

Site Selection Technical Note

Land at Main Road, Brailsford, Ashbourne, DE6 3DA

April 2026



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Technical Note has been prepared by BSR Energy Limited. It is submitted in support of a full planning application at Land at Main Road, Brailsford, Ashbourne, for the following:

“Erection of a ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array, with a total export capacity of up to 55 MW, and associated infrastructure, landscaping and access works” ('development').
- 1.2. The development is proposed to be located on 119ha of agricultural fields currently in arable farming use ('the site'). The purpose of the development is to generate renewable electricity to feed into the National Grid ('the Grid').
- 1.3. This Technical Note outlines the process undertaken to identify sites for the proposed development. It should be read in conjunction with the Planning, Design and Access Statement and the suite of technical documents submitted in support of this planning application.
- 1.4. Whilst national planning policy does not require the need for renewable energy development to be demonstrated, as set out in paragraph 168 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), this Technical Note has been prepared to explain the rationale for the selection of the application site. In doing so, it outlines the considerations that have guided the selection of this site. The primary factor is a need to be close to an available grid connection, which in turn influences the viability of the project.
- 1.5. Pre-application planning advice was received from Derbyshire Dales District Council ('DDDC') on 4 February 2026. This advice requested that the planning application include ***“a demonstration that the development cannot be sited on land of lesser agricultural value, including reasonable steps to disaggregate the capacity across parcels.”*** While there is no specific requirement in national or local planning policy to apply a formal sequential approach in relation to agricultural land quality for solar development, this Technical Note has been prepared in response to the Council's request. It sets out the steps undertaken to consider alternative parcels within the defined search area, having regard to agricultural land quality alongside grid availability, deliverability, landownership, and other physical and environmental constraints.
- 1.6. This Technical Note concludes that the site is the most suitable and deliverable location for the proposed development at the point of submitting the planning application. The proposed development benefits from a

confirmed grid connection, enabling it to contribute positively toward DDDC's climate change strategy and national targets.

1.7. The sections of this Technical Note are divided into:

- **Section 2:** The Need for Renewable Energy
- **Section 3:** The Proposed Development
- **Section 4:** Alternative Sites Assessment Methodology and Assessment
- **Section 5:** Planning Policy Review
- **Section 6:** Conclusions.

2. The Need for Renewable Energy

- 2.1. The UK Government realises the true potential of renewable energy generation from ground mounted solar photovoltaic technology at scale, acknowledging not enough is being done to both promote and allow for its deployment to increase across the country. In response to this, the Government published the paper ‘Powering Up Britain – Energy Security Plan’ (April 2023), which states: ***“Ground-mounted solar is one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation and is readily deployable at scale. The government seeks large scale ground-mounted solar deployment across the UK, looking for development mainly on brownfield, industrial and low and medium grade agricultural land.”***
- 2.2. The National Energy System Operator (NESO) was formed on 1 October 2024 to manage the planning and operation of Great Britain’s electricity and gas systems. Since then, NESO has put in place several grid reforms to enable the UK to reach it’s low carbon goals in 2030 and 2050.
- 2.3. The publication of NESO’s Clean Power 2030 provides guidance on how the UK will achieve clean power by 2030. In addition, developers will need to demonstrate that they are actively progressing projects – such as through the submission of planning applications – to ensure they are on track to construct the generation in line with the connection date. When allocating capacity, NESO will prioritise progressed projects rather than purely basing it on the original grid offer date.
- 2.4. At the local level, the Derbyshire Spatial Energy Study (2022) identifies ground-mounted solar as one of the most viable renewable technologies for the county, with potential to meet around 7% of Derbyshire’s total electricity demand. The study highlights that suitable areas to deliver this exist outside the National Park and green belt and provides strong support for appropriately located solar development. The proposed development responds directly to these identified opportunities and would make a significant contribute to Derbyshire’s transition to a low-carbon energy system.
- 2.5. Furthermore, the DDDC Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, 2020 to 2030 (2020) states that the Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and sets out the Council’s commitment to achieving net zero status by 2030.

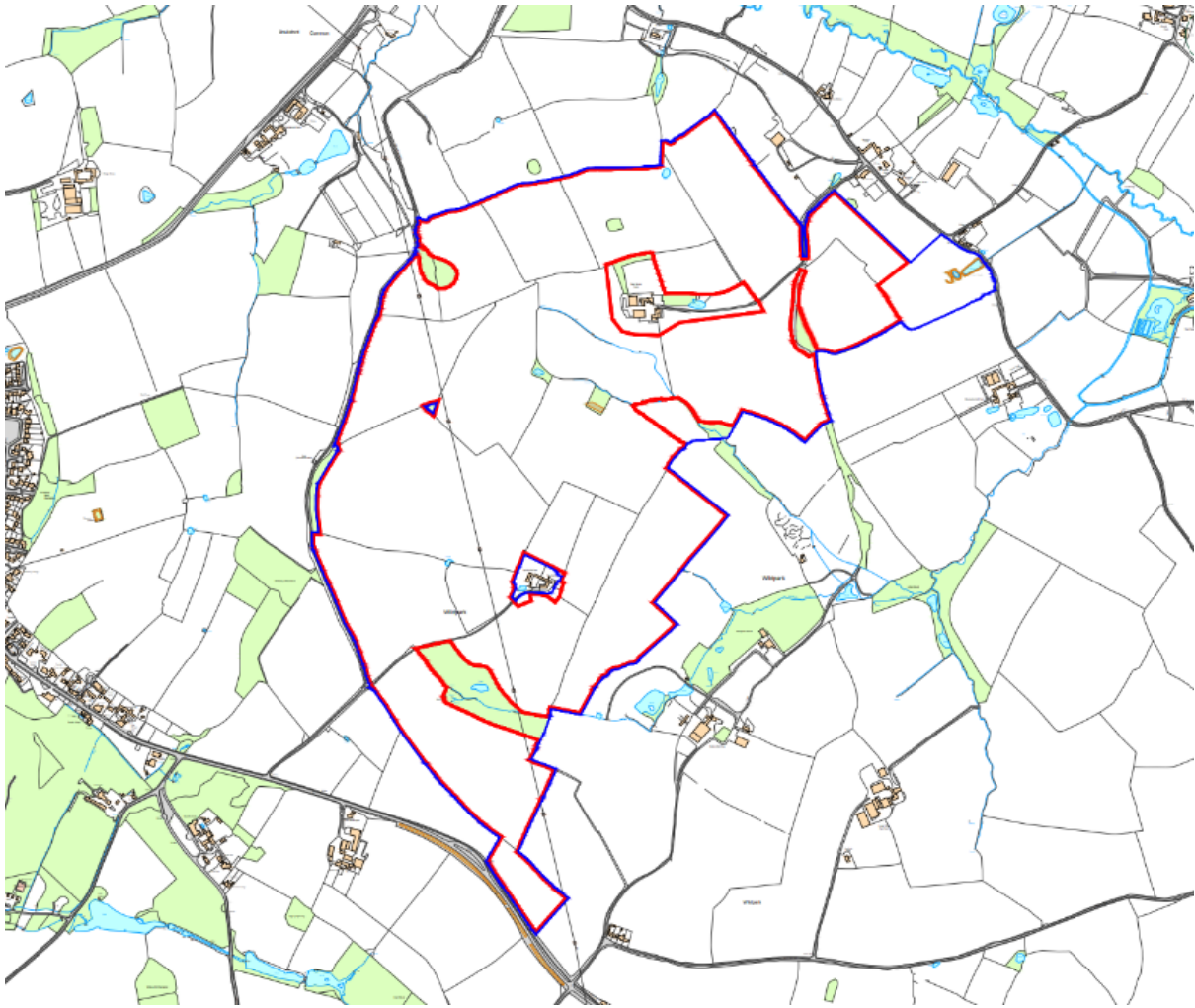
While this study focuses on increasing energy efficiency across Council operations, it reinforces the Council's broader commitment to lowering carbon emissions across the district.

- 2.6. The delivery of large-scale solar projects is therefore critical to meeting the Government's clean power ambitions. Smaller rooftop or fragmented schemes, while valuable, cannot alone deliver the quantum of renewable electricity required before 2050, particularly where grid availability is limited. Accordingly, projects that are able to secure viable grid connections and progress to construction represent a strategically important component of the national energy transition.
- 2.7. It is widely accepted across the renewable energy industry and in Government (national and local) that rural locations are typically the most suitable to accommodate utility scale ground mounted solar photovoltaic arrays due to the availability of land at a scale that is critical to the economies required to make projects viable, and to enable them to make a material contribution to the generation of electricity necessary to achieve energy transition goals and net zero goals.

3. Site Location

- 3.1. The proposed development will generate the energy equivalent to the electricity consumption of approximately 16,060 homes per year, which would represent a saving of a[approximately 22,489 tonnes of CO₂ annually.
- 3.2. The site is located east of the village of Brailsford in Ashbourne, Derbyshire. The site is within the Parish and Ward of Brailsford and the Parish of Mercaston.
- 3.3. The proposed boundary of the site as comprised in the planning application is marked by a red line shown in **Figure 1**. The total site area comprises 119.8 hectares of agricultural land.
- 3.4. The Point of Connection (PoC) - the location where the solar park will physically connect into the National Grid to export the electricity it would generate - is located within the south-west corner of the site.
- 3.5. Full details of the proposed development are provided within the Planning, Design and Access Statement which accompanies this planning application.

Figure 1. Site Location Plan (ref: 1711-0200-07)



4. Site Selection Assessment Methodology

4.1. The site selection and assessment process undertaken is divided into various phases:

- Locational Requirements, checking grid availability (both in terms of capacity and connectivity);
- Establish search area through maximum viable cable length;
- Identify environmental designations and constraints;
- Review Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) grades;
- Identify flood zones;
- Assess commercial viability, willing landowners, agree rental level and development costs; and undertake a planning appraisal with a planning consultant.
- Submit grid application;
- Receive grid offer;

5.1 Locational Requirements / Grid Capacity

4.1.1. Many solar park are connected into the local distribution network. The capacity of the local grid network to accept the likely output from a proposed solar park is critical to the technical and commercial feasibility of a development proposal.

4.1.2. To utilise existing grid infrastructure, minimise disruption to existing local community infrastructure and reduce overall construction costs, applicants may choose a site based on nearby available grid export capacity. Where this is the case, applicants should consider the cumulative impacts of situating a solar park in proximity to other energy generating stations and infrastructure. This has been addressed as part of an assessment of cumulative impact contained within section 11.10 of the Environmental Statement.

4.1.3. The LDP does not allocate sites for renewable energy projects but instead Policy PD7 requires applicants to demonstrate that such proposals would not result in adverse impact upon the local environment. As noted below, the LDP pre-dates many of the Government's policy documents and guidance on renewable energy development and its designation as being of Critical National Priority.

- 4.1.4. Similarly, the NPPF does not provide specific locational requirements and therefore reliance is upon the guidance provided within the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the National Policy Statements to the extent that they are material planning considerations. The PPG states that locating such developments will need to take into account the requirements of the technology to include proximity to grid connection infrastructure and site size (Para: 006 Reference ID: 5-006-20140306) with consideration to also be given to possible physical and environmental impacts (Para: 013 Reference ID: 5-013-20150327). The PPG reflects national policy and practice on locating such development, for instance within the UK Solar PV Strategy (Part 2).
- 4.1.5. Whilst the need for development is not required to be demonstrated, set out within paragraph 168 of the NPPF, the supporting information and the contents of this Technical Note seek to explain the reason for the site location. The primary factor is a need to be close to an available grid connection, which in turn influences the viability of the project.
- 4.1.6. BSR Energy Limited have developed mapping software to review where there are hotspots of available grid capacity on the national grid. In this instance, the 132kV overhead line network was reviewed, as shown in **Figure 2**.
- 4.1.7. Furthermore, grid substations and primary substations along the overhead line were also reviewed for suitability to facilitate a grid connection. The review concluded there was capacity to connect to the grid via the 132kV overhead line that connected into Willington GSP (Grid Supply Point), substation which is located approximately 12km south of the site.
- 4.1.8. The Spondon and Willington GSP network was originally targeted as there was available capacity identified in the WPD Network Headroom Report for the East Midlands. Willington GSP group was also mentioned in the Network Options Assessment and Network Development Plan.
- 4.1.9. We were subsequently advised by WPD (Western Power Distribution, now National Grid Electricity Distribution, NGED) on a connection surgery call with an engineer that a connection of this size would require direction to Willington GSP prompting BSR's decision to submit a grid application to this network. BSR were subsequently offered a connection onto the overhead line from Willington GSP to Winster BSP (Bulk Supply Point) at a location in the south west of the site to serve the proposed development.

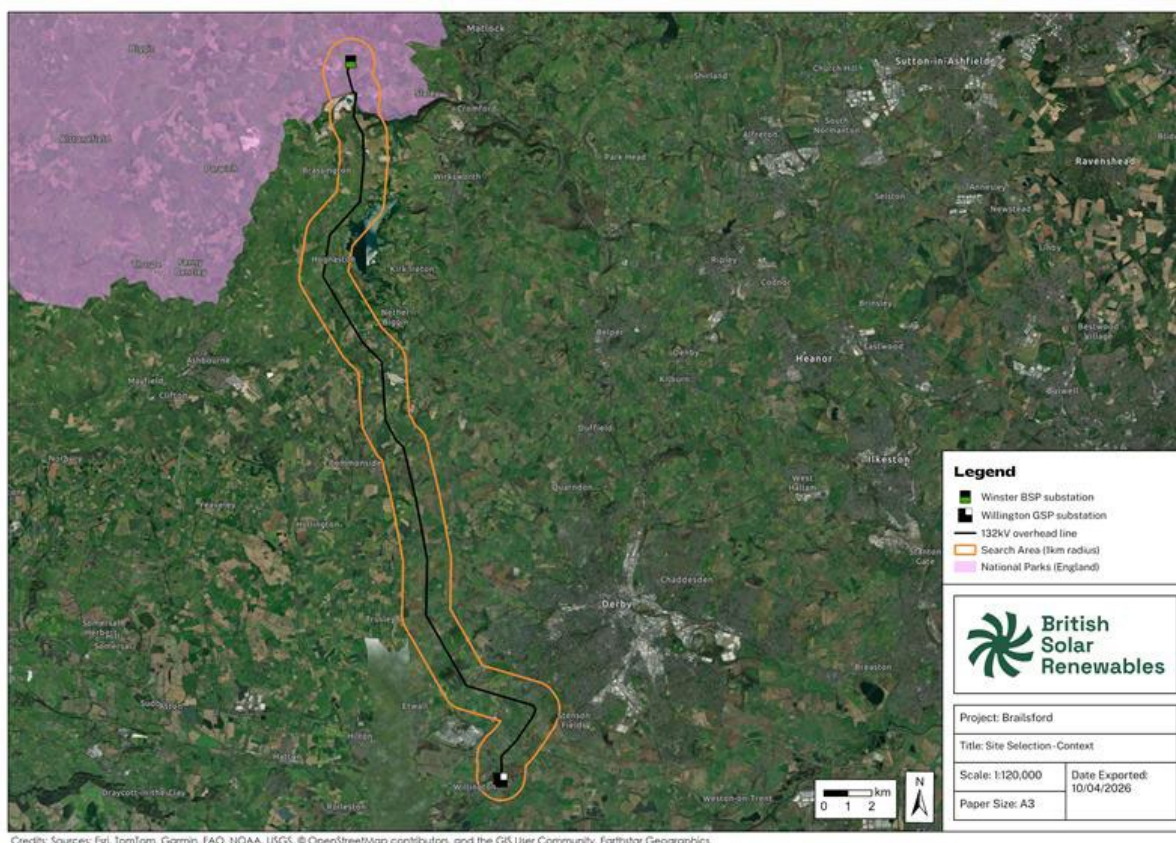


Figure 2. Willington 132kV Network

5.2 Establish search area through maximum viable cable length

4.1.10. The size of the search area is dependent on the available capacity at the identified substation. As explained above, the nearest substation with capacity was Willington GSP substation.

4.1.11. The search area was set at 1km as this was assessed as the optimum distance that could be installed for a project of this scale and type. Onsite connections were also prioritised to minimise disruption associated with laying the cable.

5.3 Identify designations and constraints

4.1.12. Following the identification of capacity at the nearby substation and the establishment of a 1km search area, BSR moved forward with a desktop

study using a GIS system which allows assessment of large areas of land in relation to multiple planning considerations including Flood Zones, Transport, Land Grade, Ecology, Landscape impact, Heritage and Noise. GIS layers for land constraints are available from sources such as Historic England, Natural England, Environment Agency, UK Government Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Maps and data.gov websites.

4.1.13. This high-level review was undertaken whilst responses from prospective landowners was awaited. A desk-based planning appraisal for these sites was also undertaken to review the constraints. The constraints were then carefully considered to understand the potential suitability of each potential site, allowing BSR to identify locations where potential impacts can be effectively mitigated through design, layout or planning controls.

5.4 Review Agricultural Land Classification Grades

4.1.14. In response to our request for pre-application advice, DDDC confirmed in an advice note dated 4 February 2026 that any application for this proposal must demonstrate why the development cannot be accommodated on land of lower agricultural value, including evidence of reasonable efforts to disaggregate capacity across multiple parcels. The following section provides this justification.

4.1.15. Where possible, ground mounted Solar PV projects should utilise previously developed and, brownfield land, contaminated land, industrial land, or agricultural land preferably of classification 3b, 4, and 5 (avoiding the use of best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land where possible). While this preference exists, national industry guidance¹ clarifies that agricultural land type **should not be a predominating factor** in determining a site's suitability, as some use of agricultural land is often unavoidable.

The development of ground mounted solar arrays is not prohibited on sites of agricultural land classified 1, 2 and 3a, or designated for their natural beauty, or recognised for ecological or archaeological importance, however the impacts of such are expected to be considered.

4.1.16. There is a need to weigh the concerns of the use of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land against the Government's direction to address

¹ Solar Energy UK (2024). **Site Selection Factsheet 2024**.

climate change. The use of 83 hectares (ha) of BMV land (119.8 hectares of total land) for the proposed development, whilst a large area of land, is comparatively small within the wider context of the district and across the country where the total agricultural land area was recorded by DEFRA in 2020 to stand at 17.5 million hectares.

4.1.17. The site has also been categorised as being part Grade 3b (35.7 ha) and 'other land' comprising farm tracks and woodland areas (1.2ha).

4.1.18. **Table 1** shows the breakdown of agricultural land grades at the site. A full Agricultural Land Quality Survey prepared by Land Research Associates is submitted alongside this planning application.

Table 1: Agricultural Land Classification Grades at the Site

Grade/Subgrade	Area (Ha)	Percentage of Land (%)
Grade 2	10.0	8
Subgrade 3a	73.0	61
Subgrade 3b	35.7	30
Other Land	1.2	1
Total	119.9	100

4.1.19. It is accepted that the use of BMV and moderate quality land (Grade 3) is discouraged, however it is reiterated that this development comprises a temporary installation of a solar park to operate over a 40-year lifespan. There would be no permanent or irreversible loss of agricultural land as the site can continue to be utilised as agricultural land during the lifetime of the solar park, with the potential for introduction of sheep grazing. This change in activity could occur on the site regardless of this development proposal, providing a less intensive use which in turn allows the land to recover and soil condition and structure to improve.

4.1.20. A review of agricultural land classifications across the DDDC LPA area has been undertaken. The total area of the LPA extends to approximately 83,078 acres, and the proportions of each ALC grade within this area are summarised in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Agricultural land classification grades across Derbyshire Dales District

ALC Grade	Acres	Percentages
Grade 1	0	0%
Grade 2	3605	4.30%
Grade 3	33285	40.10%
Grade 4	40852	49.20%
Grade 5	3344	4%
Non-Agricultural	1992	2.40%
Total	83078	100%

4.1.21. Much of the land within and surrounding the defined search area is classified as Grades 3 and 4 (see Figure 3). The Natural England ALC dataset does not distinguish between Grade 3a (BMV) and Grade 3b (non-BMV), which limits the ability to identify areas of confirmed lower-grade land within the search area. This significantly constrains the potential to identify a developable parcel that both avoids BMV land entirely and remains technically suitable for connection to the identified overhead line.

4.1.22. Within the 1 km search area shown by the yellow line in **Figure 3**, areas of lower-quality agricultural land do exist; however, their distribution, configuration and relationship to the 132 kV overhead line mean that very few parcels are developable. A significant proportion of the Grade 4 land shown in Figure 3 lies within the Peak District National Park (PDNP), where additional landscape, ecological and heritage constraints are present.

4.1.23. While such locations are not ruled out for solar development, they present greater environmental and visual sensitivity. As a result, these northern parcels -situated in or adjacent to the National Park -were not prioritised for landowner contact, allowing the assessment to focus on areas with fewer constraints and a clearer potential to deliver the scheme.

4.1.24. Furthermore, the area of land situated to the south of the PDNP boundary but north of Brailsford was not taken forward for landowner contact. Although this land lies outside the National Park, the pattern of ownership in this northern section of the search area is made up of small, highly

fragmented parcels, none exceeding approximately 90 acres. Consequently, these landholdings were not considered suitable to accommodate a solar park of the scale required, nor could they support a coherent and efficient site layout without extensive subdivision across multiple ownerships. With these limitations considered, these northern landholdings were not pursued further during the site search process.

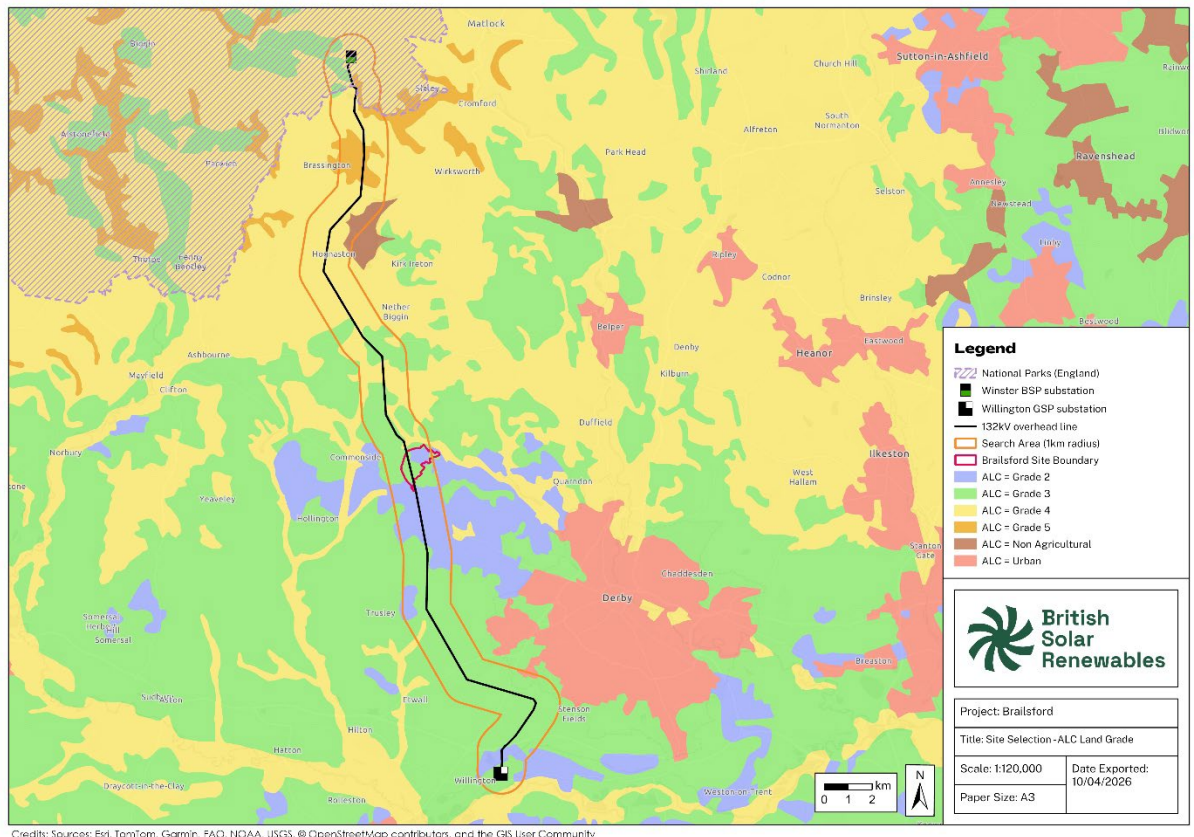


Figure 3. Agricultural Land Grades in the Wider Area

- 4.1.25. In addition, much of the lower grade land lies outside of the 1km search area, and is separated from feasible connection points by substantial areas of BMV land. Other areas of lower-grade land occur in parcels that are irregularly shaped or too constrained to accommodate a solar park of the scale required.
- 4.1.26. When the position of the overhead line, the viable connection points, and the 1 km cable corridor are taken into account, the amount of non-BMV land that can be utilised without requiring disproportionately long cable routes or additional land disturbance becomes extremely limited. As a result, the

partial use of BMV land is unavoidable in order to secure a viable grid connection and deliver a coherent site layout.

4.1.27. The selected site, while containing areas of Grade 2 and Grade 3a land, provides the most appropriate option within the 1km search area as it lies in proximity to the overhead line, provides a suitably sized land parcel that can accommodate the solar array, and offers the least environmentally constrained developable area.

4.1.28. The extent of BMV land affected has been reduced to the lowest reasonable level through careful consideration of the site boundary, with the scheme ensuring an agricultural after-use through managed grassland beneath and between the solar arrays. The site would also continue to be used for sheep grazing throughout its operational lifespan.

4.1.29. Given the large proportion of BMV land in the district, the concentration of technical constraints around the existing overhead line, and the requirement for a viable, deliverable grid connection, the partial use of Grade 2 and Grade 3a land is unavoidable. The chosen site therefore provides the least impact and most sustainable location capable of accommodating the development while ensuring efficient use of land.

5.5 Identify Flood Zones

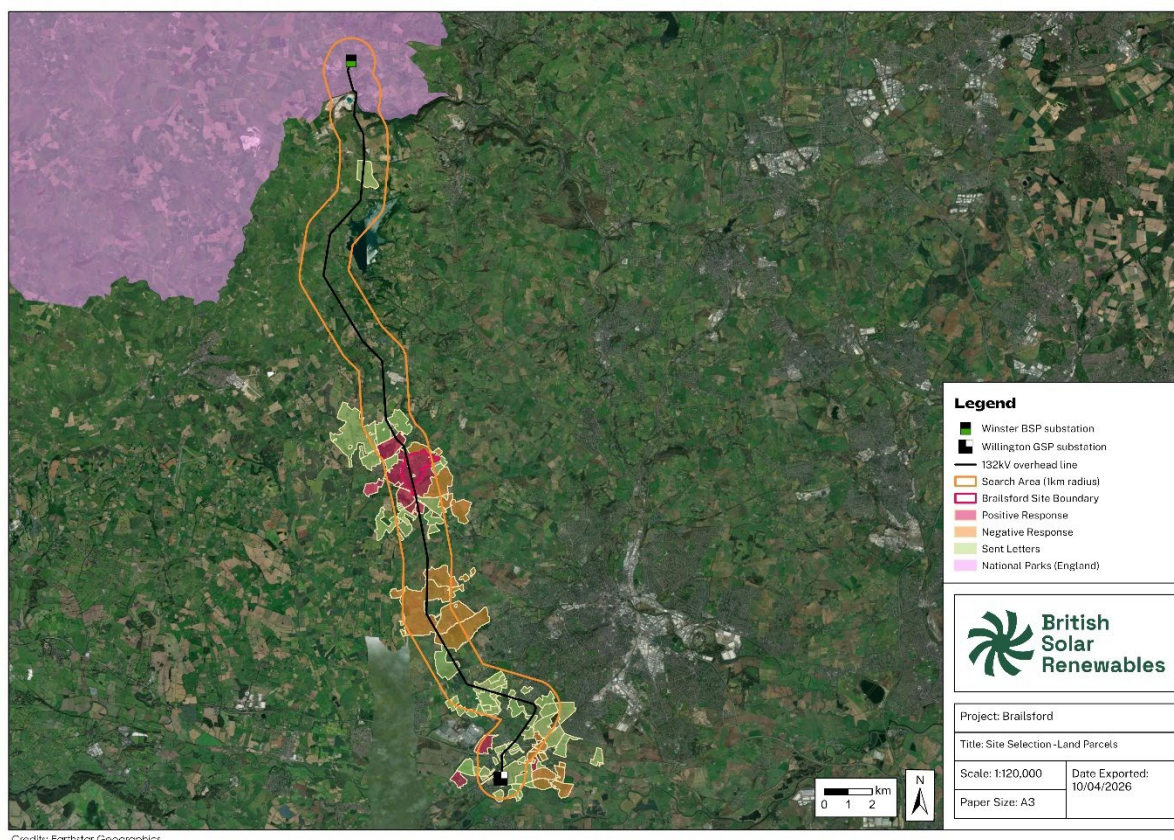
4.1.30. BSR review the flood risk associated with sites. The latest flood zone data from the Environment Agency shows that the solar panels and associated equipment are within Flood Zone 1 for fluvial flooding and low to medium for surface water flooding. A subsequent Flood Risk Assessment identified that surface water flood risk is negligible for most of the site but low to medium where there is surface water ponding and overland flow pathways.

4.1.31. Flood risk was therefore not identified to be a constraint to the proposal in this location.

5.8 Assess Viability and Landowner Interest

4.1.32. A total of 48 landowners were contacted via letter as part of the site search process, of which 12 landowners responded. Four of the responses indicated no interest in participating, while eight landowners expressed a positive interest in the potential for their land to be considered. The land parcels belonging to the land owners that were contacted and received letters are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Land Parcels Identified and Landowner Interest



4.1.33. For those land parcels where landowner interest was expressed, the details and outcomes are summarised in Table 3. One land parcel, Land at New House Farm, was taken forward, and now forms the site.

4.1.34. This site was considered suitable due to its scale and ability to accommodate a solar park of this size, location within the viable cable length, and alignment with a potential grid connection opportunity at the Willington GSP substation. The remaining land parcels, despite initial interest, were discounted as they did not provide sufficient suitable land to accommodate the development.

4.1.35. Two further landowners initially indicated interest; however, subsequent discussions highlighted a number of commercial and practical uncertainties which meant one could not be progressed as a suitable option.

Table 3: Interested Landowners and Site Status

Location	Acres	Notes	Status
Land on the east side of Burton Road, Derby	102	Not enough land of a suitable size.	Discounted
Land lying to the north of Castle Way, Derby	65	Not enough land of a suitable size.	Discounted
Land at New House Farm, Brailsford	324	BSR are progressing with part of this site.	Selected
Land at Oaklands Farm, Brailsford	128	Terms of a land agreement could not be agreed between parties.	Discounted
Land at Buckford Lane, Stenson, Barrow on Trent, Derby	27	Not enough land of a suitable size.	Discounted
Land at Kings Grove Farm, Brailsford	478	Terms of a land agreement could not be agreed between parties.	Discounted
Land at Hazelhurst Farm, Mercaston	34	Not enough land of a suitable size.	Discounted
Land at Middle Wild Park Farm, Brailsford	158	The landowner deemed renewable energy development to not be compatible with their existing land use.	Discounted

Selected Land Area

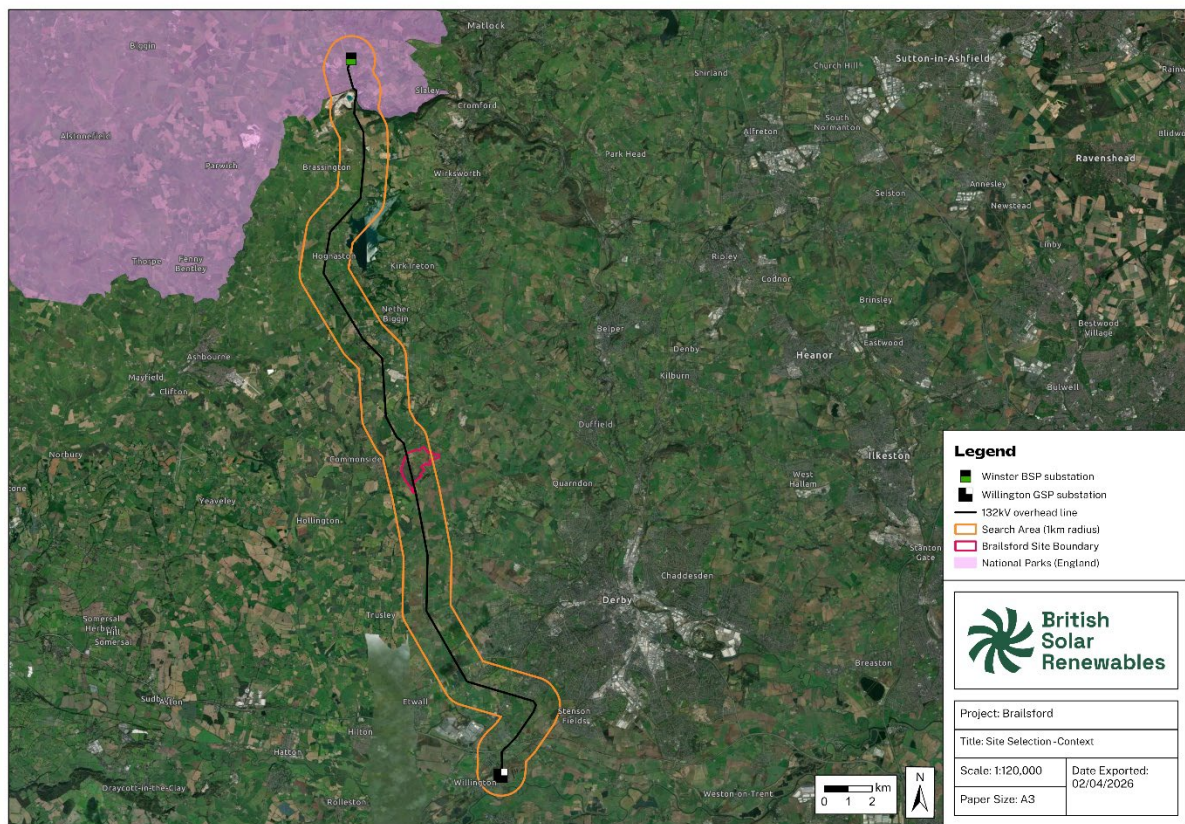
Land at New House Farm, Brailsford

4.1.36. This parcel was assessed as providing an appropriate scale of land and is located within the defined 1km optimum cable corridor that would enable the site to connect to the Willington GSP substation if an offer was received.

4.1.37. Further engagement with the landowner confirmed that the site could be made available on terms that would ensure that the development would be deliverable.

4.1.38. Accordingly, the parcel forms part of the site boundary that BSR is progressing (as shown in Figure 5). The size, configuration and proximity to the overhead line provide the most suitable area for accommodating the proposed development.

Figure 5. Chosen Landholding in Relation to 132Kv Overhead Line and 1km Search Area



5.6 Submit Grid Application

4.1.39. Once the above steps had been fulfilled, BSR submitted a grid application to the Distribution Network Operator (DNO), which in this instance is National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED).

5.7 Receive Grid Offer

4.1.40. A grid offer was received, and no overriding planning or environmental constraints were identified that would preclude the site from being taken forward in support of the planning application.

5. Planning Policy Review

5.1. The planning policy that is most relevant to site selection comprises the following:

- Derbyshire Dales Local Plan 2017–2033 (December 2017)
- Derbyshire Dales Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)
- National Planning Practice Guidance
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3, 2023)

National Planning Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.1.1. The NPPF (February 2025) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF is a framework to guide both decision taking and plan making and is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

5.1.2. In respect to the development of renewable energy the following is considered of relevance:

- Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development
- Chapter 4: Decision-making
- Chapter 9: Promoting sustainable transport
- Chapter 11: Making efficient use of land
- Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 13: Protecting Green Belt land
- Chapter 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding, and coastal change
- Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Chapter 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance

5.1.3. Planning Practice Guidance (Ref Id: 5-013029150327) identifies particular planning considerations relating to large scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic farms. The deployment of large-scale solar parks can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating

landscapes. However, the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar park can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively. Particular factors a local planning authority will need to consider include:

- Where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether (i) the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and (ii) the proposal allows for the continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourage biodiversity improvements around arrays.

The Overarching National Policy Statement for energy (EN-1) 2025

5.1.4. The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) was designated in January 2026 and is a material consideration in decision making on planning applications. It confirms that all onshore electricity generation covered by National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), which includes generation from solar photovoltaic technology, is to be Critical National Priority. This means that there is a policy presumption that the urgent need for such infrastructure to achieve the Government's energy objectives, together with national security, economic, commercial, and net zero benefits, will outweigh any other residual impacts not capable of being addressed by application of the mitigation hierarchy, in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

The National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) 2025

5.1.5. The National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) was designated in January 2026 and is a material consideration in decision making on planning applications. The extent to which the NPS is a material consideration will be judged on a case-by-case basis and will depend upon the extent to which the matters are already covered by applicable local planning policy.

5.1.6. Section 2.3 'factors influencing site selection and design', sets out clear practical considerations involved in siting of a solar park. These considerations are set out in the following headings with a summary of Policy text.

Local Planning Policy

- 5.1.7. The Derbyshire Dales District Council Local Development Plan ('LDP') was adopted in December 2017 and sets out the overall vision, objectives, and policies for the future development of the Derbyshire Dales areas that lie outside of the Peak District National Park, up to 2033. The LDP pre-dates the Council's declaration of a climate emergency, and pre-dates most of the Government's policy documents on renewable energy development including solar photovoltaic technology being designated as of Critical National Priority. The approach to site selection has taken this into consideration.
- 5.1.8. The paragraphs below outline the policies that are most applicable to the siting of large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic arrays.
- 5.1.9. **Policy S4 Development in the Countryside** states that outside the defined settlement boundaries, the council will ensure that new development protects and, where possible, enhances the landscape's intrinsic character and distinctiveness, including the character, appearance and integrity of the historic and cultural environment. It states that Planning Permission will be granted where:
- It does not adversely affect the purposes of the Peak District National Park and is not harmful to its valued characteristics.
 - It preserves and/or enhances the character, appearance and local distinctiveness of the landscape and landscape setting of the Peak District National Park;
 - It comprises renewable energy development in accordance with Local Plan Policy PD7.
 - Any significant loss of the "best and most versatile" (BMV) agricultural land is outweighed by the benefits of the development, and the development cannot be sited on land of lesser agricultural value.
 - It will have a safe access and will not generate traffic of a type or amount which cumulatively would cause severe impacts on the transport network or require improvements or alterations to rural roads which could be detrimental to their character.
 - It does not conflict with any other relevant policy of this Local Plan.

5.1.10. **Policy PD7 Climate Change** states that the Council are seeking to achieve a development strategy that mitigates against climate change by:

- Requiring new development to be designed to contribute to achieving national targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Supporting the generation of energy from renewable or low-carbon sources provided that the installation would not have significant adverse impact (either alone or cumulatively).
- Ensuring that renewable energy installations minimise any adverse impact on the landscape and landscape setting of the Peak District National Park.
- Promoting the use of sustainable design and construction techniques (including flood resistance/resilient measures).
- Ensuring that renewable/low carbon energy generation developments and associated infrastructure are supported by requiring Design Statements to include an assessment of how any impacts on the environment and heritage assets, including cumulative landscape, noise and visual impacts, can be avoided and/or mitigated through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures.

5.1.11. Where renewable/low carbon energy development accords with any of the above, proposals will be required to demonstrate:

- a) the impact of the scheme, together with any cumulative impact (including associated transmission lines, buildings and access roads), on landscape character, visual amenity, water quality and flood risk, the historic environment and heritage assets as well as their setting and biodiversity;
- b) evidence that the scheme has been designed and sited to minimise any adverse impact on the surrounding area for its effective operation;
- c) the nature and extent of any adverse impact on users and residents of the local area, including shadow flicker, air quality and noise;
- d) the direct benefits to the area and local community.

5.1.12. Furthermore, in all cases, development is required to demonstrate how any significant adverse impacts on acknowledged biodiversity interests (and the habitats that support them) will be adequately mitigated.

5.1.13. **Policy PD8 Flood Risk Management and Water Quality** states that the Council will support development proposals that avoid areas of current or future flood risk and which do not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. It states that management of flood risk will be achieved by only permitting development within areas at risk from flooding as defined by the Environment Agency if:

- a) a sequential test demonstrates that this is the only site where the development can be located;
- b) the development is on a site which has passed the sequential test but where flood risk still exists, the sequential approach has been used to locate the most vulnerable parts of the development in the areas of lowest flood risk;
- c) where necessary an 'Exception Test' demonstrates that the proposed development can be accommodated with an acceptable degree of safety;
- d) a site-specific flood risk assessment shows that the site is protected adequately from flooding, or the scheme includes adequate flood defences or flood risk management measures and takes account of the predicted impact of climate change;
- e) it does not damage or inhibit access to watercourses for maintenance or existing flood defence and flood risk management structures or measures; and
- f) it will not cause or worsen flooding on the site or elsewhere and will reduce flood risk elsewhere where possible.

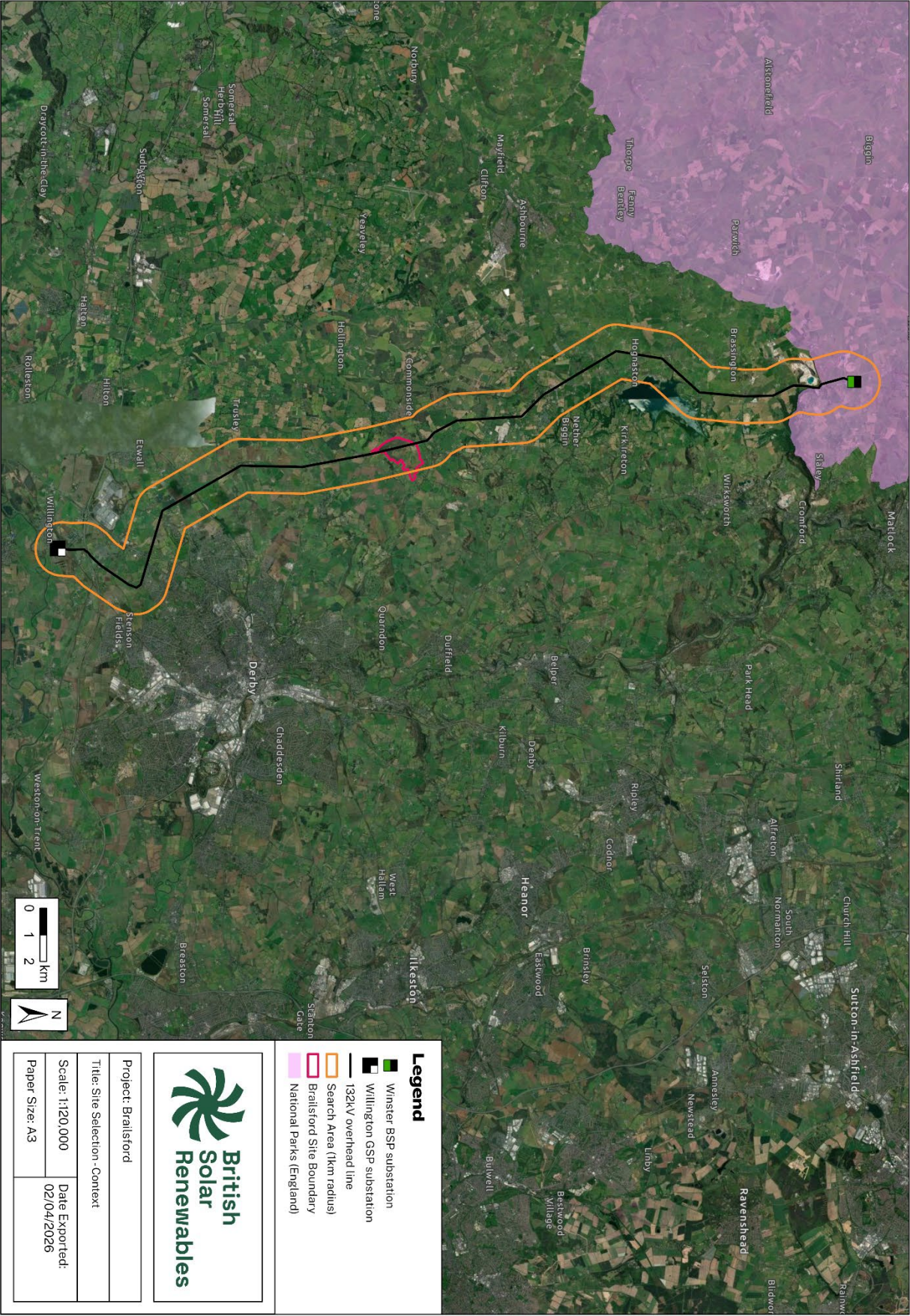
5.1.14. For developments in areas with known surface water flooding issues, appropriate mitigation and construction methods will be required.

6. Conclusions

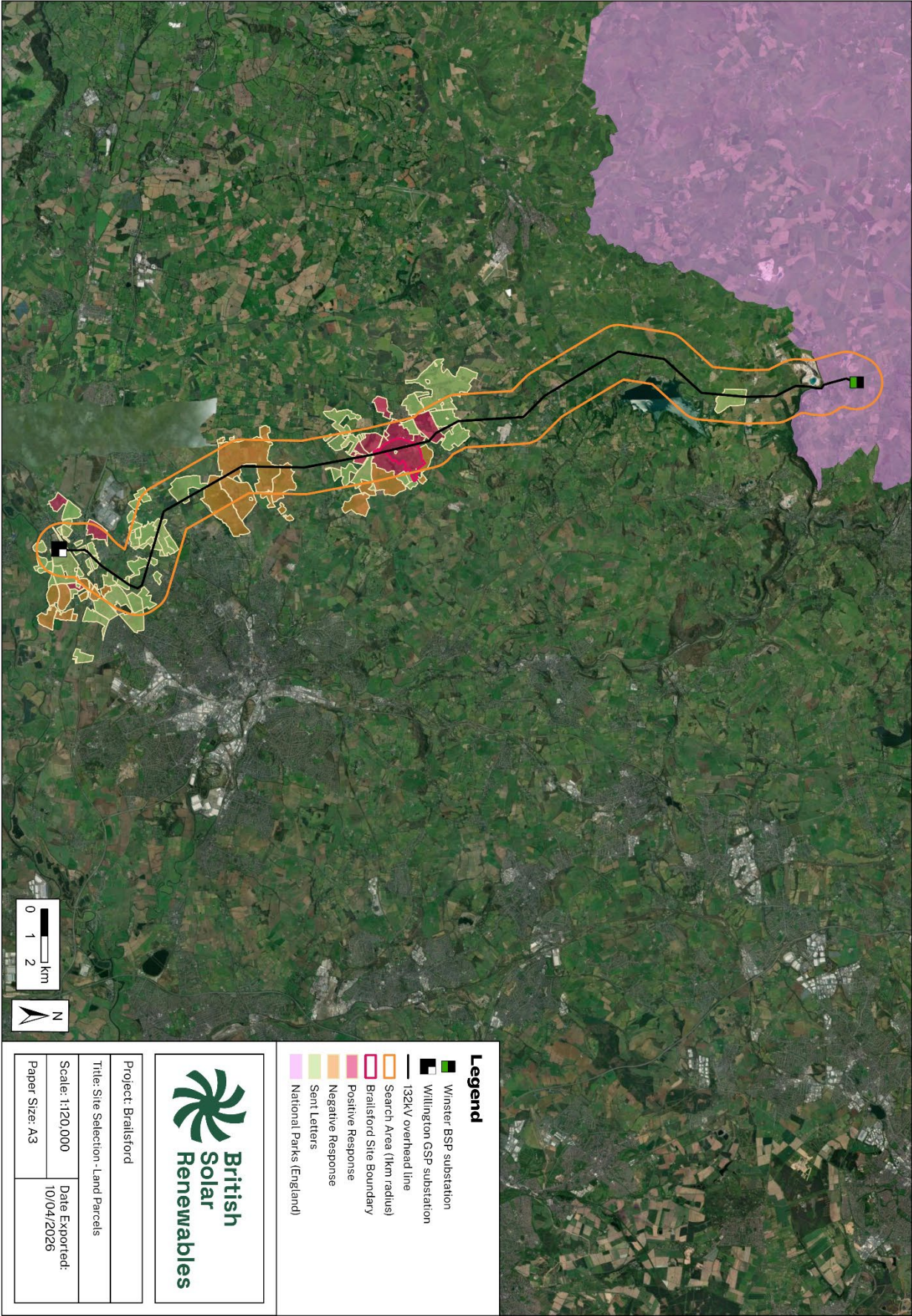
- 6.1.1. This Technical Note has been prepared in support of a planning application for a 55MW solar park at land at Main Road, Brailsford, Ashbourne. It is supported by a suite of technical reports which demonstrate that the site is environmentally suitable for accommodating solar development. The submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the site is suitable in planning terms.
- 6.1.2. This Technical Note provides a clear justification for the selection of the site through reference to national energy policy, the need for renewable energy, and an assessment of grid availability, planning designations, and agricultural land quality.
- 6.1.3. The site benefits from an on-site point of connection to the National Grid, providing the most efficient and viable solution for connecting the development to existing infrastructure and avoiding the need for an off-site cable route.
- 6.1.4. The land lies entirely within Flood Zone 1, demonstrating that flood risk does not constrain development in this location. Although parts of the site comprise Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land, the layout has been refined to limit the extent of higher-grade land required. The solar array constitutes a temporary and reversible form of development, enabling continued agricultural use, including managed grassland and potential sheep grazing, for the duration of its operation, as well as maintaining the land for agricultural use at the end of the development's lifespan. In any event, solar development does not cause the loss of BMV land.
- 6.1.5. A comprehensive assessment of alternative locations was undertaken, including landowner engagement with 48 landholdings, review of agricultural land classifications, environmental designations, flood zones, and establishment of the maximum viable cable length. Of the eight land parcels with landowner interest, only one land parcel, Land at New House Farm, offered a sufficient scale, configuration, and proximity to the 132 kV overhead line to deliver a viable scheme. This parcel was the only option capable of meeting the secured grid connection, had support from an engaged landowner, and was the least environmentally constrained.
- 6.1.6. The evidence presented within this Technical Note supports the suitability of the site for a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic development generating up to 55MW of renewable electricity. The proposed development represents an efficient use of land, aligns with national and local policy objectives to deliver clean energy, and contributes meaningfully toward the UK's legally binding net-zero commitments. By utilising a site in an area with confirmed

grid capacity and few environmental constraints, the proposal delivers renewable energy generation in a way that is both environmentally sensitive and viable for delivery.

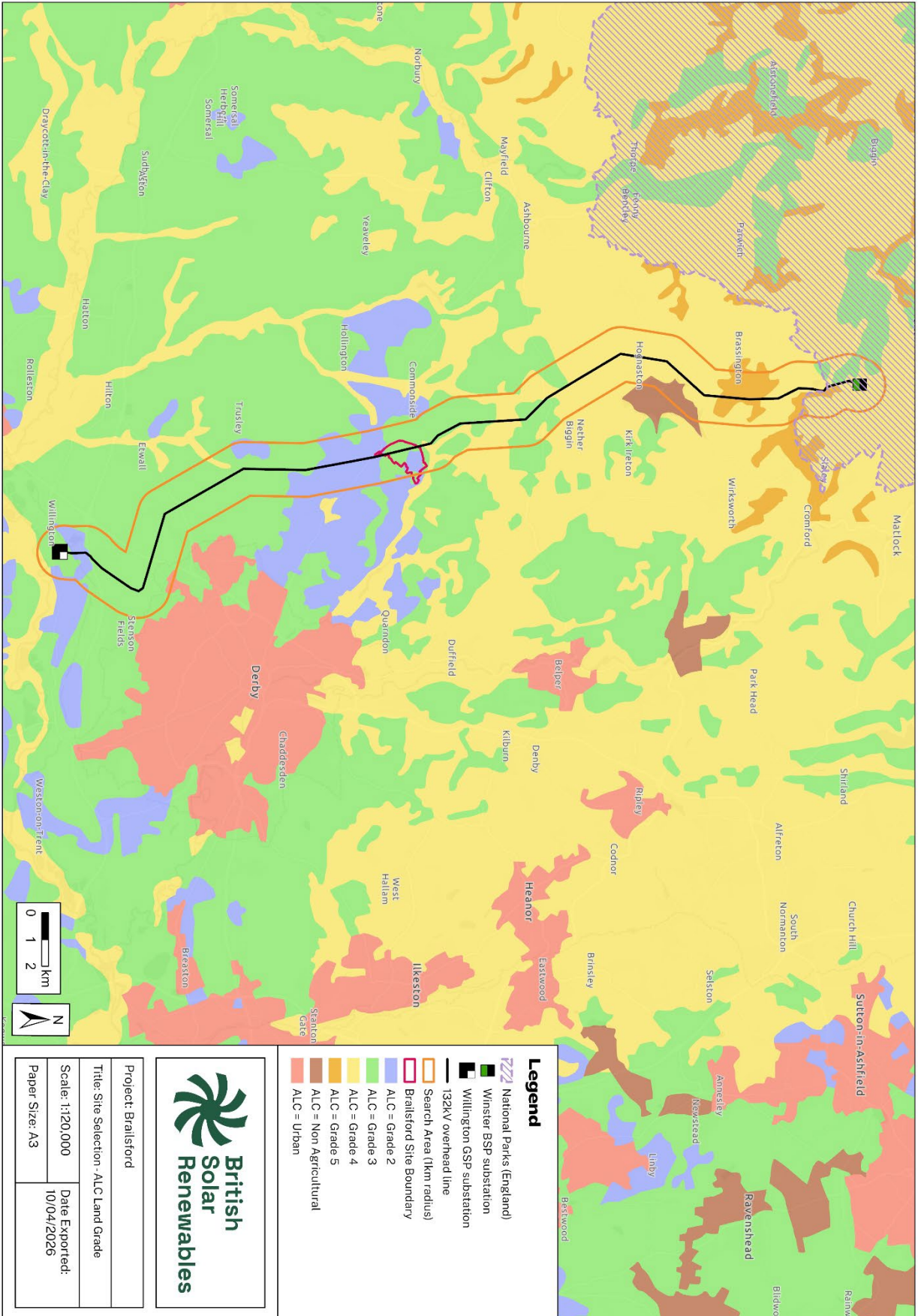
Appendix – Figures (Full Resolution)



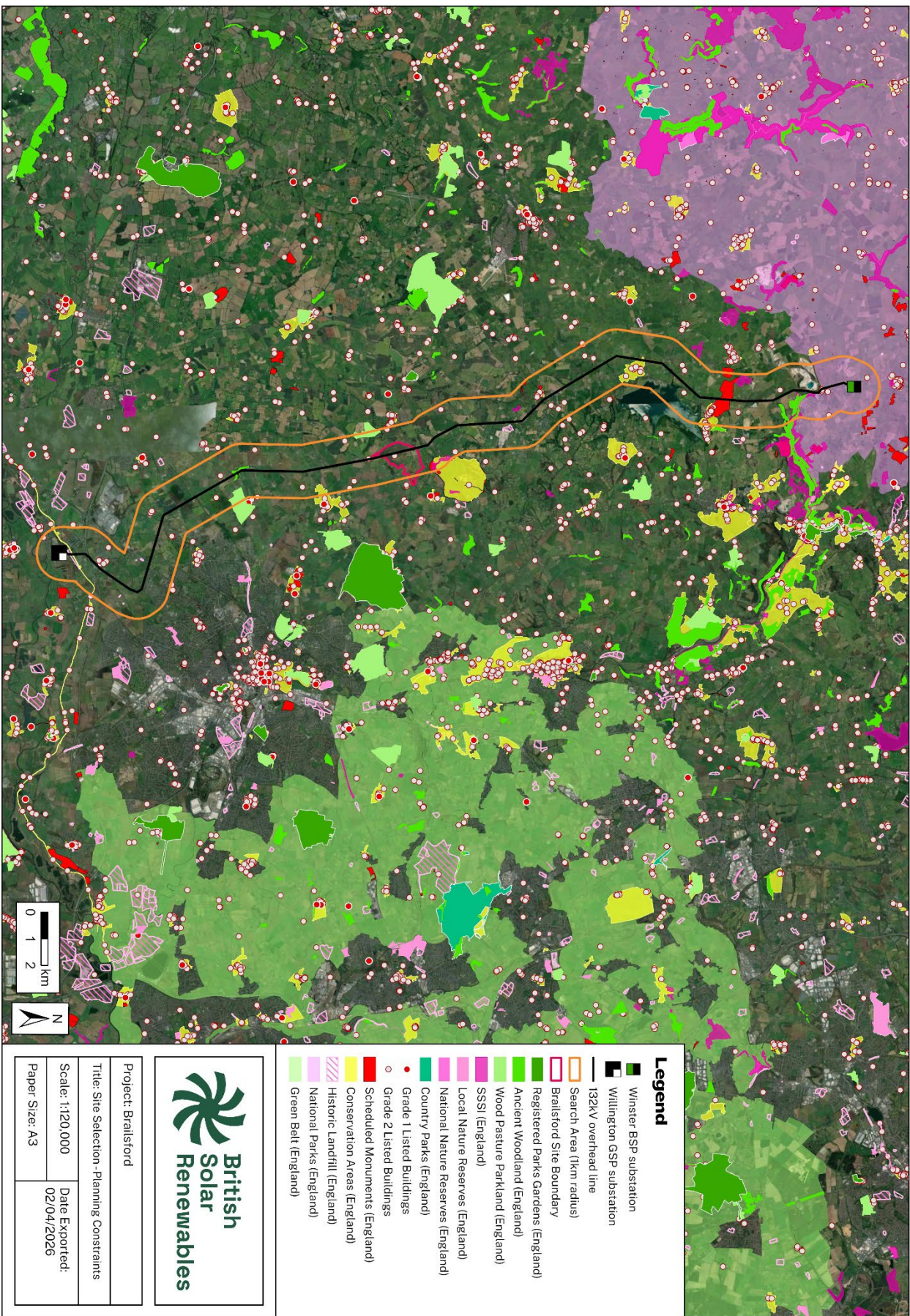
Credits: Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, @ OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Earthstar Geographics



Credits: Earthstar Geographics



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