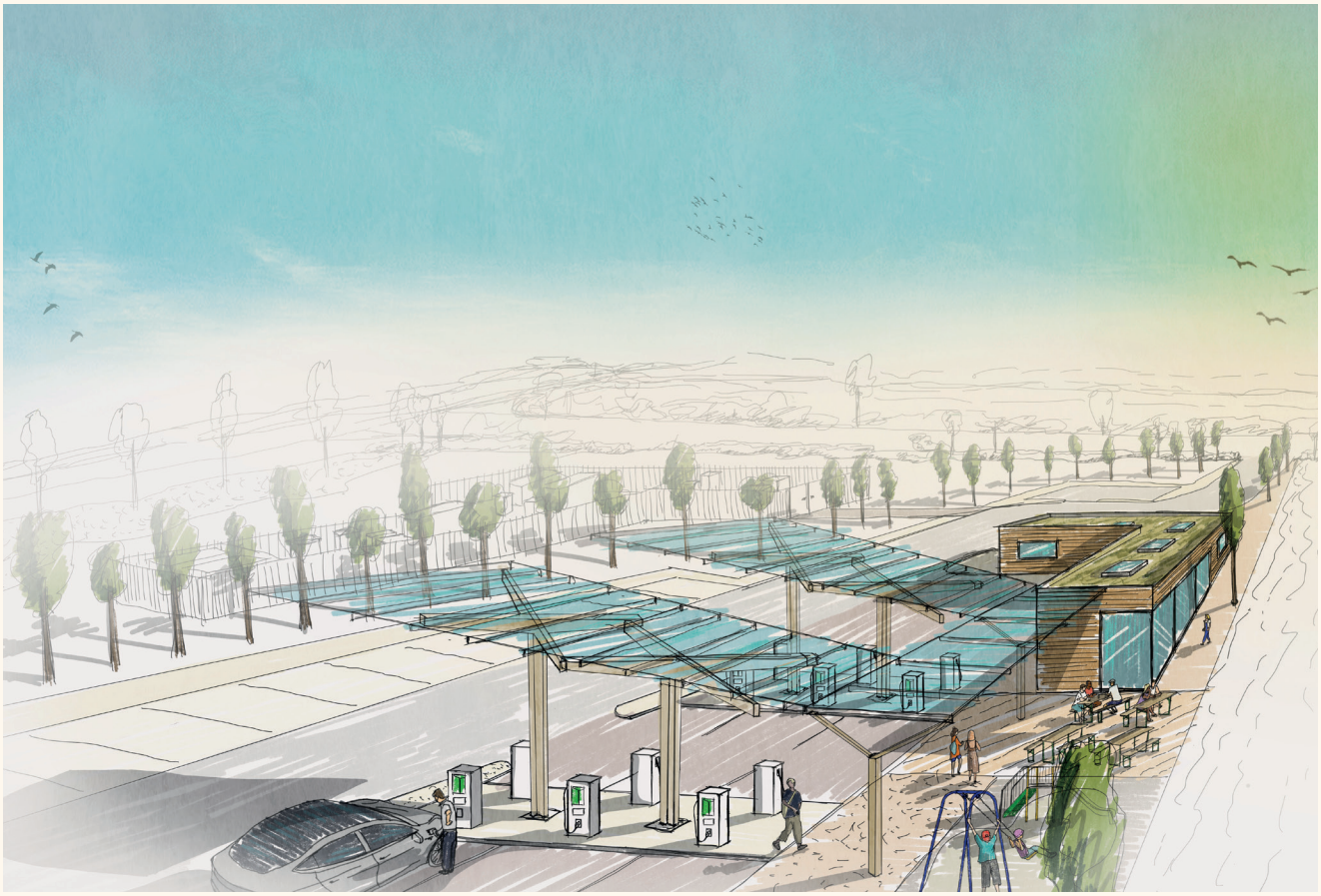
Halstead Road eco-hub proposal

Statement of Community Involvement

16 December 2021



Produced By GNL Strategic on behalf of
Naturalis Energy Developments Ltd

naturalis

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1 Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement ("SCI") provides a summary of the community engagement undertaken on behalf of the applicants, Naturalis Energy Developments Ltd ("Naturalis" hereafter) in relation to their proposal to build an eco-hub in Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken.

1.2 The application seeks approval to deliver:

- a public, electric vehicle (EV) charging station with at least 12 ultra-rapid and rapid charging points and 13 fast charging points;[1]
- battery storage to store electricity from the solar farm and help the National Grid manage its network efficiently; and
- solar panels that will generate electricity at source in Kirby, generating electricity each year that is equivalent to the demand from circa. 6,500 typical homes.[2]

1.3 This SCI has been produced to assist Tendring District Council in its assessment of the planning application. It sets out the programme of stakeholder engagement and public consultation activities that has been undertaken. It demonstrates how feedback received from stakeholders played an important role in the design evolution of the scheme. It should be considered alongside the other documents that have been submitted to support the application.

2 Policy context

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (the "Framework") (revised July 2021) places an onus on the applicant to engage in pre-application discussions with local planning officers prior to submitting a planning application.

2.2 Naturalis has been mindful of the guidance in the Framework on these matters and has undertaken an engagement exercise in pursuit of these objectives.

2.3 Paragraphs 39 to 42 of the Framework give guidance on pre-application engagement and front-loading of applications to achieve better decisions from local planning authorities.

2.4 Paragraph 39 supports pre-application engagement and stipulates that "*early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties*", while paragraph 40 more explicitly encourages applicants "*to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.*"

2.5 Paragraph 41 goes on to state that "*the more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage…the greater the benefits*". An early consideration of fundamental issues that could arise in respect of a proposed development is important and this should involve the "participation of other consenting bodies in pre-application discussions" (Paragraph 42).

2.6 To help move towards the goal of achieving well-designed places, the guidance in paragraph 128 of the Framework states that "*applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community*". It goes on to state that proposals for new development will be looked on more favourably should they demonstrate ongoing design development through public consultation.

1 See: https://www.zap-map.com/charge-points/connectors-speeds/

2 The UK average for solar photovoltaic project capacity factors in 2020 was 11.2% (Source: 2021 Digest of UK Energy Statistics, BEIS, table 6.5). 25MWp (the project's assumed capacity) x 1,000 (converting from MW to kW) x 8,760 (hours in a year) x 11.2% (assumed capacity factor) = 24.5m kWh, to one decimal place. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, "Energy Consumption in the UK" Table C9, 22 October 2020, average, temperature-corrected domestic consumption in 2019 @ 3,772 kWh. 24.5m kWh divided by 3,772 kWh = 6,495 homes.

2.7 Tendring District Council's Statement of Community Involvement states in paragraph 3.3 that *"...the Council also encourages prospective applicants to engage with the community prior to submitting a planning application so that they can take on board residents' views and, where practical, incorporate their ideas or address their concerns by making changes to the initial draft proposals. Early engagement with communities should therefore help to minimise the number of formal objections the Council receives once the planning application has been submitted."*[3]

2.8 Naturalis has met and exceeded the Tendring District Council's minimum requirements for pre-application consultation, delivering in every field as set out in table 3.13 including:

- meetings held with elected representatives;
- a meeting held with Frinton & Walton Town Council;
- a public meeting where Naturalis presented the proposal, and was available for questions and answers, organised and advertised by the Frinton & Walton Town Council;
- a public exhibition held over two days, with 14 days notification in the *Clacton & Frinton Gazette* and through a newsletter/exhibition invitation posted by Royal Mail to every home and business in Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken; and
- creation of a website, serving as a consultation portal that enables readers to view materials, information and illustrations, with a function to provide feedback directly to the Naturalis project team.

3 Consultation methodology

3.1 The objective of the consultation process was to engage local stakeholders who may have an interest in the future use of the site and development proposal. The intention was to create an open dialogue with residents and businesses about the proposed development and how it aligns with national and local priorities regarding climate change and a need to meet a growing demand for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The feedback collected throughout the consultation process was used to inform the proposals and several changes have been made in response to comments.

3.2 Naturalis has been committed to the preparation of a locally led scheme that has been informed by feedback from as many people as possible. To achieve this, the consultation process has been guided by several core principles to ensure that the local community had an opportunity to inform the design evolution.

3.3 From the outset, Naturalis wished to undertake a consultation and engagement programme that was collaborative in its approach. That is why they sought to work with key stakeholders who have a strong interest in the planning process, from the local planning authority to residents and elected representatives, to prepare a development proposal that would deliver the best scheme possible. This approach also meant that once feedback was received, it was taken on board and used, where possible, to inform the proposal and its design.

3.4 To foster a positive working partnership with the local community and other key stakeholders, Naturalis has been and will continue to be clear and transparent in their approach for every element of the planning process, from early design concepts to public consultation, post-submission and beyond. As part of this, Naturalis has been open with the community about their aspirations for the future of the site and communicated information in a way that is easy to access and to understand.

3 https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/planning/Planning_Policy/Statement%20of%20Community%20Involvement%20%28SCI%29%20July%202020.pdf – page 13, dated July 2020.

3.5 For Naturalis, accountability is an important element of openness and transparency. As such, every aspect of the engagement and consultation programme has made clear that Naturalis is the developer seeking to develop the site and provided contact details for how anyone can contact the project team directly to receive further information, provide feedback and/or speak to a member of the team. All consultation material was clearly branded to show who it was produced by.

3.6 Inclusivity was a value at the core of Naturalis's approach to engagement and consultation. That is why Naturalis sought to engage with a wide range of people during the design process, from site neighbours to residents in the wider area around the site and ward councillors. Moreover, all feedback has been reviewed and treated equally, regardless of the respondent.

4 Stakeholder engagement

4.1 During the consultation process, Naturalis sought to engage with local stakeholders who would have a strong interest in the future of the site and the development proposal – and foster strong, working relationships with them.

Stage 1: Introductions

4.2 At the outset, Naturalis sought to engage with key local stakeholders prior to the proposal going into the wider public domain. The purpose of engagement was to present information, understand local aspirations and use feedback to inform the proposals ahead of wider, public consultation.

4.3 A list of local stakeholders, the rationale for engagement and outcomes are set out in the table below:

Stakeholder	Rationale	Outcomes
Cllr Carlo Guglielmi Deputy Leader of the Council	A high-level discussion with the Deputy Leader of the Council who took active role in the creation of the Council's Climate Change Emergency.	Declined to meet; advised in an e-mail dated 5th July 2021 that Naturalis should liaise with ward members and planning officers.
Cllr Michael Talbot Cabinet Member for Environment & Public Space	A high-level discussion with the portfolio holder responsible for renewable energy and climate change.	Declined to meet. In a written letter dated 16th July 2021, Cllr Talbot wrote "*I repeat for the record that as the Cabinet Member charged with overseeing Tendring's approach to the mitigation of the adverse effects of Climate Change, I fully support projects such as the one you outlined when we spoke on Wednesday, and I would hope serious progress can be made by 'Naturalis' in Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross*". See Appendix A.
Cllr Mark Platt Essex County Council	A discussion with the county councillor whose division includes the site – and in his capacity as the town councillor whose ward of Kirby-le-Soken & Hamford includes the site.	Agreed to meet in principle but no meeting took place with Cllr Platt.

Stakeholder	Rationale	Outcomes
Cllr Nick Turner Tendring District Council	Present the proposal to a neighbouring ward councillor and member, Frinton & Walton Town Council.	Agreed to meet in principle but no meeting took place with Cllr Turner.
Cllr Terry Allen Tendring District Council	Present the proposal to a neighbouring ward councillor and member, Frinton & Walton Town Council.	No reply to e-mails and no meetings occurred with Cllr Allen.
Cllr Jeff Bray Tendring District Council	Present the proposal to the town councillor whose ward of Kirby Cross includes the site.	Declined to meet as he needs to stay impartial due to his role as Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee on Tendring District Council.
Giles Watling MP Member of Parliament	Present the scheme to the local MP who represents his constituents in the House of Commons.	No reply to the meeting invitation and no meetings has occurred with Mr Watling.
Cllr Fiona Knowles Tendring District Council and Frinton & Walton Town Council	Present the scheme to a key stakeholder who represents the site at district and town council levels (as advised by council officers following formal pre-application advice of February 2020).	A joint meeting took place with Cllr Paul Clifton on 26th August 2021 via Microsoft Teams. Key themes discussed: • Climate change. • Solar technology. • Increasing demand for EV charging. • Principle of development. • Preservation of the Green Gap. • Public consultation. • Site visit.
Cllr Paul Clifton Tendring District Council and Frinton & Walton Town Council	Present the scheme to a key stakeholder who represents the site at district and town council levels (as advised by council officers following formal pre-application advice of February 2020).	A meeting took place on with Cllr Fiona Knowles on 26th August 2021 via Microsoft Teams. Key themes discussed: • Climate change. • Solar technology. • Increasing demand for EV charging. • Principle of development. • Preservation of the Green Gap. • Public consultation. • Site visit.

Stage 2: Ongoing dialogue with ward councillors

4.4 Naturalis has maintained a consistent and ongoing dialogue with Cllr Paul Clifton and Cllr Fiona Knowles who both represent the site at district and town council levels of local government.

4.5 As part of the ongoing dialogue, key meetings and feedback is set out below:

Details	Date	Discussion points
Site visit with Cllr Paul Clifton and Cllr Fiona Knowles	18th September 2021	• Use of materials for EV charging station to be rustic/have a rural setting, avoiding a concrete/commercial building. • Include additional parking to alleviate school parking at Kirby Primary School/sports parking at Kirby Playing Fields at weekends. • Inclusion of biodiversity enhancements. • Development in Green Gap – recognition that eco-hub would prevent housing developments, such as Linden Homes which was successful at appeal. • Sheep grazing is essential. • Coffee shop/café perhaps linked to a farmer selling local produce would be appealing. • Undertake a new traffic survey, following the installation of traffic lights at the southern end of Halstead Road. • Consult every home in wards of Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken. • Engage with Kirby Preservation Society.
MS Teams call with Cllr Paul Clifton and Cllr Fiona Knowles	28th September 2021	• Review of site layout and sketch of proposed EV charging station. • Introduction to materials/design precedents on existing EV stations. • Provision of rapid charging points.
MS Teams call with Cllr Paul Clifton and Cllr Fiona Knowles	18th October 2021	• Review of site layout and sketch of proposed EV charging station. • Discussion on consultation materials and key messages.

5 Public consultation

Stage 1: The launch

5.1 Naturalis launched the project and advertised the scheme to stakeholders and members of the public on 30th September 2021.

5.2 An advertisement was published in the form of a full-page newspaper advertisement, published on 30th September in the *Frinton & Walton Gazette* and the *Clacton Gazette*. See Appendix B. A copy of the advert was sent to every member of Tendring District Council and the Frinton & Walton Town Council. The timing of the advertisement coincided with the formal submission to Tendring District Council of an EIA Screening request in respect of the project.

5.3 The advertisement, titled 'Kirby to lead the way with provision of new eco-hub infrastructure' disseminated the following points:

- That Kirby will be one of the first locations across the UK to benefit from this type of infrastructure provision.
- National policy context, that by 2030, the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will be banned, setting out a need to deliver infrastructure now, to meet a growing demand.
- Details of the scheme, such as battery storage, solar panels and EV charging points.
- The benefits of renewable energy in a global context, in the sense that Britain can be energy independent.
- That the proposal will save the Green Gap from any future housing growth, preventing coalescence between Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken.
- Launch of a project website, online feedback form and consultation next steps.

5.4 Naturalis received six enquiries via the website during this period which were responded to.

Stage 2: Meeting with Frinton & Walton Town Council

5.5 Naturalis presented the scheme, policy context and benefits to the Frinton & Walton Town Council on Thursday 7th October 2021.

5.6 Four councillors and five members of the public posed the following questions to Naturalis:

Question	Response
What is the planning gain?	Provision of EV charging points, contributing to improving air quality, mitigating the impact of climate change and a community benefit fund.
What are your screening measures?	Shrubs, bushes, and some fencing to minimise visual impact from residential properties.
What is your decommissioning strategy?	A planning condition can be included in any future planning permission to ensure that the project is decommissioned after 40 years.
Doesn't your development erode/ destroy the Green Gap?	No. In fact, this development prevents housing from being built, which would permanently destroy the Green Gap and create coalescence between the two communities.

Question	Response
All new homes will be built with EV charging points, so is your scheme really needed?	Yes, to meet a growing public demand for EV charging. The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders forecasts that even taking account of home charging etc, 700 public EV charging points need to be installed every day until 2030, the equivalent of 28 Halstead Road projects per day.
Is Naturalis trying to circumnavigate the planning system?	No, planning is a quasi-judicial process. Naturalis will submit a full planning application to Tendring District Council who will determine the application according to local and national policies. (This question was posed in the light of the (then) pending EIA Screening request which was believed – mistakenly – to be the application for the project).

Stage 3: Public Meeting (organised and advertised by Frinton & Walton Town Council)

5.7 On Friday 26th October 2021, Naturalis attended a public meeting organised by Frinton & Walton Town Council. A total of 46 residents attended the event, including Cllr Paul Clifton (Tendring First, Kirby Cross).

5.8 Cllr Paul Clifton gave a presentation and covered themes such as climate change, the climate emergency, technical aspects of EVs while answering questions posed to him by residents.

5.9 Naturalis presented the emerging proposal and responded to the following themes:

Theme	Response
We do not need this project in Kirby as electric vehicles are a gimmick	The government has banned the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030. As such, UK car manufacturers, the private and public sectors are now in the process of transitioning an renewables economy. Naturalis emphasised that rural communities have often been left behind during periods of large-scale infrastructure deployment, such as with broadband, so this proposal delivers vital infrastructure, that will meet a growing need in the future, to a rural location that may otherwise be missed, while filling a regional gap in such infrastructure.
The scheme is in the wrong location	The site is adjacent to a suitable grid connection, perhaps the main locational factor for this type of development.
Battery storage is dangerous to human health, such as EMF radiation that can cause cancer	The thousands of battery storage projects operating around the world (with hundreds in the UK) provide evidence of the negligible effects on public health from such proposals.
We oppose prison-style fencing	The fencing will be sympathetic to the rural context and feel of the area. Most of the fencing is to prevent deer and humans from walking between the panels and reflects a rural, post and wire mesh design.

Theme	Response
We don't need solar panels in the Green Gap; they should be placed on top of existing homes	Naturalis welcomes domestic installation of solar panels, but there is an increasing demand across the UK for electricity generation. The scheme will produce enough electricity to power 6,500 average homes, plus it will generate electricity to power the EV charging station. The equivalent amount of generation from roof-top solar installations would be more costly, take far longer to install and require virtually all houses in the area to have solar panels, with its own visual effects. Even if this were possible, it does not detract from the need for the Halstead Road eco-hub, such is the scale of the challenge to decarbonise the economy.
The scheme will cause traffic mayhem on Halstead Road	Naturalis wants to solve an existing problem. In addition to the circa. 30 parking spaces within the Linden Homes development, Naturalis can provide an additional 50 or so parking spaces. Naturalis would pay to have double yellow lines installed one-side of Halstead Road, which if enforced correctly by the police and local authority, would force parents to park within the development and not on the street. Consequently, it would remove parked cars one side of Halstead Road and allow the traffic to flow much better.
Climate change is a myth; CO_2 is good for planet earth – and Britain should re-use coal	Naturalis, taking account of all the evidence available, disagrees with this statement. The science on this matter demonstrates without doubt that the use of fossil fuels is harming human health (air pollution) and is harming planet earth through global warming and climate change. The UK has therefore established legally-binding targets for continual reductions in greenhouse gas emissions until at least 2050.

Stage 4: Meetings with site neighbours

5.10 During the public meeting on 26th October 2021, Naturalis engaged with residents whose homes sit directly adjacent to the proposed EV charging station by Kirby Playing Fields.

5.11 As such, on Tuesday 16th November 2021, Naturalis held two meetings with residents of 101 Halstead Road and 103 Halstead Road.

5.12 The themes of discussion include:

- Visual impact and screening measures
- Safety – proximity to homes of lithium-ion battery storage units, transformers and other high voltage electrical equipment
- Impact technology would have on pacemakers

Stage 5: Public consultation

5.13 To publicise the exhibition to the wider public a half-page newspaper advertisement was published on 4th November 2021 in the *Clacton Gazette* and the *Frinton and Walton Gazette*. See Appendix C. The advertisement contained the time, date and location of the exhibition as well as providing an overview of the proposal, while again promoting the project website and online feedback form portal.

5.14 On 4th November 2021, Naturalis invited by e-mail every member of Tendring District Council, Frinton & Walton Town Council and Giles Watling MP to attend the exhibition.

5.15 A four-page community newsletter was sent by Royal Mail to 2,914 properties on Thursday 4th November 2021. The list of addresses included every business and residential property within the electoral wards of Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken & Hamford. See Appendix D.

5.16 Naturalis held a public exhibition over two days: from 12pm to 8pm on Tuesday 16th November 2021 and from 4pm to 8pm on Wednesday 17th November 2021. The exhibition took place at St Michael's Church Hall, The Street, Kirby-le-Soken. The venue is well known locally, it is accessible, has ample car parking and is used as a polling station for all local and parliamentary elections.

5.17 The exhibition included display panels which presented the scheme. See Appendix E. A feedback form was provided to every attendee. See Appendix F. Attendees could complete it at the end of the exhibition or complete it at home and return it to Naturalis by FREEPOST.

5.18 In total, 250 people attended the consultation held over two days. Photos from the exhibition event can be found in Appendix G.

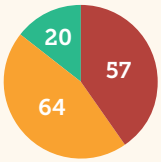
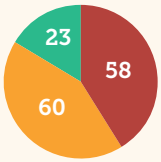
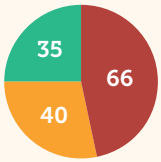
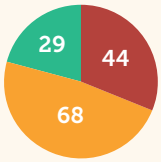
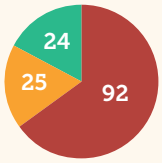
In total, 141 feedback forms have been received; 120 forms submitted during the consultation and 21 feedback forms were received via the Freepost. That's a total response rate of 56.4%.

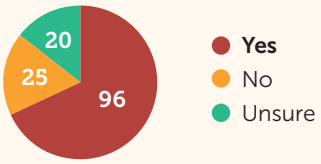
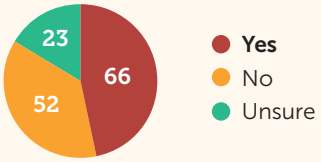
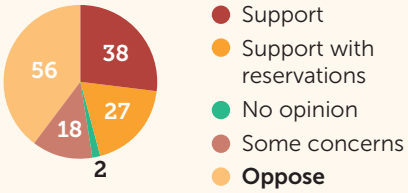
The feedback received suggests that the majority of attendees/respondents do not hold strong opinions either for or against the proposal.

This is evidenced by responses to specific questions. For example, 45% of respondents oppose the principle of building the eco-hub with 40% in support of it. Moreover, 42% of respondents agree that the scheme is inappropriately located whilst 41% state that it is appropriately located next to a grid connection.

As such, 26.9% of respondents fully support the development proposal whilst 39.7% emphatically oppose it, with 33.4% having mixed views about the overall development proposal, ranging from no opinion, to having concerns or supporting with reservations.

A breakdown of feedback received to date is set out below:

Questions	Responses
1 **Do you support or oppose the principle of building an eco-hub in this part of Kirby?**	 Support **Oppose** Unsure
2 **The eco-hub is in a suitable location as it is located next to National Grid infrastructure. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?**	 Agree **Disagree** Unsure
3 **Do you support or oppose the UK government's decision to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and small vans by 2030?**	 **Agree** Disagree Unsure
4 **Do you plan on purchasing an electric vehicle in the near future?**	 Yes **No** Unsure
5 **Do you believe that eco-hubs strengthen Britain's energy security as homegrown electricity production reduces our country's reliance on importing fossil fuels from abroad?**	 **Yes** No Unsure

Questions	Responses
6 Do you welcome projects such as the eco-hub to respond to the global climate change emergency?	
7 The proposal provides additional parking spaces on Halstead Road to help alleviate the pressure of overspill parking problems during school times. Do you welcome this measure?	
8 Please suggest the names of any local businesses that might benefit from potential opportunities to support the construction and operation of this eco-hub?	Silverton Aggregates 5 Sound & Vision Electronic in Frinton 1 SRW & Electronics 1 Amazon Ipswich 1 Costa Coffee 1
9 What is your overall attitude towards this development proposal?	
10 Please use the space below to ask questions or provide comments that you would like Naturalis to consider.	• Wrong location. • Insert double yellow lines down Halstead Road. • No development within Green Gap. • Preserve local footpaths. • Action needed to save planet earth from climate change. • Yes to a solar farm, no to housing in the Green Gap. • Please provide cheaper electricity for local residents. • Halstead Road is too busy to cope with more traffic. • The proposed car park will help reduce traffic on Halstead Road. • Climate change is a myth; we need more CO_2. • No solar, use land for farming.

5.19 Naturalis has responded to the common questions and themes raised at the exhibition:

Theme	Response
We do not need this project in Kirby as electric vehicles are a gimmick	The government has banned the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030. As such, UK car manufacturers, the private and public sectors are now in the process of transitioning an renewables economy. Naturalis emphasised that rural communities have often been left behind during periods of large-scale infrastructure deployment, such as with broadband, so this proposal delivers vital infrastructure, that will meet a growing need in the future, to a rural location that may otherwise be missed, while filling a regional gap in such infrastructure. NB: *66 residents welcome the government's proposed ban of the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2030 compared to 40 residents who oppose it, according to the feedback forms responses.*
The scheme will cause traffic mayhem on Halstead Road	Naturalis wants to solve an existing problem. In addition to the circa. 30 parking spaces within the Linden Homes development, Naturalis can provide an additional 50 or so parking spaces. Naturalis would pay to have double yellow lines installed one-side of Halstead Road, which if enforced correctly by the police and local authority, would force parents to park within the development and not on the street. Consequently, it would remove parked cars one side of Halstead Road and allow the traffic to flow much better. NB: *56 residents support this measure compared to 52 residents who oppose it according to the feedback form responders.*
The eco-hub is in the wrong place and shouldn't be built in the Green Gap	The site is adjacent to a suitable grid connection, perhaps the main locational factor for this type of development.
Battery storage is dangerous to human health, such as EMF radiation that can cause cancer	The thousands of battery storage projects operating around the world (with hundreds in the UK) provide evidence of the negligible effects on public health from such proposals.
We oppose prison-style fencing along the footpaths	The fencing will be sympathetic to the rural context and feel for the area. Most of the fencing is to prevent deer and humans from walking between the panels and reflects a rural, post and wire mesh design.
Why are you removing footpaths?	All footpaths will be retained while public access will be enhanced by these proposals, with the provision of permissive footpaths to complement the existing network of public footpaths and improve public access.

Theme	Response
Climate change is a myth; CO_2 is good for planet earth – and Britain should reuse coal	Naturalis, taking account of all the evidence available, disagrees with this statement. The science on this matter demonstrates without doubt that the use of fossil fuels is harming human health (air pollution) and is harming planet earth through global warming and climate change. The UK has therefore established legally-binding targets for continual reductions in greenhouse gas emissions until at least 2050.
Is Naturalis a Dutch company based in the Netherlands?	No. Naturalis is a UK based company. (This question is believed to be based on an internet search that returned the web-site www.naturalis.nl)
The scheme will cause flooding in Dugmore Avenue and most of Kirby-le-Soken.	Not at all. On the contrary, the proposal could improve drainage and reduce the risk of flooding through the proposed hedge and tree planting and as a result of improving soil structure following the cessation of intensive arable farming practices on the site.
The scheme will be visible from our homes	Adequate screening will be installed to minimise visual impact.

Stage 6: Follow-up meetings with residents

5.20 During the exhibition, Naturalis noted questions and concerned raised by site neighbours. As such, Naturalis instructed Arthur Daw, a Senior Landscape Architect of Pegasus Group advising on the project, to liaise directly with those residents who wanted to home visit.

5.21 On Thursday 2nd December 2021, Mr Daw visited homes and provided a summary of the conversations/outcomes from specific meetings:

Property	Brief summary of response at meeting
12 Hillcrest	Unavailable.
15 Hillcrest	Satisfied with proposal if the site is well screened.
16 Hillcrest	Suggested that a beech hedge maintained to a certain height will soften views while maintaining the open view. Welcomes idea of apple trees (part of a proposed community orchard).
101 Halstead Road	Suggested beech hedge not hornbeam. Fruit trees such as blackthorn, apple, cherry, and viburnum. Native trees such as Maple and Scots Pine further back. And even an evergreen oak if possible.
103 Halstead Road	Wants mature screening to block the views.

6 Conclusions

6.1 The programme of engagement with stakeholders began when the project entered the public domain in July 2021 and the pre-application consultation process began in October 2021 (this is in addition to the pre-application advice sought by Naturalis in late 2019). It sought to create an open dialogue and nurture relationships with residents, businesses, community groups and political stakeholders.

6.2 The pre-submission exhibition provided an opportunity for constructive engagement with members of the project team. Representatives from the developer and wider project team were all in attendance to meet with residents, councillors, local businesses and community stakeholders. This dialogue will remain open throughout the planning process.

6.3 Initial meetings with stakeholders, the exhibition and subsequent house visits have all provided important feedback, informing the project design as the proposals were developed. All feedback was thoroughly considered and discussed by the project team and, as these meetings occurred, Naturalis materially adapted and amended the scheme to respond to the feedback wherever practicable.

6.4 To ensure that the brief of wide consultation was met, invitations to the public exhibition were sent to 2,914 business and residential addresses in the area – that's every property in the electoral wards of Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken & Hamford.

6.5 Separately, local community and political stakeholders were directly invited to meet Naturalis.

6.6 Feedback from the public exhibition was mixed; nearly half of attendees did not complete feedback forms while those that were completed show that there is no majority opinion for or against the proposal, as illustrated below:

Feedback to question "What is your overall attitude towards this development proposal?"

Response	Responses (number)	Responses (%)
Support	38	26.9%
No opinion/some concerns/support with reservations	47	33.4%
Oppose	56	39.7%

6.7 Feedback forms posed key questions relating to the development principle, national policy context and sought feedback on the proposed scheme ahead of the submission of a planning application.

6.8 In response to feedback gathered throughout the consultation process, Naturalis has made a number of changes to the scheme including:

- Enhanced screening, and in some cases, mature screening along some perimeter boundaries.
- Installation of double yellow line along Halstead Road and provision of overspill car park to alleviate existing congestion issues.
- Proposals to include permissive footpaths on routes used informally by local residents, to improve local access and to help provide access to the existing network of public footpaths in the wider area.

6.9 Naturalis is committed to continuing to engage with the community and other key stakeholders post-submission.

7 Appendices

Appendix A

Tendring
District Council

Michael Talbot
Cabinet Member
Portfolio:
Environment

E-mail
cllr.mtalbot@tendringdc.gov.uk
Town Hall Enquiries:
01255 686868

Mr Billy Taylor,
Managing Director,
GNL Strategic
On behalf of Naturalis Biodiversity Centre.

16th July 2021.

Dear Mr Taylor,

I am in receipt of your letter to me of Wednesday which followed a telephone conversation we had at 1650 that day.

We spoke about your Company, as a political consultancy, representing 'Naturalis' who are planning to develop a Solar Farm on land between Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross, and we discussed possible ways forward.

You asked, if along with the Local District Council members Paul Clifton and Fiona Knowles, I would meet with you to discuss the project, but I declined saying that whilst I am a wholehearted supporter of non-fossil fuel powered electricity generation, I would decline your invitation of a pre-application meeting.

I suggested that you approach both the Parish Councill's within who's boundaries 'Naturalis' Solar Farm project would be created. In this way you might be able to satisfy and support local views your eventual application.

I think by now everybody must appreciate the value of using the Sun as a source of power for projects of Power Generation, but there often are quite genuine concerns of local residents on the doorstep of such a development.

I repeat for the record that as the Cabinet Member charged with overseeing Tendring's approach to the mitigation of the adverse effects of Climate Change, I fully support projects such as the one you outlined when we spoke on Wednesday, and I would hope serious progress can be made by 'Naturalis' in Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross.

Yours sincerely,
Cllr M. Talbot

Appendix B

Kirby to lead the way with provision of new Eco-Hub infrastructure

2021 Ford Mustang Mach-E and 1915 Ford Model T

Credit: Matt Alexander/PA

> *"We are in the middle of the biggest revolution in motoring since Henry Ford's first production line started turning back in 1913."*
>
> Justin Rowlatt of the BBC[1]

Fields near Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross are set to become one of first locations across the UK to benefit from a brand-new Eco-Hub.

The project comprises a public electric vehicle charging station off the Halstead Road powered by its own solar panels as part of a proposed £12-15 million investment from developer, Naturalis.[2]

By 2030, the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and small vans will be banned in Britain. Replacing them will be a range of electric vehicles. Customers will use projects like this one to recharge their cars and small vans.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders believes that in order to have the world-class infrastructure required for 2030, at least 700 public charging points must be installed each day until 2030.[3]

Wider proposals

The Eco-Hub is all-encompassing and sustainable. It will produce electricity to power homes,businesses and vehicles while helping to manage the National Grid through the provision of battery storage.

The Eco-Hub includes:

- Public electric vehicle station with at least 12 charging points.
- Battery storage to help the National Grid manage its network.
- Solar panels that will generate electricity at source in Kirby, powering electric vehicle chargers and homes.

Fact: During a full year, the proposed solar project would produce electricity equivalent to the demand of around 6,500 average UK homes.[4] That's more than three times the number of homes in Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken, combined.

Britain: a global leader in renewables

Whether it is petrol or gas, these fossil fuels are imported from various locations around the world such as the Middle East and Russia to meet British demand.

Britain's reliance on imported energy is minimised by projects like the Eco-Hub. As the Secretary of State said recently *"...it is the case that the UK is still too reliant on fossil fuels. Our exposure to volatile global gas prices underscores the importance of our plan to build a strong, home-grown renewable energy sector to strengthen our energy security into the future."*[5]


Transport for London Glass Yard electric vehicle charging hub

Kirby: doing its bit for Britain

Electric vehicle sales are growing fast but there are concerns that investment in public electric vehicle charging is missing out large parts of the UK, especially smaller towns, and rural areas.[6]

The £12-15million Eco-Hub investment will ensure that Kirby avoids this risk and benefits from cheap, clean electricity generation that will power homes and vehicles alike. The project will be designed to "rapid charge" at least 12 electric cars at the same time, no matter the make or model.

Moreover, Kirby will be doing its bit for the nation through the production of clean electricity that will feed into the National Grid and help reduce the impact of climate change.

The project will create local jobs, during construction and during operation, and expressions of interest from local contractors can be made through the website.

Saving the Green Gap

Housing developers want to build on land between Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross, an example of which is the new housing scheme on Halstead Road, in Kirby Cross. Current planning policy and farming have not stopped houses from being built.

Massive housebuilding in the Kirby area could eventually lead to the merging of the communities of Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross in the way that housing has effectively joined together Walton, Frinton and Kirby Cross in recent years.

The location of this Eco-Hub would preserve the Green Gap. It would prevent new homes from being built on 40-50 acres of this sought-after development land during its 40-year life, ensuring Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross remain separate villages with separate identities.

Consultation and next steps

Naturalis brings together the combined renewable energy experience of Falck Renewables and REG Power Management.

As Naturalis seeks to progress the Eco-Hub proposal, it will be undertaking a consultation on the scheme ahead of the submission of a planning application to Tendring District Council likely in December 2021. Further details to follow.

You can stay up to date with progress on this proposal, including the latest updates and news by visiting:

www.halsteadroadecohub.co.uk

naturalis

1 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-57253947
2 A Joint Venture between Falck Renewables and REG Power Management.
3 SMMT (March 2021) Delivering the Triple Bottom Line: A Blueprint for the Electric Vehicle Revolution.
4 The UK average for solar photovoltaic project capacity factors in 2020 was 11.2% (Source: 2021 Digest of UK Energy Statistics, BEIS, table 6.5). 25MWp (the project's assumed capacity) x 1,000 (converting from MW to kW) x 8,760 (hours in a year) x 11.2% (assumed capacity factor) = 24.5m kWh, to one decimal place. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, "Energy Consumption in the UK" Table C9, 22 October 2020, average, temperature-corrected domestic consumption in 2019 @ 3,772 kWh. 24.5m kWh divided by 3,772 kWh = 6,495 homes.
5 Taken from the "Statement on the UK gas market by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, 20 September 2021".
6 Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Simon Clarke MP, 2 February 2021.

Appendix C

Invitation to attend a public consultation

Kirby is set to become one of the first locations across the UK to benefit from brand-new eco-hub infrastructure, which includes a public electric vehicle charging station, solar panels and battery storage.

2021 Ford Mustang Mach-E and 1915 Ford Model T

Credit: Matt Alexander/PA

1 A joint venture between Falck Renewables and REG Power Management.
2 The UK average for solar photovoltaic project capacity factors in 2020 was 11.2% (Source: 2021 Digest of UK Energy Statistics, BEIS, table 6.5). 25MWp (the project's assumed capacity) x 1,000 (converting from MW to kW) x 8,760 (hours in a year) x 11.2% (assumed capacity factor) = 24.5m kWh, to one decimal place. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, "Energy Consumption in the UK" Table C9, 22 October 2020, average, temperature-corrected domestic consumption in 2019 @ 3,772 kWh. 24.5m kWh divided by 3,772 kWh = 6,495 homes.
3 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-57253947.

The £12-15 million investment in infrastructure from Naturalis[1] comprises:

- Public electric vehicle station with **12 rapid charging points** off the Halstead Road.
- It would be **powered by solar panels** producing enough electricity to power 6,500 typical homes.[2]
- Battery storage to assist the **National Grid manage its network**.

Why is this happening?

By 2030, the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and small vans will be banned in Britain. Replacing them will be a range of electric vehicles. Customers will use projects like this one to recharge their cars and small vans, eventually replacing the traditional petrol garage.

Why is this site in Kirby?

Naturalis chose this site in Kirby as it is suitably located next to a vital connection to the National Grid.

Without the ability to connect an eco-hub to a grid connection, this infrastructure simply doesn't work.

> ***"We are in the middle of the biggest revolution in motoring since Henry Ford's first production line started turning back in 1913."***
> Justin Rowlatt of the BBC[3]

Dates and times

- Tuesday 16 November 2021 (from 1pm until 8pm)
- Wednesday 17 November 2021 (from 4pm until 8pm)

Venue

- St Michael's Church Hall, The Street, Kirby-le-Soken, Essex CO13 0EF

No bookings required.
Just drop by at any time.

The Naturalis project team looks forward to presenting information about the proposal, answering your questions and capturing your feedback on the plans before a planning application is submitted to Tendring Council.

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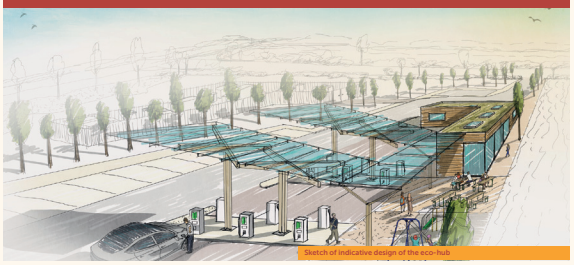
For further information, visit our website: www.halsteadroadecohub.co.uk

Appendix D

Invitation to attend a public consultation on plans to build an eco-hub in Kirby



Sketch of indicative design of the eco-hub

A leading renewable energy developer, Naturalis, is proposing to build a £12-15million eco-hub on land between Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross.

The eco-hub is all-encompassing and sustainable. It will produce electricity to power homes, businesses and vehicles while helping to manage the National Grid through the provision of battery storage.

The eco-hub includes:

- **A public electric vehicle (or 'EV') station** with at least 12 rapid charging points.
- **Battery storage to help the National Grid** manage its network.
- **Solar panels that will generate electricity at source in Kirby**, powering electric vehicle chargers and homes.

Indicative project timescales:

1. **Submission of a planning application:** December 2021
2. **Receive planning decision:** Q2, 2022
3. **Financial investment decision:** Q1, 2023
4. **Construction:** Q2 – Q3, 2023
5. **First generation/operation:** Q3, 2023

Britain: a global leader in renewables

Whether it is petrol or gas, fossil fuels are imported from various locations around the world such as the Middle East and Russia to meet British demand.

Britain's reliance on imported energy is minimised by projects like the eco-hub. As the Secretary of State said recently:

***"...It is the case that the UK is still too reliant on fossil fuels. Our exposure to volatile global gas prices underscores the importance of our plan to build a strong, home-grown renewable energy sector to strengthen our energy security into the future."*[1]**

1 https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/uk-gas-market-and-prices

The consultation

Local residents will be able to view the proposals, ask questions and comment on the emerging scheme. All feedback will be reviewed and considered by Naturalis to inform the final proposal ahead of the submission of a planning application to Tendring District Council.

The consultation will take place over the following two days:

Dates and times

- Tuesday 16 November 2021 (from 1pm until 8pm)
- Wednesday 17 November 2021 (from 4pm until 8pm)

Venue

- St Michael's Church Hall, The Street, Kirby-le-Soken, Essex CO13 0EF

No bookings required. Just drop in at any time.

The Naturalis project team will be in attendance and on hand to provide information and answer questions throughout the course of the consultation.

If you cannot attend these events, you can view our consultation materials online and provide feedback via our website or via the FREEPOST feedback form that can be found on the reverse of this leaflet.

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www.halsteadroadecohub.co.uk

Why are we proposing to build an eco-hub on these sites?

With the ban on new petrol and diesel cars only eight years away, every community – urban and rural – across the UK will need to have access to electric vehicle charging stations in the same way that most drivers today need to use garages for petrol and diesel.

Naturalis chose this site in Kirby as it is suitably located next to a vital connection to the National Grid and lacks good quality EV public charging. Without the ability to connect an eco-hub to a grid connection, this infrastructure simply doesn't work.

The location of this eco-hub would preserve the Green Gap. It would prevent new homes from being built on 40-50 acres of this sought-after development land during its 40-year life, ensuring Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross remain separate villages with separate identities.

Why do we need a public electric vehicle charging station?

Example of an operational electric vehicle charging station

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders believes, even taking account of EV charging at home, work and supermarkets in future, that at least 700 public charging points must be installed each day for the next 8 years.[4] That's the equivalent to building 50 Halstead Road projects every day!

Electric vehicle sales are growing fast but there are concerns that investment in public electric vehicle charging is missing out large parts of the UK, especially smaller towns, and rural areas.[3]

The £12-15million eco-hub investment will ensure that Kirby avoids this risk and benefits from cheap, clean electricity generation that will power homes and vehicles alike. The project will be designed to "rapid charge" at least 12 electric cars at the same time, no matter the make or model.

2 SMMT (March 2021) Delivering the Triple Bottom Line: A Blueprint for the Electric Vehicle Revolution.
3 Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Simon Clarke MP, 2 February 2021.
4 The UK average for solar photovoltaic project capacity factors in 2020 was 11.2% (Source: 2021 Digest of UK Energy Statistics, BEIS, table 6.5). 25MWp (the project's assumed capacity) x 1,000 (converting from MW to kW) x 8,760 (hours in a year) x 11.2% (assumed capacity factor) = 24.5m kWh, to one decimal place. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 'Energy Consumption in the UK' Table C9, 22 October 2020, average, temperature-corrected domestic consumption in 2019 @ 3,772 kWh. 24.5m kWh divided by 3,772 kWh = 6,495 homes.

Why is a solar farm a part of the eco-hub proposal?

National Grid expects peak demand for electricity will significantly increase due partly to additional demand from electric vehicle charging. As such, there is a need to generate more electricity to meet a growing demand across the UK.

The eco-hub concept is all-compassing and sustainable. The solar farm would generate electricity needed to power local homes and cars. The power will feed into the electric car chargers or the national grid with some electricity stored in the battery storage units to assist the smooth operation of the local grid.

Did you know that this project would produce enough electricity to power about 6,500 typical homes?[4]

The western site would comprise the electric vehicle charging station, the battery storage units and the grid connection.

The electric vehicle charging station comprises:

- Construction of a new access off the Halstead Road by the Kirby Playing Fields.
- Around six ultra-rapid (up to 350kW) and six rapid (43-100kW) charging points (more could be added over time, to meet demand).
- These chargers would allow all types of EVs to charge at the eco-hub.
- Public rest facilities including a small café/shop with lounge area and an outdoor seating and play area.
- Inclusion of at least 30 car parking spaces, for EVs as well as non-EVs, to help reduce congestion and traffic on the Halstead Road during peak school drop-off and pick-up times.
- New wild flower, hedge and tree planting.

The battery storage and grid connection comprise:

- Up to three battery storage containers located adjacent to the electric vehicle charging station within a fenced compound for safety and security, and to screen the containers from view.
- The batteries would meet recognised fire safety standards and would be fitted with automatic fire suppression technology.
- Two switching stations (single storey height) and associated electrical equipment.

The solar farm would be located in the larger, eastern site and would comprise:

- Photovoltaic modules installed on a simple metal framework mounted on piles driven into the ground.
- The panels would have a maximum height of up to 2.8m (existing ground levels would be unaltered).
- An improved access via an existing field entrance from the Halstead Road.
- Approximately four inverter/transformers located across the site.
- Deer-proof fencing and a CCTV system (looking inwards) within the site boundary would be installed around the site's perimeter while access tracks will be constructed within the site.
- All public footpaths within the site to be protected and maintained.
- New wildflower, hedge, and tree planting.
- Improved biodiversity – hedge/tree planting, bat boxes, improved soil structure from no farming (reducing flood risk).

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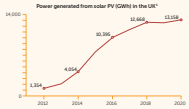
Economic benefits: The Halstead Road eco-hub

Supporting a growing sector



Jan-May 2019
For the first time since the Industrial Revolution, Britain obtained more power from zero-carbon sources (48%) than fossil fuels (47%).

Supporting the move to zero emission vehicles

Sales of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to end from 2030.[2] So far in 2021, electric car sales in the UK exceed diesel car sales.[3]

Operational benefits

Generating electricity equivalent to the demand of **c. 6,500** typical homes each year.

Investment of approximately **£13.5million** To develop a c. 25MWp solar project, a battery storage facility, ultra-rapid electric vehicle chargers and a shop and café area.

£75,000 Estimated annual business rates generated by the solar farm.[7]

Up to **117** Temporary jobs, both on-site and in the wider supply chain during the 6-month construction phase.

Supporting **6** Permanent direct and indirect jobs once the proposed development is built and operational.

c. £360,000 Community benefits fund over the project's operational life.

Up to **£4.2million** In gross value added to the economy over the 6-month construction phase.

Contributing **£3.1million** In gross value added[9] to the economy over the next 10 years.[4]

1. Based on data in the 2020 Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics (DUKES), published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.
2. As outlined in Powering our Net Zero Future: Energy White Paper, December 2020.
3. Based on research by SMMT (Available at: www.smmt.co.uk/2021/01/battery-electric-vehicles-power-on-despite-supply-issues-bendelling-new-car-market/)
4. Based on the 2020/21 average capacity adjusted forecasts from REG Power Management's experience of managing 8 English Solar projects.
5. GVA, or gross value added, is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, sector or industry.
6. Where future benefits are calculated over a longer timeframe, they have been discounted to produce a present value.

Decommissioning: returning the site to green fields

At the end of its expected 40-year life, the site would be fully decommissioned, and this will incorporate all elements; solar farm, charging infrastructure and battery storage facility and associated infrastructure such as the seating area etc.

The detailed decommissioning arrangements would be expected to be included in the list of planning conditions associated with any future planning permission.

Nearer the time of decommissioning, a decision would be made as to how much of the underground infrastructure should be taken away, given that the environmental disturbance may be significant if it is to be removed after 40 years.

That said, the project is completely reversible, and all aspects could be fully removed if that is the preferred option at the time. After decommissioning, farming could continue.

An example of sheep grazing on a solar farm

Key benefits

The scheme will deliver the following local benefits:

- **£360,000 over the project's operational life** of 40 years.
- Ensuring the local area gets ahead with **hi-tech electric vehicle charging**.
- **Improved biodiversity** – hedge/tree planting, bat boxes, improved soil structure from no farming (contributing to flood risk mitigation).
- **Local jobs** – employment opportunities at the EV charging station and café/shop.
- Business rate payments of **up to £75,000 every year** to Tendring Council.
- Helping to **improve energy security**.
- Ensuring the local area contributes to Tendring District Council's Climate Emergency and the Government's **"Build Back Greener" strategy**.

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Get in touch!

You can keep up to date with the progress of this development by visiting our website:
www.halsteadroadecohub.co.uk

Feedback form

When completing and returning this feedback form, please provide your contact details so that we can respond to your questions with answers.

Please tick here ☐ if you want us to contact you.

Please complete and return this survey to:
FREEPOST GNL CONSULTATION

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

E-mail:

Questions

1 **Do you support or oppose the principle of building an eco-hub in this part of Kirby?**
☐ Support ☐ Oppose ☐ Unsure

2 **The eco-hub is in a suitable location as it is located next to the National Grid infrastructure. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?**
☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Unsure

3 **Do you support or oppose the UK government's decision to ban the sale of petrol and diesel cars and small vans by 2030?**
☐ Support ☐ Oppose ☐ Unsure

4 **Do you plan on purchasing an electric vehicle in the near future?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Please explain why

5 **Do you believe that eco-hubs strengthens Britain's energy security as homegrown electricity production reduces our country's reliance on importing fossil fuels from abroad?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

6 **Do you welcome projects such as the eco-hub as a way to respond to the global climate change emergency?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

7 **The proposal provides additional parking spaces on Halstead Road to help alleviate the pressure of overspill parking problems at school times. Do you welcome this measure?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

8 **Please suggest the names of any local businesses that might benefit from potential opportunities to support the construction and operation of this eco-hub.**

9 **What is your overall opinion towards this development proposal?**
☐ Support ☐ Support with reservations
☐ No opinion ☐ Some concerns ☐ Oppose

10 **Please use the space below to ask questions or provide comments that you would like Naturalis to consider.**

GDPR and Data Protection: This information is collected by GNL Strategic on behalf of Naturalis and will be shared with them and the project team, securely stored and destroyed at the end of the planning process.

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Appendix E

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Welcome

Naturalis is pleased to welcome you to this public consultation.

The purpose of this event is to provide information about the proposal, answer questions and use your feedback, where possible, to inform the final scheme ahead of the submission of a planning application to Tendring District Council in December 2021.

The project team are on hand today to provide further information and to answer any questions you may have. Please remember to complete and return a feedback form in the box provided or you can return it at a later date using the FREEPOST address provided on the form.

Naturalis

The Halstead Road eco-hub is being proposed by Naturalis Energy Developments Ltd.

Naturalis is a joint venture between REG Power Management and Falck Renewables which works to roll out green energy projects across the UK, incorporating battery storage and electric vehicle ('EV') charging where the electrical grid and road networks allow.

Both companies have an established and successful track record in renewables development, both in the UK and abroad.

If approved, the Halstead Road eco-hub would be built and operated by Falck Renewables.

About REG Power Management

REG POWER MANAGEMENT

Since 2005, the team at REG has been dedicated to developing a variety of renewable energy projects to help in the shift to a zero-carbon future. REG is based in the UK and has, to date, developed over 1 gigawatt of wind, solar and bio-fuel projects in the UK, Poland and Canada.

REG has over 40 projects built and in operation today, the vast majority in its core market of the UK.

REG and Falck Renewables are working together through Naturalis to develop, build and operate this project. Falck Renewables are expected to be the long-term owners and operators of the Halstead Road eco-hub.

About Falck Renewables

Falck Renewables ASSET DEVELOPMENT

Falck Renewables and its affiliated companies are experienced worldwide players in the development, construction, purchase and management of wind and solar power projects at all stages of their development.

They have a proven track record of successfully developing, constructing and operating wind and solar projects across Europe. Falck Renewables currently owns a wind and solar portfolio of over 1,300 Megawatts in operation with over 400 Megawatts of onshore wind operational in the UK across 12 sites.

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Policy context

A global shift towards renewables

There is currently a global shift in public opinion and with it, new governmental policies to support the generation and use of clean, renewable energy.

The UK is reconstructing its domestic economy as part of its 'Build Back Greener' strategy. In seeking to end its reliance on the use of imported fossil fuels, the UK is supporting the rapid growth of a new, homegrown low-carbon economy that provides energy security for Britain, creates new jobs, and is kinder to human health to planet earth.

The UK Government is creating a policy framework to support the transition from a fossil fuel economy to a new, low carbon one, by:

- Taking an historic step towards net-zero with a ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.
- Becoming the first major economy to pass net-zero emissions laws, requiring the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050.
- Enshrining in law a new target in law to slash emissions to 78% by 2035.
- A Prime Minister stating that all the UK's electricity will come from clean sources by 2035.

As part of this transition, the private sector is leading the way with record investment in new low-carbon infrastructure.

The proposal to build this eco-hub infrastructure is a product of this ongoing transition to build a low carbon economy.

Britain: a global leader in renewables

Whether it is petrol or gas, fossil fuels are imported from various locations around the world such as the Middle East and Russia to meet British demand.

Britain's reliance on imported energy is minimised by projects like the eco-hub. As the Secretary of State said recently:

"...it is the case that the UK is still too reliant on fossil fuels. Our exposure to volatile global gas prices underscores the importance of our plan to build a strong, home-grown renewable energy sector to strengthen our energy security into the future."

A response to the climate emergency

Tendring District Council declared its own climate emergency in August 2019, subsequently implementing a Climate Emergency Action Plan, that seeks to make the area carbon-neutral by 2030.

This proposal will help the local authority achieve that target.

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Appendix E (continued)

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The eco-hub

How it works

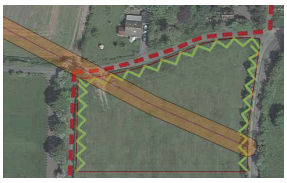
The eco-hub concept is all-encompassing and sustainable.

Light shines on the panels which creates electricity, which will power the electric vehicle charging station and feed into the National Grid.

The eco-hub comprises:

- A public electric vehicle (or 'EV') station with at least 12 rapid charging points.
- Battery storage to help the National Grid manage its network.
- Solar panels that will generate electricity at source in Kirby, powering electric vehicle chargers and homes.

Why build here?



National grid connection

Naturalis chose to build eco-hub infrastructure here to fill a local, rural EV charging gap and because the site located next to a vital connection to the National Grid.

In fact, the grid connection runs through Kirby Playing Fields/Halstead Road.

Without the ability to connect an eco-hub to the National Grid, this infrastructure simply doesn't work.

Saving the green gap

Housing developers have been active in the area building on land between Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross and current planning policy has not stopped new houses from being built.

Further housebuilding in the Kirby area could eventually lead to the merging of the communities of Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross just as it has joined together Walton, Frinton and Kirby Cross in recent years.

The location of this eco-hub would help preserve the Green Gap. It would prevent new homes from being built on around 50 acres of sought-after development land during its 40-year life, ensuring Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross remain separate villages with separate identities.

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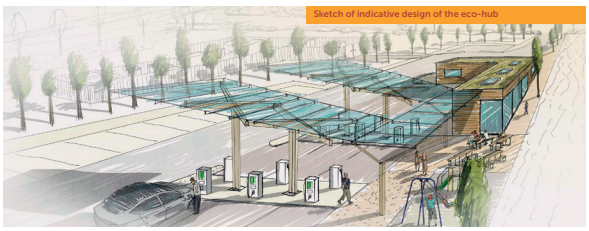
Electric Vehicle ('EV') charging station


Sketch of indicative design of the eco-hub

Much needed infrastructure

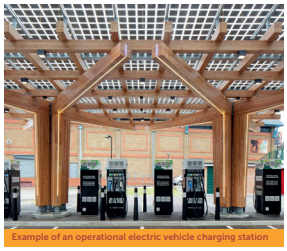
The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders believes, even taking account of EV charging at home, work and supermarkets in future, that at least 700 public charging points must be installed each day for the next 8 years. That's the equivalent to building 50 Halstead Road projects every day!

Electric vehicle sales are growing fast but there are concerns that investment in public electric vehicle charging is missing out large parts of the UK, especially smaller towns, and rural areas.

The £12-15million eco-hub investment will ensure that Kirby avoids this risk and benefits from cheap, clean electricity generation that will power homes and vehicles alike. The project will be designed to "rapid charge" at least 12 electric cars at the same time, no matter the make or model.

The electric vehicle charging station is located on the western parcel of land, comprising:

- Construction of a new access off the Halstead Road by the Kirby Playing Fields.
- Around six ultra-rapid (up to 350kW) and six rapid (43-100kW) charging points (more could be added over time, to meet demand).
- These chargers would allow all types of EVs to charge at the eco-hub.
- Public rest facilities including a small café/shop with lounge area and an outdoor seating and play area.
- Inclusion of at least 30 car parking spaces, for EVs as well as non-EVs, to help reduce congestion and traffic on the Halstead Road during peak school drop-off and pick-up times.
- New wildflower, hedge and tree planting.


Example of an operational electric vehicle charging station

Local demand for EV charging

The UK has banned the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2030. As such, the demand for the purchase and use of electric vehicles will continue to increase. This project ensures that Kirby is one of the first, and not the last, communities across the UK who will benefit from this infrastructure.

The table below illustrates the point. As of November 2021, more electric cars were sold in the UK than diesel ones. That's an 87% increase in electric vehicle sales compared to November 2020, and a 43% decrease in diesel cars and a 13% drop in petrol car sales.

Year to date		
	YTD 2021	October 2021
Diesel	117,605	7,028
MHEV diesel	85,171	4,502
Petrol	621,598	48,384
MHEV petrol	159,776	13,165
BEV	125,141	16,155
PHEV	87,040	8,382
HEV	120,283	8,649
Total	**1,316,614**	**106,265**

BEV = Battery Electric Vehicle
PHEV = Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle
MHEV = Mild Hybrid Electric Vehicle

Source: https://www.smmt.co.uk/2021/11/plug-in-car-performance-holds-steady-despite-overall-registrations-falling-24-6/

www.halsteadroadecohub.co.uk

Appendix E (continued)

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Solar panels

A modern solar farm

Increasing demand for electricity

National Grid expects peak demand for electricity will significantly increase due partly to switching from petrol and diesel cars to electric cars. As such, there is a need to generate more electricity to meet a growing demand across the UK.

The eco-hub concept is all-encompassing and sustainable The solar farm would generate electricity needed to power local homes and cars. The power will feed into the electric car chargers or the national grid with some electricity stored in the battery storage units to assist the smooth operation of the local grid.

Did you know?

This project would produce enough electricity to power about 6,500 typical homes.

The solar farm would be located on the larger, eastern site and would comprise:

- Photovoltaic modules installed on a simple metal framework mounted on piles driven into the ground.
- The panels would have a maximum height of up to 2.8m (existing ground levels would be unaltered).
- An improved access via an existing field entrance from the Halstead Road.
- Approximately four inverter/ transformers located across the site.
- Deer-proof fencing and a CCTV system (looking inwards) within the site boundary would be installed around the site's perimeter while access tracks will be constructed within the site.
- All public footpaths within the site to be protected and maintained.
- Improved biodiversity – wildflower, hedge and tree planting, bat boxes, improved soil structure from no farming (reducing flood risk).

> ***"A low-cost, net zero consistent electricity system is most likely to be composed predominantly of wind and solar generation, whether in 2035 or 2050."***
>
> **HM Government's "Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener" October 2021.**

Battery storage

The battery storage and grid connection comprise:

- Up to three battery storage containers located adjacent to the electric vehicle charging station within a fenced compound for safety and security, and to screen the containers from view.
- The batteries would meet recognised fire safety standards and would be fitted with automatic fire suppression technology.
- Two switching stations (single storey height) and associated electrical equipment.
- New hedge and tree planting (screening).

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Key considerations

Visual impact

- The site is relatively flat with existing mature hedges and trees reducing visibility.
- A tree and hedge planting scheme would be proposed to further reduce visibility.
- A bund could be provided to reduce visibility from Dugmore Avenue
- Deer proof fencing in a "rural" style would be installed

Footpaths

- All public footpaths within the site to be protected and maintained.
- Improvements to nearby paths and cycle routes could be supported by the community fund
- Opportunities for walking and cycling will be maintained and enhanced

Highways

- Traffic survey completed in mid-September (when the schools had returned) showed peak traffic volumes on the Halstead Road at school drop-off and collection times 8-9am, 3-4pm.
- The school drop-off and collection peaks are c. 20% higher than the weekend peaks.
- The eco-hub has been designed to provide additional parking for at least 30 cars – not just EVs – so that the parents of school children have another, safe parking option, helping to avoid congestion on Halstead Road during peak times.

Surveys

As part of the application progression, Naturalis has been carrying out a series of environmental surveys to include ecology, landscape and visual, arboriculture, archaeology and cultural heritage, flood risk assessment, transport and access as well as noise.

Decommissioning

At the end of its expected 40-year life, the site would be fully decommissioned, and this will incorporate all elements; solar farm, charging infrastructure and battery storage facility and associated infrastructure such as the seating area etc.

The detailed decommissioning arrangements would be expected to be included in the list of planning conditions associated with any future planning permission.

Nearer the time of decommissioning, a decision would be made as to how much of the underground infrastructure should be taken away, given that the environmental disturbance may be significant if it is to be removed after 40 years.

That said, the project is completely reversible, and all aspects could be fully removed if that is the preferred option at the time. After decommissioning, farming could continue.

Appendix E (continued)

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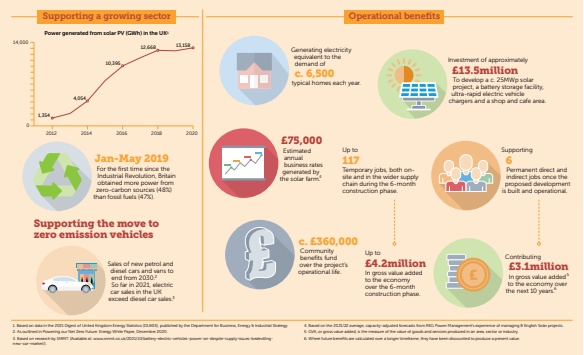
Local benefits



Sustainability is central to the way we do business. For us, it means sharing the economic, social and environmental value generated by our activities with the local communities that are home to our developments.

The aim is that local communities gain a tangible benefit from our presence, and we support the local development of the places where we operate in a variety of ways.

The scheme will deliver the following local benefits:

- A Community Benefit Fund offering approximately £360,000 over the project's operational life of 40 years to be spent by local people on local projects.
- Ensuring the local area gets ahead with hi-tech electric vehicle charging.
- Improved biodiversity – hedge/tree planting, bat boxes, improved soil structure from no farming (contributing to flood risk mitigation).
- Local jobs – employment opportunities at the EV charging station and café/shop.
- Business rate payments of up to £75,000 every year to Tendring District Council.
- Helping to improve energy security.
- Ensuring the local area contributes to Tendring District Council's Climate Emergency and the Government's "Build Back Greener" strategy.

The project provides opportunities for local businesses

Naturalis is proud to maximise opportunities for local business and suppliers to work with us.

In due course, Naturalis will facilitate and hold 'Contractors Open Days', where local businesses will have the opportunity to learn more about the goods and services required to build this eco-hub. It will enable local businesses to register their interest with us directly, so we can make contact with them when opportunities to tender arise.

When constructing new projects, we choose short supply chains wherever our technical requirements, quality and safety can be met by local businesses.

This brings several benefits:

- for the local community because it contributes to the local economy and the growth of professional skills.
- for us, as it helps keep our supply costs down.
- for the environment as we can reduce our impact.
- for the local economy as we share our profits with the areas in which we operate.

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Next steps

Thank you for attending today's public consultation event to view Naturalis's emerging plans to build eco-hub infrastructure in Kirby.

Now that you have had an opportunity to view the proposal, Naturalis is keen to hear your views and would be grateful if you could complete the consultation feedback form.

Your comments will help the project team to finalise the plans before they are submitted to Tendring District Council.

Indicative timescales

Public consultation
September-December 2021

→ **Submission of a planning application**
December 2021

→ **Receive planning decision**
Q2, 2022

→ **Financial close**
Q1, 2023

→ **Construction**
Q2/Q3, 2023

→ **First generation/ operation**
Q3, 2023


A modern solar farm

Appendix F

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Public consultation feedback form

Thank you for attending this public consultation.

Your feedback is important. Naturalis will consider all comments and suggestions prior to the submission of a planning application to Tendring District Council.

You can submit your feedback form at the consultation event or alternatively you can post it to us for free using FREEPOST GNL CONSULTATION.

Your contact details

Name: ……..

Address: ……..

Postcode: ……..

Email……..

Please tick here [ ] if you would like us to contact you in response to your comments.

GDPR and Data Protection: This information is collected by GNL Strategic on behalf of Naturalis and will be shared with them and the project team, securely stored and destroyed at the end of the planning process. All written feedback will be anonymised and shared with the local planning authority.

Questions

1) Do you support or oppose the principle of building an eco-hub in this part of Kirby?

Support [ ] Oppose [ ] Unsure [ ]

2) "The eco-hub is in a suitable location as it is located next to National Grid infrastructure." Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Unsure [ ]

3) Do you support or oppose the UK government's decision to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and small vans by 2030?

Support [ ] Oppose [ ] Unsure [ ]

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4) Do you plan on purchasing an electric vehicle in the future?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure [ ]

Please explain why…

5) Do you believe that eco-hubs strengthen Britain's energy security as homegrown electricity production reduces our countries reliance on importing fossil fuels from abroad?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure [ ]

6) Do you welcome projects such as the eco-hub as a way to respond to the global climate change emergency?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure [ ]

7) The proposal provides additional parking spaces on Halstead Road to help alleviate the pressure of overspill parking problems during school times. Do you welcome this measure?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure [ ]

8) Please suggest names of any local businesses that might benefit from potential opportunities to support the construction and operation of this eco-hub.

9) What is your overall opinion towards this development proposal?

Support [ ] Support with reservations [ ] No opinion [ ]

Some concerns [ ] Oppose [ ]

10) Please use the space below to ask questions or provide other comments…

Appendix G


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Key considerations
Visual impact
The site is relatively flat with existing mature hedges and trees reducing visibility.
Footpaths
TO OPEN PULL BOLT DOWN


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Welcome
Policy context

GNLStrategic

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