New Website Lets Residents Examine Longmarsh Green Energy Data Centre Plans

A free independent website called What's in the Way has been launched to help people assess the proposed Longmarsh Green Energy data centre scheme near King's Lynn. Built by Adam Hardingham of the King's Lynn web company Rivmedia in his spare time, the site uses open data, maps and planning information to allow visitors to examine the development. The scheme, described as a data centre powered in part by a solar farm, would cover about 1,900 hectares. The developer's public consultation is open until 26 November 2026.

What's in the Way lets users place the proposed scheme anywhere in Britain and compare features such as flood zones, farmland grade, protected wildlife sites, listed buildings, homes and power lines. It also provides information about the data centre's power demand and the solar farm's generation, including month-by-month figures for a full year. Groundwater and river readings near the proposed site, compared with earlier years, are included. The website offers more than 50 questions for residents and a tool that turns them into a letter. It draws on free public sources including the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, the Planning Inspectorate and OpenStreetMap. The site is free to use without an account and can be embedded by news sites, parish councils and community groups. The announcement was covered by freepressreleases.co.uk.

How Flood Risk Maps Work

Flood risk maps are tools that show areas where flooding is likely to occur. They are created using data on rainfall, river levels, tides, drainage systems and land elevation. Government agencies and environmental bodies produce these maps to help planners, developers and the public understand the probability of flooding in a given location. The maps classify zones according to the likelihood of flooding, often using categories such as low, medium and high risk. They are updated as new data becomes available and as climate patterns shift.

The maps serve as a reference point for planning decisions. Local authorities consult them when assessing planning applications for new buildings or infrastructure. Developers use them to design projects that avoid or mitigate flood risk. Insurance companies also refer to them when setting premiums for properties in flood-prone areas. For residents, the maps can provide a clear picture of the potential flood threat to their home or neighbourhood.

Flood risk maps are not static. They change as rivers are rerouted, flood defences are built, or land use alters. Climate change is also a factor, as rising sea levels and more intense rainfall can increase the flood risk in areas previously considered safe. Agencies therefore review and revise the maps periodically to reflect current conditions.

Why Flood Risk Matters for Large Developments

Large developments such as data centres and solar farms cover substantial areas of land. When such a scheme is proposed, its impact on flood risk must be assessed. A development of 1,900 hectares, like the Longmarsh Green Energy scheme, could alter the natural drainage of the land. Hard surfaces such as buildings and roads can reduce the ground's ability to absorb rainwater, increasing runoff. This can raise the risk of flooding not only on the site itself but also downstream or in neighbouring areas.

Planners typically require a flood risk assessment for any major development. This assessment examines the existing flood risk on the site, the potential for the development to increase that risk, and the measures that can be taken to manage it. These measures might include sustainable drainage systems, retention ponds, raised floor levels or flood defences. The assessment is submitted alongside the planning application and is reviewed by the local authority and the Environment Agency.

Open data sources such as the Environment Agency's flood maps are used in these assessments. They provide a baseline for understanding the current risk. For members of the public, access to the same data through tools like What's in the Way allows them to see for themselves what the maps show. This transparency can help residents form their own views on a proposed development.

The Role of Open Data in Planning

Open data has become an important part of the planning process. Government bodies in Britain publish a wide range of datasets covering flood zones, wildlife sites, heritage assets and land use. These datasets are free to access and can be used by anyone with the right tools. Websites like What's in the Way bring this data together in a single interface, making it easier for non-specialists to explore.

By combining data from different sources, such sites can show how a proposed development would interact with its surroundings. A user can see, for example, whether a scheme would encroach on a protected wildlife site, how many listed buildings are nearby, or where the flood zones lie. This kind of analysis was once the preserve of planning consultants. Now it is available to anyone with an internet connection.

The use of open data also encourages accountability. When planning decisions are made, the public can check the facts for themselves. They can see whether the developer's claims about flood risk or environmental impact match the official data. This can lead to more informed debate and better outcomes for communities.

How Residents Can Use the Information

For residents near the proposed Longmarsh Green Energy site, What's in the Way offers a way to examine the scheme in detail. They can place the development on a map of their area and see how it overlaps with flood zones, farmland, wildlife sites and other features. They can also look at the power demand and generation figures to understand the scale of the project.

The website includes more than 50 questions that residents might ask about the development, along with a tool that turns those questions into a letter. This can be sent to the developer or to the local council as part of the consultation process. The consultation closes on 26 November 2026, giving residents time to review the plans and submit their views.

What's in the Way is free to use and does not require an account. It can also be embedded by other websites, such as local news outlets or parish council pages, allowing a wider audience to access the information. The site was built in spare time by Adam Hardingham of Rivmedia, a web company based in King's Lynn.

The announcement of the website was carried by freepressreleases.co.uk, which provided details of the site's features and the data it uses. The site draws on sources including the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, the Planning Inspectorate and OpenStreetMap. These are the same sources that planners and consultants use when assessing major developments.

Looking at the Broader Context

Tools that combine open data with mapping are becoming more common as public datasets grow and web technology improves. They allow citizens to engage with planning issues in a way that was difficult a decade ago. For a large scheme such as the Longmarsh Green Energy data centre, having access to a site like What's in the Way can help residents understand what is being proposed and how it might affect their area.

The use of flood risk maps is a key part of this. Flooding is one of the most significant natural hazards in Britain, and any development on the scale of this scheme needs to be assessed carefully. By making the flood zone data available in an interactive format, the website helps people see the risk for themselves. They can zoom in on their own street, check whether the development would sit in a flood zone, and consider what that might mean for drainage and safety.

The same applies to other features shown on the site. Farmland grade indicates the quality of agricultural land that would be lost. Protected wildlife sites show areas of ecological importance. Listed buildings and homes give a sense of the human and heritage impact. Power lines show the infrastructure needed to connect the data centre to the grid. All of these

factors are part of the planning balance that the local authority will weigh when it decides on the application.

What's in the Way does not take a position on the scheme. It simply presents the data and lets users draw their own conclusions. That neutrality is part of its value. Residents, councillors and community groups can all use the same information to form their views.