



Chapter 2 – Approach to EIA

Postcombe and Lewknor Solar Farm Environmental Statement

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---|
| ALC | Agricultural Land Classification |
| CEMP | Construction Environmental Management Plan |
| CTMP | Construction Traffic Management Plan |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| ES | Environmental Statement |
| FRA | Flood Risk Assessment |
| GLVIA3 | Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment third edition |
| Ha | Hectares |
| HSI | Habitat Suitability Index |
| NPPF | National Planning Policy Framework |
| NTS | Non-Technical Summary |
| PEA | Preliminary Ecological Appraisal |
| PV | Photovoltaic |
| SCE | Statement of Community Engagement |



2. Approach to EIA

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) sets out the approach taken to produce the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Proposed Development.
- 2.1.2 The EIA process assists South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) in their determination of the planning application by identifying where significant environmental effects are predicted. This assessment has been completed in conjunction with consultation with statutory consultees, interested parties and the general public.
- 2.1.3 The structure of the ES follows the requirements of the Town and Country Planning EIA Regulations 2017 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as ‘the EIA Regulations’) and relevant good practice guidance. The ES comprises a Non-Technical Summary (NTS), the main ES text, accompanying figures and appendices.
- 2.1.4 This chapter is structured as follows:
- overview of the relevant legislation, policy and guidance;
 - an outline of the EIA process;
 - the scope of the assessment;
 - details of the assessment of potential effects;
 - the consultation undertaken; and
 - assumptions, likely limitations and uncertainty.
- 2.1.5 This chapter is supported by the following appendices:
- **Appendix 2.1** – EIA Screening Request
 - **Appendix 2.2** – EIA Scoping Report
 - **Appendix 2.3** – SODC Scoping Opinion
 - **Appendix 2.4** – Transport Statement and Construction Traffic Management Plan
 - **Appendix 2.5** – Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment
 - **Appendix 2.6** - Arboricultural Impact Assessment

2.2 Legislation, Policy and Guidelines

- 2.2.1 A number of legislative and best practice documents have informed the EIA process. In respect of the EIA Regulations the Proposed Development meets Schedule 2, Part 3 (a) of the EIA Regulations as it relates to ‘industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water’ with a development area exceeding 0.5 ha.



- 2.2.2 The criteria for considering whether a Schedule 2 development requires the preparation of an EIA are set out in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations. Reference to Schedule 3 suggests that on the basis of the scale and location of the Development, an EIA is likely to be required. This was confirmed by SODC through an EIA Screening process, described below.
- 2.2.3 Regulation 4 of the EIA Regulations details the EIA process while Schedule 4 confirms the information to be included within an ES.
- 2.2.4 The EIA process and structure of this ES follows the requirements of the EIA Regulations.
- 2.2.5 In addition to the above, the regulations and best practice guidance of core relevance to the EIA process and which have been taken into account are as follows:
- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended);
 - Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment, Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA, 2004);
 - Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to Shaping Quality Development (IEMA, 2015a);
 - Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation (IEMA, 2015b); and
 - Guide to Delivering Quality Development (IEMA, 2016).
- 2.2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) policy of particular relevance to the Proposed Development is Section 14 entitled ‘Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change’. Paragraph 152 states that “*the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate...It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure*” (Gov UK, 2025).
- 2.2.7 Overall, the NPPF indicates that existing strong policy support for renewable energy is likely to grow even stronger in the transition to a low carbon future.

2.3 Legal Framework for the EIA

Overall EIA Process

- 2.3.1 In order for the EIA process to be as effective as possible it should be used as an iterative process throughout the design stage, rather than a single assessment performed once the design is finalised. When used as an iterative process, the findings of the EIA can be incorporated within the design of the proposal to provide an optimum design with regard to the Applicant’s requirements and the environment.



- 2.3.2 The findings of the EIA are presented in this ES, which has been prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations.
- 2.3.3 The general approach which has been followed in undertaking the EIA is presented in this chapter and an overview of specific methodology adopted for each technical study, where it differs from the approach described below, is provided within the respective technical chapters (**Chapters 5 to 9**).

Screening and Scoping

- 2.3.4 Screening is the process by which it is determined whether or not an EIA should be conducted for a proposed development.
- 2.3.5 As set out in **Paragraph 2.2.1**, the Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations. Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations sets out the criteria that should be considered in determining whether a Schedule 2 development is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence require a formal EIA.
- 2.3.6 The Applicant recognised that the Proposed Development may have the potential to have significant environmental effects, and therefore, an EIA may be required. As such, the Applicant submitted a Screening Opinion request to SODC on 19th January 2023. SODC responded on 29th March 2023 (Planning Reference: P23/S0203/SCO) and concluded that, having regard to the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations, the Proposed Development constitutes an EIA development.
- 2.3.7 The EIA Scoping process is undertaken to identify the potentially significant environmental issues which should be considered when assessing the potential effects of the Proposed Development, and those effects that are not likely to be significant (which can be ‘scoped out’). An EIA Scoping Opinion may be obtained from the consenting authority, which sets out the matters that should be considered through the EIA.
- 2.3.8 An EIA Scoping Opinion was requested from SODC in January 2023 through the submission of an EIA Scoping Report (refer to **Appendix 2.1**). The EIA Scoping Report contained details of the site baseline and the Proposed Development. It also proposed which environmental impacts would be assessed in the EIA, and the assessment methodologies that would be used.
- 2.3.9 SODC consulted with a variety of statutory and non-statutory consultees before providing an EIA Scoping Opinion on 29th March 2023 (Planning Reference: P23/S0203/SCO). This information has informed the EIA. The scope of this ES is based on the Scoping Opinion received as included in **Appendix 2.2**.
- 2.3.10 Direct consultation has also been undertaken with consultees, to confirm and agree the approach and scope of technical surveys and assessments on a topic by topic basis. Details of relevant consultations are included in each technical chapter as appropriate.



2.4 The EIA Process

2.4.1 EIA is the systematic process of compiling, assessing, presenting and mitigating all the significant environmental effects of a proposed development. The assessment is designed to inform the decision-making process by way of setting out the likely environmental profile of a project. Identification of potentially significant adverse environmental effects then leads to the design and incorporation of appropriate mitigation measures into both the design of the scheme and the way in which it is constructed.

2.4.2 The main steps in the EIA assessment process for the Proposed Development have been:

- Baseline surveys (where appropriate) to provide information on the existing environmental character of the Proposed Development site and the surrounding area.
- Consideration of the possible interactions between the Proposed Development and the existing and predicted future site conditions. These interactions or effects are assessed using criteria based on accepted guidance and best practice.
- Using the outline design parameters for the Proposed Development, prediction of the environmental effects, including direct, indirect, cumulative, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, beneficial and adverse effects.
- Identification of mitigation measures designed to avoid, reduce or offset adverse effects and enhance beneficial effects.
- Assessment of the significance of any residual effects after mitigation, in relation to the sensitivity of the feature impacted upon and the magnitude of the impact predicted, in line with the methodology identified below.
- Identification of any uncertainties inherent in the methods used, the predictions made, and conclusions drawn during the course of the assessment process.
- Reporting of the results of the EIA in this Environmental Statement.

Assessment of Effects

2.4.3 Throughout the assessment, a distinction has been made between the term 'impact' and 'effect'. The EIA Regulations refer to the requirement to report the significance of 'effects'. An impact has been defined as the physical change of the characteristics of the receiving environment as a result of the Proposed Development (e.g. glint and glare from panels), whereas an effect refers to the significance of this impact (e.g. a significant residual glare effect on residential properties). These terms have been adopted throughout this ES to present a consistent approach to the assessment and evaluation of effects and their significance. The specific approach to the assessment of effect significance is described in the respective technical topic chapters.

2.4.4 The exception to this is the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which classifies the level of physical and perceptual change to the receiving environment as the "magnitude of change" in line with the recommendations of the Guidelines



for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment third edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute & IEMA, 2013). However, this terminology should be considered interchangeable with "magnitude of impact".

- 2.4.5 Within this ES, the assessment of effects for each environmental topic takes into account the environmental impacts of the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development; and how the environmental baseline is expected to evolve in the absence of the Proposed Development (the do-nothing scenario).
- 2.4.6 In order to determine whether or not the potential effects of the Proposed Development are likely to be 'significant' a number of criteria are used. These significance criteria vary between topics but generally include:
- international, national and local designations or standards;
 - relationship with planning policy;
 - sensitivity of the receiving environment;
 - magnitude of impact;
 - reversibility and duration of the effect; and
 - inter-relationship between effects.
- 2.4.7 Effects that are considered to be significant are identified within the ES. The significance of the resultant effect is informed by professional judgement as to the importance or sensitivity of the affected receptor(s) and the nature and magnitude of the predicted changes. For example, a high magnitude of impact on a low sensitivity receptor will have an effect of lesser significance than the same impact on a high sensitivity receptor.
- 2.4.8 **Table 2.1** below is used as a guide to demonstrate the relationship between the sensitivity of the identified receptor and the anticipated magnitude of an impact. Professional judgement is, however, equally important in verifying the suitability of this guiding 'formula' to the assessment of the significance of each individual effect. Therefore, the table below may change between technical assessments.



Table 2.1: Guide to the Inter-Relationship between Magnitude of Impact and Sensitivity of Receptor

| | | Sensitivity of Receptor / Receiving Environment to Change | | | |
|---------------------|------------|---|-------------------|---------------------|------------|
| | | High | Medium | Low | Negligible |
| Magnitude of Impact | High | Major | Moderate to Major | Minor to Moderate | Negligible |
| | Medium | Moderate to Major | Moderate | Minor | Negligible |
| | Low | Minor to Moderate | Minor | Negligible to Minor | Negligible |
| | Negligible | Negligible | Negligible | Negligible | Negligible |

2.4.9 The following terms are used in the ES, unless otherwise stated, to determine the level of effects predicted to occur:

- **major** beneficial or adverse effect – where the Proposed Development would result in a large improvement (or deterioration) to the existing environment;
- **moderate** beneficial or adverse effect – where the Proposed Development would result in a moderate improvement (or deterioration) to the existing environment;
- **minor** beneficial or adverse effect – where the Proposed Development would result in a small improvement (or deterioration) to the existing environment; and
- **negligible** – where the Proposed Development would result in no discernible improvement (or deterioration) to the existing environment.

2.4.10 Using professional judgement and with reference to relevant guidance, the majority of the assessments within this ES consider effects of moderate or greater significance to be significant, with those of minor significance or less to be non-significant. If there are deviations from this these will be clearly stated within the individual technical chapters.

2.4.11 Summary tables are provided at the end of each technical chapter of the ES and within **Chapter 10** that outline:

- the predicted effects associated with an environmental issue;
- the appropriate mitigation measures required to address these effects; and
- the subsequent overall residual effects.



- 2.4.12 Distinction has also been made between direct and indirect, short and long term, permanent and temporary effects.

Cumulative Effects

- 2.4.13 Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations sets out the matters that require to be incorporated within Environmental Statements. Part 5(e) state that Environmental Statements should include an assessment of “*the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources*”.
- 2.4.14 Cumulative effects are those which result from incremental changes caused by past, present or reasonably foreseeable future actions resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development. These cumulative effects cover the combined effect of individual impacts from the Proposed Development and combined impacts of several developments. Developments considered in addition to the Proposed Development are existing and other proposals, covering all major developments, including other solar developments.
- 2.4.15 Within this ES, cumulative effects for each technical discipline are covered as required on a chapter by chapter basis with a summary of overall effects included in the residual effects in **Chapter 10**.
- 2.4.16 The key cumulative solar farm developments considered are shown within **Figure 4.2**.

2.5 Scope of the EIA

Technical Scope

- 2.5.1 As confirmed by the EIA Scoping Opinion (**Appendix 2.2**) there are five topics scoped-in to the EIA: Landscape and Visual Impact (**Chapter 5**) and Cultural Heritage (**Chapter 6**). Ecology and Biodiversity (**Chapter 7**), Land Take, Soil Quality & Agricultural Land (**Chapter 8**) and Glint and Glare (**Chapter 9**).
- 2.5.2 The following technical topics have been scoped out of the EIA:

Transport and Access

- 2.5.3 The amount of traffic for operational and maintenance purposes will be very low with approximately four Low Good Vehicle (LGV) trips every month.
- 2.5.4 Traffic from construction will be appropriately managed through good practice in construction as noted in **Chapter 4** of this ES, to be set out in a CEMP and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). A combined Transport Statement and outline CTMP is provided in **Appendix 2.3**. Given the scale and nature of the traffic flows a full assessment of the effects on transport and access has been scoped out.



Noise

- 2.5.5 Noise from construction will be appropriately controlled through good practice in construction as noted in **Chapter 4** of this ES, to be set out in a CEMP. These effects are therefore not considered likely to be significant and assessment of effects on noise sensitive receptors during construction has been scoped out of the EIA.
- 2.5.6 The electrical infrastructure associated with solar developments are typically quiet and can be located far from the closest noise sensitive receptors and further minimised through design and engineering to ensure the appropriate noise standards are met. The noise generated from the operational phase of the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be not significant, and assessment of effects on noise sensitive receptors during operation has also been scoped out.

Socio-economics

- 2.5.7 The Site is rural in nature with little industry in the vicinity. The Proposed Development has the potential to generate a number of employment opportunities which could benefit the local area. However, as the construction period is expected to be up to 14 months and the development is small scale it is considered that the impacts are unlikely to be significant and therefore an assessment of effects on socio-economics has been scoped out.
- 2.5.8 The Proposed Development will also support farm diversification, which will promote economic development for the local economy. Farming plays a vital role in preserving the countryside's quality, and diversification is becoming increasingly essential to support farm incomes. Expanding into new ventures such as renewable energy generation can strengthen the rural economy while maintaining access to the countryside and providing ecological enhancement, thus potentially attracting additional visitors to the area.

Air Quality

- 2.5.9 Local air quality during construction (dust and vehicle emissions) will be appropriately controlled through good practice in construction as noted in **Chapter 4** of this ES, to be set out in a CEMP prior to construction. These effects are therefore not considered likely to be significant and assessment of effects on local air quality during construction has been scoped out of the EIA. No significant atmospheric emissions are likely to arise as a result of the operation of the Proposed Development, and assessment of effects on local air quality during operation has therefore also been scoped out.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 2.5.10 A Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment (FRDA) has been undertaken and is provided in **Appendix 2.4**. The Proposed Development is located within Flood Zone 1, (the lowest risk of flooding) which equates to less than a 0.1% annual probability of flooding from rivers or the sea in any given year. The nearest main watercourse



to the Site is the Haseley Brook located approximately 1 km to the north-west of the Site boundary. Flood risk during construction will be appropriately managed through good practice in construction and will be noted in the CEMP, to be drafted and agreed with SODC prior to construction. Flood risk during operation will be appropriately managed through the Proposed Development's design, including through the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) based upon computer modelling with a required allowance for climate change. It is therefore considered that flood and drainage impacts are unlikely to be significant and that an assessment of effects on Flood Risk and Drainage has been scoped out.

Arboriculture and Trees

- 2.5.11 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been undertaken and is provided in **Appendix 2.5**. It is anticipated that one tree is to be removed, and there is a section of hedgerow to be translocated to allow for the visibility splay on the new access junction on the A40. The effects of this are covered within the **Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity**.

Human Health

- 2.5.12 Effects on population and human health are assessed in relation to visual impacts within the **Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**.

Climate

- 2.5.13 An assessment of climate has been scoped out given solar energy developments are unlikely to have potential for negative likely significant environmental effects in relation to climate change.
- 2.5.14 The principal objective of the Proposed Development is the generation of renewable energy to support the national objectives for domestic energy security and its route to Net Zero. The renewable energy generation from the Proposed Development and the resultant reduction in carbon emissions associated with generation of electricity from non-renewable sources are important and meaningful positive effects.

Material Assets

- 2.5.15 Material assets are addressed through the assessment of cultural heritage effects within **Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage**.

The Vulnerability of the Proposed Development

- 2.5.16 An assessment of major accidents and/or disasters has been scoped out given a solar energy development of this nature is unlikely to have the potential to have potential for likely significant environmental effects in relation to the risk of major accidents or disasters.

Spatial Scope

- 2.5.17 The spatial scope of the EIA, i.e., the geographical coverage of the assessment undertaken, has taken account of a number of factors, in particular:



- the extent of the Proposed Development, as defined by the planning application boundary (refer to **Figure 1.1**);
- the nature of the baseline environment, sensitive receptors and the likely impacts that could arise; and
- the distance over which predicted effects are likely to remain significant and in particular, the existence of pathways which could result in the transfer of effects to a wider geographical area than the extent of the proposed physical works.

Temporal Scope

- 2.5.18 The baseline years used for the assessment of environmental effects are 2022 to 2025, as this is the period in which the baseline environmental surveys were undertaken.
- 2.5.19 For the purposes of the EIA, construction is assumed to commence in 2027 and is expected to last up to 14 months. The proposed operational life for the Proposed Development is 40 years, after which time it has been assumed for EIA purposes that it will be decommissioned.
- 2.5.20 It is anticipated that the levels of effect during decommissioning would be similar but of a lesser level than those during construction. Decommissioning would be undertaken in line with best practice processes and methods at that time and will be managed through an agreed Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan.

2.6 Environmental Statement

- 2.6.1 Regulations 4 and 18 and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations specify the information required to be included in ES's. **Table 2.2** below details where the information has been provided within this ES.



Table 2.2 Information Included in the Environmental Statement

| EIA Regulations | Required Information (EIA Regulations) | Relevant Reference within this Environmental Statement |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Regulation 4 | <p>(2) The EIA must identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of the proposed development on the following factors-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) population and human health; (b) biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Council Directive 92/43/EEC(1) and Directive 2009/147/EC(2) (c) land, soil, water, air and climate; (d) material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape (e) the interaction between the factors referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d) <p>(4) The significant effects to be identified, described and assessed under paragraph (2) include the expected significant effects arising from the vulnerability of the proposed development to major accidents or disasters that are relevant to that development.</p> | <p>The Environmental Statement includes an assessment of the direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Development during construction and operation (refer to Chapters 5 to 9).</p> <p>The receptors potentially affected by the Proposed Development are detailed within each of the technical chapters.</p> <p>Effects on population and human health are assessed in relation to visual impacts.</p> <p>Material assets are addressed through the assessment of cultural heritage effects.</p> <p>An assessment of major accidents and/or disasters has been scoped out as detailed in Section 2.5.</p> |
| Regulation 18 | <p>(3) An environmental statement is a statement which includes at least-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a description of the proposed development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the development; (b) a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment; (c) a description of any features of the proposed development, or measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment; (d) a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment; (e) a non-technical summary of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d); and (f) any additional information specified in Schedule 4 relevant to the specific characteristics of the particular development or type of development and to the environmental features likely to be significantly affected. | <p>Chapter 4 contains a description of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Chapters 5 to 9 contain a description of the likely significant effects and the measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent, reduce or offset significant adverse effects.</p> <p>Chapter 3 contains a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the Applicant.</p> <p>A Non-Technical Summary has been included with the application.</p> |
| | <p>(4) An environmental statement must-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) where a scoping opinion or direction has been issued in accordance with regulation 15 or 16, be based on the most recent scoping opinion or direction issued (so far as the proposed development remains materially the same as | <p>The EIA and ES is based on the Scoping Opinion. Where changes to the scope of any surveys or assessments were considered to be reasonable, this was discussed and agreed with the relevant technical consultees. Details of relevant</p> |



| EIA Regulations | Required Information (EIA Regulations) | Relevant Reference within this Environmental Statement |
|-----------------|--|---|
| | <p>the proposed development which was subject to that opinion or direction);</p> <p>(b) include the information reasonably required for reaching a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the development on the environment, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment; and</p> <p>(c) be prepared, taking into account the results of any relevant UK environmental assessment, which are reasonably available to the person preparing the environmental statement, with a view to avoiding duplication of assessment.</p> | consultations are included in each technical chapter. |
| | <p>(5) In order to ensure the completeness and quality of the environmental statement—</p> <p>(a) the developer must ensure that the environmental statement is prepared by competent experts; and</p> <p>(b) the environmental statement must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts.</p> | Chapter 1 contains details of the expertise and qualifications of the competent experts. |
| Schedule 4 | <p>1. A description of the development, including in particular</p> <p>(a) a description of the location of the development;</p> <p>(b) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases;</p> <p>(c) a description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the development (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used;</p> <p>(d) an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases.</p> | <p>The Proposed Development is described in Chapter 4, including consideration of anticipated construction methods and the operation of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The land use requirements during construction and operational phases are also described in Chapter 4.</p> <p>Expected residues and emissions are addressed, where relevant, in the appropriate technical chapters.</p> |
| | <p>2. A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.</p> | Chapter 3 describes the design iteration process and details how the Proposed Development site was chosen, and the environmental constraints taken into consideration in determining the final layout which is the subject of the Application. |
| | <p>3. A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with</p> | A description of the existing environment and how it is expected to evolve in the absence of the Proposed Development is provided within each technical chapter and supporting technical appendices. |



| EIA Regulations | Required Information (EIA Regulations) | Relevant Reference within this Environmental Statement |
|-----------------|--|--|
| | reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge | |
| | 4. A description of the factors specified in regulation 4(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape. | <p>The receptors potentially affected by the Proposed Development are detailed within each of the technical chapters.</p> <p>Effects on population and human health are assessed in relation to visual impacts.</p> <p>An assessment of the effects on biodiversity is assessed within Chapter 7.</p> <p>An assessment of the effects on soils and water has been assessed within Chapter 8.</p> <p>Material assets are addressed through the assessment of cultural heritage effects.</p> |
| | <p>5. A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from, inter alia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the construction and existence of the development, including, where relevant, demolition works; (b) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources; (c) the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste; (d) the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters); (e) the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources; (f) the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change; (g) the technologies and the substances used. <p>The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in regulation 4(2) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development. This description should take into account the environmental protection objectives established at Union or Member State level which are relevant to the project, including in</p> | <p>The predicted significant effects of the Proposed Development are reported after relevant mitigation measures have been applied to an identified effect, in each of the technical chapters.</p> <p>Effects have been predicted in relation to both the construction / decommissioning and operational phases of the Proposed Development, including the nature of these effects and their duration.</p> <p>The overall approach and methods used in the assessment of environmental impacts are discussed within this chapter. Prediction methods are discussed in detail within each relevant technical chapter.</p> |



| EIA Regulations | Required Information (EIA Regulations) | Relevant Reference within this Environmental Statement |
|-----------------|--|--|
| | particular those established under Council Directive 92/43/EEC(1) and Directive 2009/147/EC(2). | |
| | 6. A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved. | An overview of the methodology of the assessment is provided within this chapter while the individual technical chapters provide details of each technical assessment (Chapter 5 to 9). |
| | 7. A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases. | Specific mitigation measures and where appropriate monitoring arrangements are reported in each relevant technical section of the ES and in the schedule of committed mitigation measures presented in Chapter 10 . |
| | 8. A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments pursuant to EU legislation such as Directive 2012/18/EU(3) of the European Parliament and of the Council or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom(4) or UK environmental assessments may be used for this purpose provided that the requirements of this Directive are met. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies. | An assessment of major accidents and/or disasters has been scoped out as detailed in Section 2.5 . |
| | 9. A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 8. | A Non-Technical Summary is presented as a stand-alone document. |
| | 10. A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the environmental statement. | References are provided at the end of each chapter. |

2.7 Consultation

2.7.1 Consultation is a key component of the EIA process. Consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees has been undertaken by the Applicant since the feasibility stages of the Proposed Development.



- 2.7.2 The Applicant has continually engaged through both formal consultation (such as the request for an EIA Scoping Opinion) and informally through meetings, calls and emails. Details of the additional consultation undertaken outwith EIA Scoping process with consultees can be found within each technical chapter.

Public Consultation

- 2.7.3 A stand-alone Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Report has been prepared which gives details of the correspondence, online public consultation and other discussions which have taken place with the communities closest to the Proposed Development Site. The report also details findings of that work and illustrates the ways in which community engagement has helped identify potential issues arising from the emerging development proposal, and where appropriate, shape the final proposal which is now the subject of this application.
- 2.7.4 The Applicant is grateful to residents and local representatives for their input into the pre-application community engagement process and intends to continue this engagement throughout the planning process and beyond.

2.8 Consideration of Alternatives

- 2.8.1 EIA legislation requires the consideration of alternatives and an indication of the reasons for selecting the site advanced, except where limited by constraints of commercial confidentiality.
- 2.8.2 The Site has been demonstrated to be a viable and a productive site for a solar development.
- 2.8.3 The Applicant considered a number of alternative layouts and different panel iterations for the Proposed Development, to arrive at the design for which consent is sought. A full description of the site identification and design iteration process is given in **Chapter 3**.

2.9 Assumptions, Limitations & Uncertainty

- 2.9.1 The EIA process is designed to enable informed decision-making based on the best available information about the environmental implications of a proposed development. However, there will always be some uncertainty inherent in the scale and nature of the predicted environmental effects as a result of the level of detailed information available at the time of assessment, data reliability or uncertainty, the potential for minor alterations to the Proposed Development following completion of the ES and/or the limitations of the prediction processes.
- 2.9.2 A number of assumptions were made during the EIA process and are detailed below:
- The principal land uses adjacent to the Site remain unchanged during the course of the Proposed Development's lifetime.
 - Current live applications for solar PV projects are included within the assessment of cumulative effects for each technical aspect.



- Information provided by third parties (including publicly available information and databases) is correct at time of submission.
- 2.9.3 Specific assumptions may also be made with regards to the individual technical disciplines, which are detailed within each chapter.
- 2.9.4 The main limitation to the assessment has been that while the baseline conditions have been assumed to be accurate at the time of surveying, due to the dynamic nature of the environment, these conditions may change during site preparation, construction and operation.
- 2.9.5 There is also the potential for a degree of necessary flexibility as certain aspects of the Proposed Development may be subject to change until a detailed design has been finalised. The maximum design envelope has been considered to ensure a robust assessment and any design flexibility will not exceed this. Flexibility can come in the form of:
- Variation of panel height;
 - Variation of foundation and infrastructure design; and
 - Micro-siting of the panels and associated infrastructure which may change due to investigation findings or implementation of mitigation measures.
- 2.9.6 Any limitations to the EIA are summarised in each technical chapter, where relevant, together with the means proposed to mitigate these.
- 2.9.7 Information on the construction of the Proposed Development has been developed by the project team based on professional judgement and outline design works, on the most likely methods of construction, plant, access routes and working areas etc. for the purposes of the EIA. The final choice of optimum construction methods will rest with the Contractor and may differ from those used in this assessment, with any such uncertainty stated in the ES. Any changes to these methods will remain within the maximum design envelope.



2.10 References

Gov UK (2025). *Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/14-meeting-the-challenge-of-climate-change-flooding-and-coastal-change#:~:text=Meeting%20the%20challenge%20of%20climate%20change%2C%20flooding%20and%20coastal%20change,-Paragraphs%20161%20to&text=161.,flood%20risks%20and%20coastal%20change>. [Accessed 28 February 2025].

Gov UK (2017). *The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017*. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571> [Accessed 28 February 2025].

