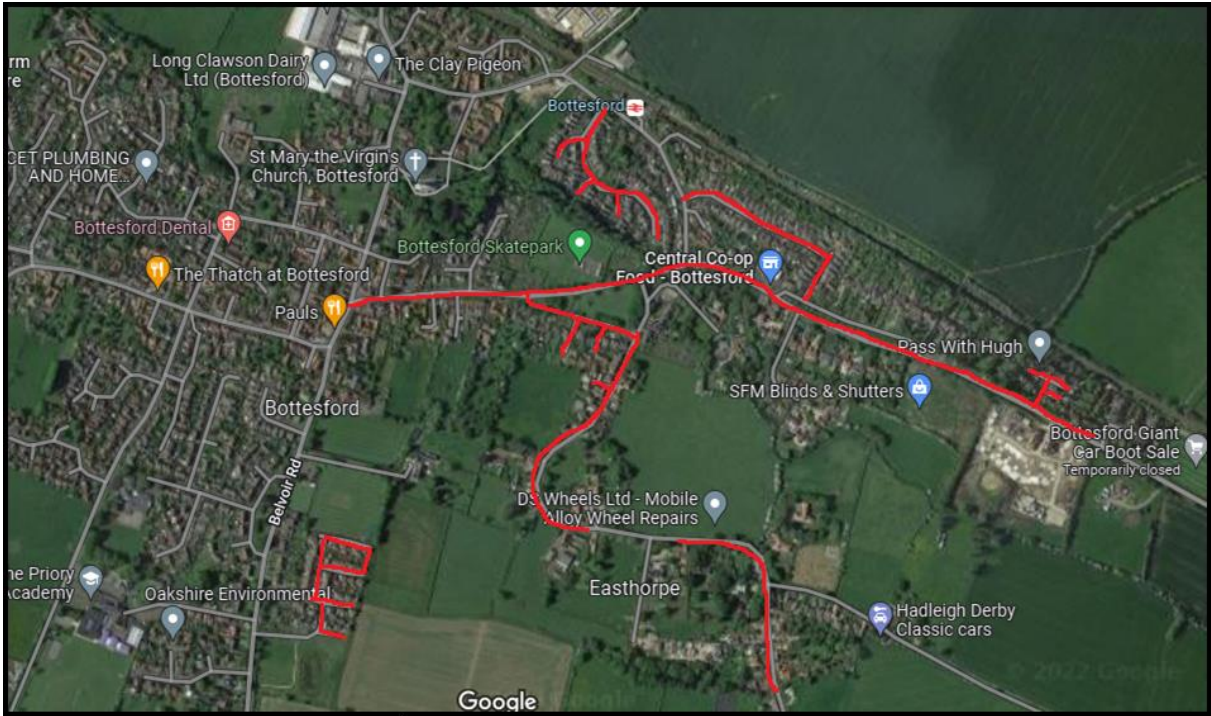
4.5 Opposition, while less common, tended to relate to the perceived visual impact, the anticipated loss of agricultural land, with people believing food security was more important an issue than energy security and that more solar farms would drastically reduce the UK's food security. Others felt the location was wrong and that brownfield sites and rooftops should be prioritised first.

4.6 Anecdotally, it was felt that opposition tended to come from those closest to the site, in Easthorpe and Muston, particularly Woolsthorpe Lane. However, it must be emphasised the further into Muston village we got, on Main Street particularly, that survey responses became more mixed and support was received, including one support letter.



# Appendix

## Appendix 1 – Bottesford/Easthorpe door-to-door outreach area map



Areas highlighted in red were door knocked (Note the new Bellway estate was also door knocked, but on Google satellite it is still being shown as being built)

Appendix 2 Muston door-to-door outreach map



Areas highlighted in red were door knocked