The Planning Inspectorate
Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

SCOPING OPINION:

Proposed East Park Energy

Case Reference: EN010141

Adopted by the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) pursuant to Regulation 10 of The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

08 December 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 1

2. OVERARCHING COMMENTS 3

2.1 Description of the Proposed Development 3
2.2 EIA Methodology and Scope of Assessment 7

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT COMMENTS 10

3.1 Landscape and Visual 10
3.2 Ecology and Nature Conservation 16
3.3 Flood Risk, Drainage and Surface Water 23
3.4 Ground Conditions 26
3.5 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology 30
3.6 Noise and Vibration 33
3.7 Socio-economics, Land Use and Tourism 36
3.8 Traffic and Transport 39
3.9 Climate Change 42
3.10 Air Quality 47
3.11 Land and Soils 50
3.12 Other Environmental Topics 53

APPENDIX 1: CONSULTATION BODIES FORMALLY CONSULTED

APPENDIX 2: RESPONDENTS TO CONSULTATION AND COPIES OF REPLIES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 On 30 October 2023, the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) received an application for a Scoping Opinion from RNA Energy Ltd (the Applicant) under Regulation 10 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) for East Park Energy (the Proposed Development). The Applicant notified the Secretary of State (SoS) under Regulation 8(1)(b) of those regulations that they propose to provide an Environmental Statement (ES) in respect of the Proposed Development and by virtue of Regulation 6(2)(a), the Proposed Development is 'EIA development'.

1.1.2 The Applicant provided the necessary information to inform a request under EIA Regulation 10(3) in the form of a Scoping Report, available from:

http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/document/EN010141-000010

1.1.3 This document is the Scoping Opinion (the Opinion) adopted by the Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS. This Opinion is made on the basis of the information provided in the Scoping Report, reflecting the Proposed Development as currently described by the Applicant. This Opinion should be read in conjunction with the Applicant's Scoping Report.

1.1.4 The Inspectorate has set out in the following sections of this Opinion where it has/ has not agreed to scope out certain aspects/ matters on the basis of the information provided as part of the Scoping Report. The Inspectorate is content that the receipt of this Scoping Opinion should not prevent the Applicant from subsequently agreeing with the relevant consultation bodies to scope such aspects/ matters out of the ES, where further evidence has been provided to justify this approach. However, in order to demonstrate that the aspects/ matters have been appropriately addressed, the ES should explain the reasoning for scoping them out and justify the approach taken.

1.1.5 Before adopting this Opinion, the Inspectorate has consulted the 'consultation bodies' listed in Appendix 1 in accordance with EIA Regulation 10(6). A list of those consultation bodies who replied within the statutory timeframe (along with copies of their comments) is provided in Appendix 2. These comments have been taken into account in the preparation of this Opinion.

1.1.6 The Inspectorate has published a series of advice notes on the National Infrastructure Planning website, including Advice Note 7: *Environmental Impact Assessment: Preliminary Environmental Information, Screening and Scoping* (AN7). AN7 and its annexes provide guidance on EIA processes during the pre-application stages and advice to support applicants in the preparation of their ES.

1.1.7 Applicants should have particular regard to the standing advice in AN7, alongside other advice notes on the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) process, available from:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/

1.1.8 This Opinion should not be construed as implying that the Inspectorate agrees with the information or comments provided by the Applicant in their request for an opinion from the Inspectorate. In particular, comments from the Inspectorate in this Opinion are without prejudice to any later decisions taken (eg on formal submission of the application) that any development identified by the Applicant is necessarily to be treated as part of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) or Associated Development or development that does not require development consent.

2. OVERARCHING COMMENTS

2.1 Description of the Proposed Development

(Scoping Report Sections 3 and 4)

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
2.1.1	Paragraph 3.2.1	Site boundary	The Scoping Report states that the site boundary may be likely to change as the design of the Proposed Development progresses. The ES should describe any alterations to the final boundary for the Development Consent Order (DCO), including an explanation of the reasons for the changes. The Applicant should ensure that the scope of assessments within the ES reflects the maximum extent of the Proposed Development.
2.1.2	Paragraph 3.1.16	Existing utilities infrastructure	The Scoping Report identifies a number of existing utilities within the site, including high pressure gas mains and overhead electricity lines. The assessment in the ES should take into account the location of existing infrastructure and identify any interactions between it and the Proposed Development. Any significant effects that are likely to occur should be assessed.
2.1.3	Paragraphs 3.2.3 to 3.2.7	Design flexibility	The Inspectorate notes the Applicant's intention to apply a 'Rochdale Envelope' approach to maintain flexibility within the design of the Proposed Development. Paragraph 3.2.7 states that the flexibility of the design will namely relate to the photovoltaic (PV) panel type and configuration, the arrangement of the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), East Park Substation and supporting infrastructure, and the alignment and siting of cabling, including the grid connection. The Inspectorate expects that at the point an application is made, the description of the Proposed Development will be sufficiently detailed to include the design, size, capacity, technology, and locations of the

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			different elements of the Proposed Development or where details are not yet known, will set out the assumptions applied to the assessment in relation to these aspects. This should include the footprint and heights of the structures (relevant to existing ground levels), as well as land-use requirements for all elements and phases of the development. The description should be supported (as necessary) by figures, cross-sections, and drawings which should be clearly and appropriately referenced. Where flexibility is sought, the ES should clearly set out and justify the maximum design parameters that would apply for each option assessed and how these have been used to inform an adequate assessment in the ES.
2.1.4	Paragraph 3.3.3	Construction compounds	The Scoping Report states that the Proposed Development would require one or more temporary construction compound(s) within the site, however, the exact location is yet to be determined. To ensure a robust assessment of likely significant effects (LSE), the ES should provide details regarding the number, location and dimensions of construction compounds.
2.1.5	Paragraph 3.3.23	Storage building	The ES should provide details relating to the storage building including location and dimensions of the building and any related storage areas. Any potential adverse impacts of the construction, operation and decommissioning of the storage building should also be assessed in the ES where significant effects are likely to occur.
2.1.6	Paragraphs 3.4.2 and 3.4.3	Construction phasing	Construction is anticipated to commence in 2026 and last 24 months. Paragraph 3.4.3 of the Scoping Report sets out the expected construction activities but does not include the anticipated phasing of construction works. The ES should include details of how the construction would be phased, including the likely commencement date. Where uncertainty remains, the assessment should be based on a worst-case scenario.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
2.1.7	Paragraph 3.4.3	Construction activities	An overview of indicative construction activities is provided in paragraph 3.4.3 of the Scoping Report. This information should be set out in the ES including key construction milestones, the duration and location of the required construction activities, associated plant and machinery, and the proposed construction hours.
2.1.8	Paragraph 3.4.3	Watercourse and road crossings	Drainage ditches are likely to be crossed during construction of the Proposed Development. The ES should identify which watercourses and/ or other features, such as roads, will be crossed and at what locations, with reference to an accompanying figure(s). The ES should describe the types of crossings that are required, their scale and dimensions and the nature of any associated construction works. Where this has not been determined, the ES should base assessments on the worst case scenario and justify why this scenario would lead to the greatest environmental impact. Sufficient details should be provided to inform a robust assessment of LSE on relevant aspects/ matters, including watercourse hydraulics and ecological receptors. Efforts should be made to agree the approach to watercourse and road crossings with the relevant consultation bodies.
2.1.9	Section 3.5	Operational and maintenance activities	The ES should describe the potential scope and duration of maintenance works that would be required during the operation of the Proposed Development, including predicted vehicle movements and staffing numbers. The proposals for ongoing management and maintenance of the land around and under the solar PV modules should be confirmed in the ES, including any vegetation management and animal grazing. Any potential adverse impacts of maintenance activities should also be assessed in the ES where significant effects are likely to occur. Proposals for maintaining vegetation around

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			easements and the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the application site should also be described.
2.1.10	Section 3.6	Decommissioning	The Inspectorate notes that decommissioning of the Proposed Development is expected to take between 12 and 24 months. The ES should provide a description of the activities and works which are likely to be required during decommissioning of the Proposed Development, including the anticipated duration. Where significant effects are likely to occur as a result of decommissioning the Proposed Development, these should be described and assessed in the ES. Any proposals for restoration of the site to full agricultural use should also be described.
2.1.11	N/A	Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP)	The Scoping Report refers to the DEMP, Demolition Environmental Management Plan and the Decommissioning Management Plan. The ES should ensure the correct names and acronyms are consistently used when referring to relevant documents.
2.1.12	N/A	Lighting	The ES should describe the lighting requirements for all elements and phases of the Proposed Development. It should be explained what measures are proposed to minimise light spill on human and ecological receptors.

2.2 EIA Methodology and Scope of Assessment

(Scoping Report Section 6)

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
2.2.1	Section 3.6 and paragraph 6.5.3	Decommissioning assessment	Paragraph 3.5.1 of the Scoping Report identifies a 40-year operational lifespan for the Proposed Development and paragraph 3.6.3 states that the effects of decommissioning are often of a similar, or lower, magnitude than the construction effects. Paragraph 3.6.3 further states that it is not proposed to provide a separate decommissioning assessment for each aspect chapter unless there are specific issues related to decommissioning which could give rise to materially greater impacts than construction. The ES should clearly set out if and how decommissioning is to be assessed and any components which may remain following decommissioning. Paragraph 3.6.1 states that a DEMP will be agreed with the Local Planning Authority. The Inspectorate would expect to see this secured through the inclusion of an outline DEMP (oDEMP) or similar with the Application.
2.2.2	Paragraph 6.5.9	Professional judgement	The ES should clearly identify where professional judgement has been relied upon to determine the level of significance of effects. Any use of professional judgement to assess significance should be fully justified within the ES.
2.2.3	Paragraph 6.6.3	Ecological mitigation and enhancement	The Scoping Report explains that an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) and a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment will be submitted with the DCO application. These documents should clearly differentiate between measures proposed to mitigate significant effects of the Proposed Development and measures proposed to support BNG.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
2.2.4	Section 6.8	Cumulative effects	The Zone of Influence (ZOI) used to identify 'other development' to be included in the assessment of cumulative effects should be determined based on the potential for significant effects on receptors to occur and may differ across the environmental aspects. The ES should provide a clear justification for the extent of each ZOI and how it captures the effects from the Proposed Development. It is recommended that the cumulative assessment follows the methodology set out in the Inspectorate's Advice Note Seventeen. Wherever possible it should be agreed with the relevant statutory consultation bodies as part of discussions on the assessment methodologies. Evidence of agreement on these points should be provided in the ES.
2.2.5	N/A	Monitoring	The ES should identify and describe any proposed monitoring of adverse effects and how the results of such monitoring would be utilised to inform any necessary remedial actions.
2.2.6	N/A	Scoping table	The Inspectorate recommends the use of a table in the ES to set out key changes in parameters/ options of the Proposed Development presented in the Scoping Report to those presented in the ES. It is also recommended that a table demonstrating how the matters raised in the Scoping Opinion have been addressed in the ES and/ or associated documents is provided.
2.2.7	Section 1.4	Transboundary	The Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS has considered the Proposed Development and concludes that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or cumulatively on the environment in a European Economic Area State. In reaching this conclusion the Inspectorate has identified and considered the Proposed Development's likely impacts including consideration of

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			potential pathways and the extent, magnitude, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impacts. The Inspectorate considers that the likelihood of transboundary effects resulting from the Proposed Development is so low that it does not warrant the issue of a detailed transboundary screening. However, this position will remain under review and will have regard to any new or materially different information coming to light which may alter that decision. Note: The SoS' duty under Regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process. The Inspectorate's screening of transboundary issues is based on the relevant considerations specified in the Annex to its Advice Note Twelve, available on our website at http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT COMMENTS

3.1 Landscape and Visual

(Scoping Report Section 7)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.1.1	Paragraphs 7.5.4 and 7.5.10	Regional Character Types	The Applicant proposes to scope out an assessment of effects on the Regional Character Types on the basis that an assessment at the national, district, and local scales would be undertaken, and the regional and district landscape types have similar characteristics. It is also noted that the Regional Character Types of the East of England would be summarised within the baseline conditions. The Inspectorate is content that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment based on the above justification.
3.1.2	Paragraphs 7.5.5 and 7.5.11	Effects on designated landscapes	The Applicant proposes to scope out effects on designated landscapes based on the distance between the site and any statutory or non-statutory designated landscapes. Paragraph 7.4.36 states that the closest statutory landscape designation is approximately 30km to the south. Paragraph 7.4.37 states that there are no non-statutory landscape designations within the study area and that "*neither Bedford Borough Council nor Huntingdonshire District Council maintain a local landscape designation as part of their local development plans*". Considering the distance of the Proposed Development from any statutory and non-statutory designated landscapes, the Inspectorate is content that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.1.3	Paragraphs 7.5.13 to 7.5.16	Standalone glint and glare assessment	It is noted that a standalone glint and glare assessment is proposed which would form a technical appendix to the landscape and visual chapter, rather than a standalone chapter, with significant effects and any mitigation measures proposed reported within the ES. The Inspectorate is content with this approach subject to cross-references being made where appropriate.
3.1.4	Paragraphs 7.5.23 and 7.5.24 and Table 7.4	Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA)	The Scoping Report notes (at paragraph 7.5.23) that an RVAA is proposed to be scoped into the ES at this stage on the basis that the layout of the Proposed Development and proposed mitigation is not yet fixed, although paragraph 7.5.24 states that an RVAA may be subsequently scoped out following consultation with stakeholders, and an evidence-based appraisal will be provided to justify this. The Inspectorate welcomes this approach but notes inconsistency between this approach and Table 7.4. This table states that an RVAA is proposed to be scoped out for the construction and decommissioning phases. It is noted that paragraph 7.5.18 of the Scoping Report refers to the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note TGN 2/19: 'Residential Visual Amenity Assessment'. The Inspectorate understands that in this guidance the requirement for an RVAA is generally dependent on the outcome of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). In the absence of an LVIA for the construction and decommissioning phases, the Inspectorate does not have sufficient evidence to agree to scope this matter out of further assessment. Construction and decommissioning effects should therefore be assessed within any subsequent RVAA, or justification should be provided why significant effects would not occur, supported by evidence of agreement with the relevant consultation bodies.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.1.5	Paragraphs 7.5.25 and 7.5.26	Night-time effects – operation	The Applicant proposes to scope out an assessment of night-time landscape and visual effects during operation on the basis that the Proposed Development would only be lit during periods of infrequent maintenance outside of daylight hours or in the event of an emergency. The Inspectorate is content that, on the basis that the Proposed Development would not be continually lit during operation, this matter can be scoped out of further assessment for the operational phase. Nevertheless, the ES should clarify the likely frequency of maintenance activities occurring outside of daylight hours and provide details of the proposed operational lighting strategy, such as measures to prevent impacts from lighting during emergency or maintenance events.
3.1.6	Table 7.4	Night-time effects – construction and decommissioning	Table 7.4 states that night-time effects during the construction and decommissioning phases are proposed to be scoped out. It is noted that some lighting would be required during construction and decommissioning but this would be managed in accordance with best practice measures set out within the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP). No further detail is provided on the proposed lighting strategy during construction/ decommissioning. Given that lighting would be required, the Inspectorate does not agree that this matter can be scoped out at this stage. Accordingly, the ES should provide an assessment of these matters, or the information demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of LSE.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.1.7	Paragraphs 7.2.6 and 7.2.7	Study area	The Scoping Report states that a 3km study area has been used for the LVIA. Paragraph 7.2.6 states that landscape and visual effects beyond this distance are not likely to be significant based on the assessor's professional judgement when considering the characteristics of the site and the receiving landscape. The Inspectorate is broadly content with the 3km study area proposed based on the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) shown on Figures 7-5 to 7-7. However, these ZTV are based on the 3m maximum height of PV panels. As described within Section 3.3 of the Scoping Report, the Proposed Development involves additional infrastructure exceeding 3m in height, such as elements of the substation up to 12m in height, switchgear up to 8m in height, and battery storage facility up to 4.5m in height. Although it is noted that fieldwork was undertaken in June 2022 to establish the maximum extent of visibility of the site, the detail of this fieldwork is not provided, and it is unclear whether this is based on the maximum height of components or the 3m high PV panels. The ES should clearly justify the study area(s) used and should ensure that a worst-case scenario is assessed. Where there are elements of the Proposed Development which exceed 3m, the Applicant should consider using multiple ZTVs to assess the potential visibility for all components of the Proposed Development. The Applicant should make effort to agree the study area for LVIA with relevant consultees and provide evidence of this within the ES.
3.1.8	Paragraph 7.4.52	Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs)	The Scoping Report states that LLCAs will be defined for the site and its immediate context but not for the full extent of the LVIA study area. It is not clear on what basis this has been established. The Inspectorate is of the opinion that the study area should reflect the

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			extent of likely significant landscape effects. The study area represents the extent to which effects could occur and therefore all the LLCAs within the study area should be defined.
3.1.9	Paragraph 7.4.64, Figure 7-7, and Table 7.3	Viewpoints	There is discrepancy within the Scoping Report about the number of viewpoints selected. Paragraph 7.4.64 states that a provisional list of 79 viewpoints has been selected, however, Table 7.3 and Figure 7-7 identify 82 viewpoints. Although the Inspectorate recognises that these are still subject to finalisation in consultation with relevant consultees, the ES should be consistent with the number of viewpoints selected. Evidence of the consultation with relevant bodies regarding the viewpoints selected should be provided within the ES.
3.1.10	Paragraph 7.5.27	Mitigation	The Scoping Report states that changes to the layout of the proposed solar panels and ancillary structures would occur in order to mitigate landscape and visual effects. It is unclear whether these changes would occur prior to the completion of the ES or whether this would occur post-consent. Where flexibility is sought, the ES should clearly set out the maximum design parameters that have been assessed and how these have been used to inform an adequate assessment in the ES.
3.1.11	Paragraphs 7.6.6, 7.7.1 and 7.7.2	Assessment scenarios	The Scoping Report states that landscape and visual effects will be assessed during summer of Year 10 of operation. It is unclear how a scenario within the summer would represent a worst-case scenario in terms of landscape and visual effects given the potential screening effect from deciduous vegetation in leaf. It is also stated in paragraph 7.7.1 that summer and winter photography will be used "*as far as practicable*". The reasoning behind this statement is unclear considering paragraph 7.7.2 states that all photography will be from publicly accessible locations.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			The Applicant should provide photographs during winter as well as in summer to allow an assessment of the maximum visibility scenario and illustrate the seasonal differences in screening provided by mitigation planting in line with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment, 3rd Edition, 2013).

3.2 Ecology and Nature Conservation

(Scoping Report Section 8)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.2.1	Paragraph 8.6.8	International statutory designated sites for nature conservation	The Applicant proposes to scope out construction, operational and decommissioning effects of the Proposed Development on international statutory designated sites. The Scoping Report states that there are no international statutory designated sites within 10km of the DCO boundary and embedded avoidance and mitigation measures proposed would not lead to significant effects on the sites or associated qualifying features. In the absence of information such as evidence demonstrating clear agreement with relevant statutory bodies, the Inspectorate is not in a position to agree to scope this matter from further assessment. The ES should provide an assessment of likely significant effects on international statutory designated sites, including the potential for the Proposed Development site to provide functionally linked land for species which are qualifying features of European sites or provide the evidence referred to above, demonstrating an absence of LSE.
3.2.2	Paragraph 8.6.8	National statutory designated sites for nature conservation	The Applicant proposes to scope out construction, operational and decommissioning effects of the Proposed Development on national statutory designated sites on the basis that embedded avoidance and mitigation measures proposed would prevent significant effects on the sites or associated qualifying features. Figure 8.1 indicates that there are several national designated sites within the established 5km ZOI. In the absence of information detailing the avoidance and mitigation measures proposed, the Inspectorate considers that the ES should provide an assessment of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on all national

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			designated sites located within 5km of the DCO boundary or provide a justification as to the absence of LSE including evidence of agreement with relevant consultation bodies.
3.2.3	Paragraph 8.6.9	Non-statutory designated sites	The Applicant proposes to scope out construction, operational and decommissioning effects of the Proposed Development on non-statutory designated sites on the basis that embedded avoidance and mitigation measures proposed would not lead to significant effects on the sites or associated qualifying features. In the absence of information detailing the avoidance and mitigation measures proposed, the ES should provide an assessment of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on all non-statutory designated sites located within 2km of the site or provide evidence to demonstrate the absence of LSE including agreement with relevant consultation bodies.
3.2.4	Paragraph 8.6.10	Ancient woodland and other irreplaceable habitats	The Scoping Report states that no ancient woodland or other irreplaceable habitats are known to be present on the site, as a result an assessment of potential effects has been scoped out of further assessment. However, the Inspectorate notes that ancient woodland and veteran trees are present within the wider 2km study area and that further arboricultural surveys may be undertaken to identify notable trees that may be impacted in land surrounding the site. The ES should provide an assessment of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on ancient woodland, veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats located within 2km of the entire site boundary, including the PV area and grid connection route, or provide evidence to demonstrate the absence of LSE including agreement with relevant consultation bodies.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.2.5	Paragraphs 8.6.11 to 8.6.14	Priority habitats and other on-site habitats - operation and decommissioning	The Applicant considers that operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development is unlikely to lead to significant effects on priority and other on-site habitats and proposes to scope this matter out of further assessment. The Inspectorate is content to scope this matter out as an assessment of construction impacts is proposed and will assess the potential long term or permanent effects of habitat loss, severance and disturbance of priority and other on-site habitats through the operation and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development.
3.2.6	Paragraphs 8.6.18 to 8.6.19	Non-breeding birds	The Applicant proposes to scope out effects on non-breeding birds during all phases of the Proposed Development on the basis that there are only low numbers of non-breeding bird species present on the site and that the impacts of operational maintenance would not be greater than existing agricultural activities on site. Paragraph 8.4.33 states that additional non-breeding bird surveys will be undertaken in 2023/ 2024 to update existing survey results and collect data at East Park Site D. In the absence of a comprehensive set of non-breeding bird survey results covering the entirety of the site, the Inspectorate considers that the ES should include an assessment of non-breeding birds or provide evidence to demonstrate the absence of LSE including agreement with relevant consultation bodies.
3.2.7	Paragraph 8.6.20	Roosting bats	The Applicant proposes to scope this matter out of further assessment on the basis that trees located within the site that offer bat roosting potential will be retained and protected in line with embedded avoidance and mitigation measures and no buildings with bat roosting potential are anticipated to be affected by the Proposed Development.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			Provided relevant mitigation measures are secured through the DCO, the Inspectorate agrees to scope this matter out of further assessment. However, should refinement of the design of the Proposed Development during the pre-application stage result in potential impacts to trees or buildings which offer bat roosting potential, the ES should provide a full assessment of effects on roosting bats during all phases of the Proposed Development.
3.2.8	Paragraphs 8.6.23 to 8.6.25	Foraging and commuting bats - decommissioning	The Inspectorate considers that decommissioning effects are unlikely to give rise to materially greater effects than construction and is content to scope this matter out of further assessment.
3.2.9	Paragraph 8.6.26 and 8.6.27	Amphibians (including great crested newt (GCN)) - operation and decommissioning	The Scoping Report states that an assessment of effects on amphibians is scoped out for the operation and decommissioning phases on the basis that suitable habitats on the site will be retained and protected through embedded avoidance and mitigation measures. However, the Inspectorate notes that the presence of GCN has been confirmed on the site and further surveys are scheduled for 2024. In the absence of information such as evidence demonstrating clear agreement with relevant statutory bodies, the Inspectorate is not in a position to agree to scope these matters from the assessment. Accordingly, the ES should include an assessment of these matters or provide information demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of LSE.
3.2.10	Paragraph 8.6.26 to 8.6.34 and Table 8.1	Impacts to the following ecological receptors: • reptiles; • badgers;	The Scoping Report states that an assessment of effects on reptiles, badgers, water vole, otter and invertebrates is scoped out of further assessment on the basis that suitable habitats on the site will be retained and protected through embedded avoidance and mitigation measures.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
		• water vole; • otter; and • invertebrates.	In the absence of information such as evidence demonstrating clear agreement with relevant statutory bodies, the Inspectorate is not in a position to agree to scope these matters from the assessment. Accordingly, the ES should include an assessment of these matters or provide information demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of LSE.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.2.11	Section 8.2	Study area	The Scoping Report proposes a 10km and 5km study area for international and national designated sites, respectively. The ES should ensure the study area for each ecological receptor reflects the Proposed Development's ZOI rather than being based on a fixed distance. In relation to internationally designated sites, the ES should consider the potential for effects to occur beyond 10km, particularly where sites are designated for mobile species such as birds and bats. Efforts should be made to agree the study area(s) with relevant consultation bodies.
3.2.12	Paragraph 8.4.5	Further ecological surveys	Paragraph 8.4.5 of the Scoping Report states that some ecological surveys are ongoing or set to be completed in 2024. The Inspectorate considers that the possibility of identifying further receptors remains. The ES must report the full survey findings and list all receptors identified as potentially present on site and assess significant effects where they are likely to occur.
3.2.13	Paragraph 8.4.14	County Wildlife Sites (CWS)	Paragraph 8.4.14 states that at least eight CWS were located within the 2km study area, including two directly adjacent to the site boundary. The Scoping Report cites two varying sources of data regarding the number of CWS within the study area, the Applicant should ensure the information used in the ES is accurate and

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			consistent with the number of CWS identified within the proposed study area.
3.2.14	Paragraph 8.5.12	Buffer zones	The Inspectorate draws the Applicant's attention to the consultation responses from the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission (see Appendix 2 of this Opinion). Appropriate buffer zone distances between elements of the Proposed Development and sensitive habitat types, including watercourses, hedgerows, ancient woodland and veteran trees, should be defined in the ES, with reference to how this is secured through the DCO. The Applicant should make effort to agree these details with relevant consultation bodies.
3.2.15	N/A	Fish and aquatic invertebrates	Pertenhall Brook flows through site A and the River Kym forms the northern boundary of site C, however, no fish or aquatic invertebrate surveys have been or are noted as being undertaken. Details of the surveys should be provided within the ES, or it should be demonstrated why LSE on fish and aquatic invertebrates are not expected to arise.
3.2.16	N/A	Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)	Impacts from INNS are not identified in the Scoping Report to be assessed in the ES. The ES should assess potential impacts from INNS where significant effects are likely to occur. Where mitigation measures are relied on to avoid significant effects, the ES should describe these measures and signpost how they would be secured through the DCO.
3.2.17	N/A	Access and cable routes surveys	The Scoping Report indicates that breeding bird, wintering bird and bat activity surveys are not required within the access and cable routes. However, in the absence of detailed information regarding construction activities and the proposed construction lighting strategy, the Inspectorate considers that there is potential for effects

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			on breeding and wintering birds and foraging/ commuting bat species within the land required for the access and cable routes during construction. The ES should ensure that ecological assessments are supported by robust baseline data. Detailed breeding bird, wintering bird and bat activity surveys should be conducted for the Proposed Development site, including the access and cable routes, or the ES should provide evidence of agreement from relevant consultation bodies that such surveys are not required.
3.2.18	N/A	Confidential annexes	Public bodies have a responsibility to avoid releasing environmental information that could bring about harm to sensitive or vulnerable ecological features. Specific survey and assessment data relating to the presence and locations of species such as badgers, rare birds and plants that could be subject to disturbance, damage, persecution, or commercial exploitation resulting from publication of the information, should be provided in the ES as a confidential annex. All other assessment information should be included in an ES chapter, as normal, with a placeholder explaining that a confidential annex has been submitted to the Inspectorate and may be made available subject to request.

3.3 Flood Risk, Drainage and Surface Water

(Scoping Report Section 9)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.3.1	Paragraph 9.5.5	Designated sites	The Applicant proposes to scope this matter out of further assessment on the basis that the Proposed Development is not hydrologically linked to any of the designated sites, which are either located upstream of the site or within a different, unconnected sub-catchment. Although a list of the closest designated sites to the site boundary is set out in paragraph 9.4.8 of the Scoping Report, limited evidence is provided to confirm that they are not hydrologically linked to the site and therefore the Inspectorate is not content to scope this matter out at this stage. The ES should provide an assessment of the potential water effects of the Proposed Development on designated sites or provide evidence to demonstrate the absence of LSE including agreement with relevant consultation bodies.
3.3.2	Paragraphs 9.5.19 and 9.5.26	Water quality from increased siltation and pollution events - operation	The Scoping Report states that during operation of the Proposed Development the risks of pollution are expected to be minimal and can be managed by the implementation of best practice measures. The Inspectorate considers that the presence of chemicals and soil disturbance during operation, including maintenance procedures, is unlikely to give rise to significant effects. The ES should explain why the operation of the Proposed Development would not give rise to routine emissions of chemicals (ie that panels are effectively inert) or sediment and how emergency releases would be managed within an Operation Environment Management Plan and/ or Soil Management Plan and Battery Safety Management Plan. The Inspectorate is content to scope this matter out of further assessment on this basis.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.3.3	Paragraph 9.5.29	Decommissioning effects	The Scoping Report states that effects from decommissioning on water environment receptors, excluding water quality effects from increased siltation and pollution events, are assumed to be no worse than effects during construction. Provided a DEMP is produced and implemented to manage decommissioning activities and relevant measures are agreed with the Local Planning Authorities, the Inspectorate is content to scope this matter out of further assessment.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.3.4	Section 9.5	Construction compounds	The Applicant should ensure that an assessment of the potential impacts from construction compounds on water environment receptors is included in the ES. The ES should also explain how the location of construction compounds, including the access, has been considered to reduce potential effects on the water environment and how any mitigation has been secured.
3.3.5	Paragraph 9.5.8	Flood risk	The Inspectorate notes the Applicant's intention to provide a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) as a standalone report within the technical appendices of the ES. The ES should assess the potential flood risk to and from the Proposed Development and describe suitable mitigation measures and flood resilient construction techniques that will allow the development to remain operational throughout its 40-year lifespan.
3.3.6	Paragraphs 9.5.10 and 9.5.28	Mitigation measures	The Inspectorate notes the proposed use of mitigation measures, namely Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The design of such mitigation measures should be informed by relevant and up to date

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			climate change allowances for the lifetime of the Proposed Development.
3.3.7	Section 9.6	Assessment methodology	The Scoping Report does not provide a detailed description of the methodology to be used in the flood risk, drainage and surface water assessment. The ES should explain how flood risk, drainage and surface water impacts have been identified and the methodology that will be used to determine the significance of effects. Any use of professional judgement to assess significance should be fully justified within the ES.
3.3.8	Figure 9-1	Figures	The Applicant should ensure that all features on the figures are clearly discernible, avoiding the use of coloured boundaries and features that are too similar or overlapping to be differentiated. This issue is particularly evident when reviewing the Water Framework Directive (WFD) river waterbodies and relevant local authority boundaries on Figure 9-1.
3.3.9	N/A	Water resources	In their consultation response (see Appendix 2 of this Opinion), Anglian Water note that the Proposed Development is located within an area designated as 'seriously water stressed' by the Environment Agency. The ES should provide details relating to the water supply and demand requirements during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development (including in the context of managing BESS fire risk).
3.3.10	N/A	Flood Zone 3	Where relevant, the ES and FRA should differentiate between Flood Zones 3a and 3b in order to determine which parts of the site are located in areas considered as 'high probability of flooding' and 'functional floodplain'. The ES should include a figure to illustrate the extent of Flood Zones 3a and 3b.

3.4 Ground Conditions

(Scoping Report Section 10)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.4.1	Table 10.1	Human health (exposure to contamination, ground gases and vapours) – operation and decommissioning	The Inspectorate has considered the characteristics of the Proposed Development and is content that the operational phase is unlikely to result in significant human health effects from exposure to contaminants. As such, an assessment of the operational phase can be scoped out of further assessment. However, it is unclear whether the potential for exposure during the decommissioning phase remains and therefore the Inspectorate is not content to scope this matter out at this stage. The ES should include an assessment of the likely significant effects on human health resulting from exposure to contaminants during construction and decommissioning or provide evidence to demonstrate the absence of LSE including evidence of agreement with relevant consultation bodies.
3.4.2	Table 10.1 and paragraph 10.4.17	Human health (Unexploded Ordnance (UXO))	The Applicant proposes to scope this matter out on the basis that UXO risk to the site is low. Paragraph 10.4.17 of the Scoping Report explains that the site is located 1.5km away from Melchborne Woods Ministry of Defence (MOD) bulk storage and filling depot which was formerly used to store ordnance. Whilst the Inspectorate acknowledges that the site is some distance from the Melchborne Woods site, it is unclear whether UXO surveys have been undertaken to determine the potential for undetected UXO to be present on-site, particularly as the proximity to the MOD depot means there is potential for a higher UXO risk if the site was a target of ordnance. On the basis of the information provided, the Inspectorate does not agree to scope this matter out at this stage. The ES should assess the

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			potential for LSE to occur from UXO or demonstrate the absence of LSE eg through the provision of surveys or agreement with relevant consultation bodies.
3.4.3	Table 10.1	Controlled waters – operation	The Inspectorate has considered the characteristics of the Proposed Development and is content to scope an assessment of this matter out for the operational phase on the assumption that the assessment of construction effects would inform the design proposal. However, paragraph 9.5.19 states that there is a small risk of pollution from chemical spills from on-site maintenance or faults in the PV modules. As such, the ES should clarify the potential sources of pollution during the maintenance phase and outline any measures in place to limit the potential for chemical spillage/ leakage, including from BESS, as well as the mechanism by which these measures are secured. The Applicant's attention is drawn to ID 3.3.2 above.
3.4.4	Table 10.1	Controlled waters – decommissioning	The Inspectorate considers that decommissioning phase activities are likely to be similar to those of construction, and therefore have potential to introduce new pathways for contamination and/ or the remobilisation of contaminants. In the absence of information such as evidence demonstrating clear agreement with relevant statutory bodies, the Inspectorate is not in a position to agree to scope these matters from the assessment at this stage. Accordingly, the ES should include an assessment of these matters, or the information referred to demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of LSE.
3.4.5	Table 10.1	Property (potential for instability/ aggressive conditions) – operation and decommissioning	The Inspectorate has considered the characteristics of the Proposed Development and is content to scope out an assessment of this matter for the operational and decommissioning phases, noting that this matter is proposed to be scoped in for the construction phase and would inform remedial works and construction design proposals.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			However, should the assessment of the construction phase effects identify any ongoing risk for the operational phase this should be assessed within the ES.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.4.6	Paragraph 10.5.10	Operational effects	The Scoping Report states that the Proposed Development is not envisaged to impact on ground conditions during operation "*providing all potential effects are investigated and scoped out at the design stage of the development*". The term "*design stage*" is not defined; it is not clear when this would occur and whether this refers to detailed design post-consent. In addition, based on the information provided in the Scoping Report, it is not clear if it would be possible to scope out all potential effects during detailed design. The ES should therefore include an assessment of operational effects or information demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of LSE.
3.4.7	Paragraph 10.4.10	Agricultural usage	The Scoping Report states that the presence of contaminated soils and groundwater on-site is likely to be limited due to the "*long-standing agricultural history of the site*". Paragraph 10.6.1 notes that a Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) is yet to be conducted to determine the risks relating to contamination. As such, these assumptions have not been verified and there remains a risk that burial pits, fuel/ oil or agrichemical spills or areas of waste burial may be present. The ES should be supported by the findings of a PRA and where land contamination is identified, the ES should assess significant effects where they are likely to occur.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.4.8	N/A	Minerals	As stated in Cambridgeshire County Council's consultation response (Appendix 2 of this Opinion), the site is located within a Minerals Safeguarding Area. This is not referenced within the Scoping Report. The ES should assess the LSE of the Proposed Development on the sterilisation of important mineral resources. The Applicant should seek agreement from the Minerals Planning Authority regarding the approach to assessment of this matter.

3.5 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

(Scoping Report Section 11)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.5.1	Table 11.7	Direct impacts to heritage assets - operation and decommissioning	The Applicant proposes to scope this matter out on the basis that direct impacts of the Proposed Development on heritage assets would be limited to the construction phase. The Scoping Report states that the operational phase would not result in ground disturbance and decommissioning would not result in further direct impacts beyond those included in the assessment of construction effects. The Inspectorate agrees that additional significant effects during operation and decommissioning are unlikely to occur and this matter can therefore be scoped out of further assessment. Any relevant best practice or mitigation measures proposed to protect heritage assets during decommissioning should be described in an oDEMP.
3.5.2	Table 11.7	Setting impacts to designated heritage assets - construction	The Scoping Report states that impacts to the setting of designated heritage assets during construction would be temporary in nature and limited to localised areas of working. As a result the Applicant considers that any temporary effects during construction would not exceed the impacts on setting during the operational phase and proposes to scope this matter out of further assessment. The Inspectorate considers that there is potential for significant effects to occur to the setting of designated heritage assets during construction of the Proposed Development and does not agree to scope this matter out of further assessment. Accordingly, the ES should include an assessment of this matter or provide information demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of LSE.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.5.3	Table 11.7	Setting impacts to non-designated heritage assets	The Applicant proposes to scope this matter out on the basis that non-designated assets are typically less sensitive to changes in their settings and unlikely to be subject to significant setting effects. However, the Scoping Report states that the ES will provide an assessment of setting impacts on non-designated heritage assets that are considered to be of national importance. The Inspectorate is content to scope out further assessment of setting impacts to non-designated heritage assets provided the ES includes an assessment of the setting impacts on nationally important non-designated heritage assets during all phases of the Proposed Development. The ES should fully justify the choice of heritage assets included in the assessment and their locations should be depicted on a supporting plan. The Applicant should also seek to agree the non-designated assets included within the assessment of setting with the relevant consultation bodies, including Historic England and Local Planning Authorities.
3.5.4	Table 11.7	Setting impacts to designated heritage assets beyond 3km study area	The Scoping Report states that designated assets beyond 3km from the DCO boundary are too distant to have their settings significantly affected by the Proposed Development. However, no evidence has been provided to explain why the use of a 3km study area is appropriate. In the absence of agreement with relevant consultation bodies, or robust justification to support the final study area, the Inspectorate considers that there is potential for the Proposed Development to lead to significant effects on the setting of designated heritage assets beyond 3km and are not in a position to agree to scope this matter out. The ES should provide an assessment of the potential setting impacts to designated heritage assets located beyond 3km or provide

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			information demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of LSE.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.5.5	Paragraph 11.5.7	Archaeological surveys	The Applicant should ensure that the information used to inform the assessment is robust and allows for suitable identification of below ground assets likely to be impacted by the Proposed Development. The Applicant should make effort to agree the need for intrusive investigations (paragraph 11.5.7 of the Scoping Report indicates that trial trenching/ evaluation and excavation may be carried out) with relevant consultation bodies. Intrusive investigations should be completed prior to submission of the DCO application and reported in the ES, unless otherwise agreed with the relevant consultation bodies.
3.5.6	Table 11.7	Decommissioning effects	The Scoping Report states that the setting of designated heritage assets may be changed during the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development. However, a description of potential effects during decommissioning is not set out in the Scoping Report. The Applicant should ensure that the ES provides an explanation of how decommissioning would impact the setting of designated heritage sites where significant effects are likely to occur. A description of any relevant restoration measures should also be provided in the ES.
3.5.7	N/A	Indirect effects	The ES should identify and assess any potential indirect effects on the historic environment, for example, changes in drainage patterns or compression of the ground from infrastructure which could affect below ground heritage assets or lead to subsidence of above ground buildings and monuments.

3.6 Noise and Vibration

(Scoping Report Section 12)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.6.1	Paragraphs 12.5.14 and 12.5.16	Vibration from construction traffic	The Inspectorate notes that vibration from the construction phase is scoped into the ES. However, vibration from construction traffic has been scoped out. Paragraph 12.5.14 of the Scoping Report states that "*vibration from HGV movements even when very close to properties does not tend to produce any measurable vibration unless the road condition is very poor, and the intensity of movement is significant*." The condition of the road has not been assessed, nor has the anticipated number and type of construction vehicles been provided within this chapter to justify why vibration from construction traffic should be scoped out. The ES should provide evidence to confirm that ground-borne vibration generated from HGV movements (including along access routes) during construction and decommissioning would not result in significant effects on sensitive receptors or include an assessment of the LSE, unless otherwise agreed with relevant consultation bodies.
3.6.2	Paragraph 12.5.24	Vibration from operational plant	The Scoping Report states that the type of equipment present during the operational phase is of a type that does not generate a perceptible level of vibration. On this basis, the Inspectorate is in agreement that an assessment of operational vibration can be scoped out of further assessment.
3.6.3	Paragraph 12.5.28 and Table 12.3	Noise and vibration effects – decommissioning	The Applicant proposes to scope out an assessment of decommissioning phase effects as these are likely to be similar or less significant than effects during construction. Limited information is provided regarding the activities proposed for the decommissioning phase. As noted in ID 3.6.1 above, indicative traffic numbers are not

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			provided for either the construction or decommissioning phases in relation to noise and vibration, and so there is little evidence to support the claim that the decommissioning phase impacts would be less significant than during construction. In the absence of information such as evidence demonstrating that decommissioning activities would not result in noise and vibration effects greater than construction or clear agreement with relevant statutory bodies, the Inspectorate is not in a position to agree to scope these matters from the assessment. Accordingly, the ES should include an assessment of these matters or provide information demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of LSE.
3.6.4	Paragraph 12.2.1 and Figures 12-1 and 12-2	Grid connection assessment	The Scoping Report does not identify any NSRs within the grid connection route or state that any baseline monitoring would be undertaken within this area. In the absence of information such as a justification as to why LSE would not arise or clear agreement with relevant statutory bodies, the Inspectorate is not in a position to agree to scope this matter out from further assessment. Accordingly, the ES should include an assessment of this matter or provide information demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of LSE.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.6.5	Paragraph 12.2.1 and Figures 12-1 and 12-2	Study area	The ES should include a plan based on Figure 12-2 showing the 500m buffer from the noise sources, along with noise contours to confirm how the noise sensitive receptors (NSR) have been determined. A figure should also be provided showing the final study area; the

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			Applicant is advised to seek to agree the study area with the relevant Environmental Health Officers.
3.6.6	Paragraph 12.4.2	Baseline noise monitoring	The Scoping Report states that noise data was collected in July and October 2022 and August 2023. The ES should provide confirmation of the dates and whether these dates fell within school holidays. If these dates are within school holidays, then justification is required to confirm why these dates represent a suitable baseline. Further consideration to include another comparative survey data not within school holidays may be required to provide a robust dataset.
3.6.7	Table 12.3	Scope summary	Within Section 12.5 of the Scoping Report, vibration is specifically mentioned as being scoped in or out at various stages, however the summary of the scope for the noise and vibration assessment in Table 12.3 does not include reference to vibration. The scope of the ES should be consistent and clear.
3.6.8	Figure 12-2	Noise monitoring locations	The Inspectorate notes that not all of the identified NSRs are subject to noise monitoring in a nearby location. The Applicant should ensure that the noise monitoring provides sufficient coverage across the entire study area to ensure a robust baseline has been assessed. Efforts should be made to agree the noise monitoring locations with the Local Planning Authorities.
3.6.9	List above paragraph 12.4.1	Standards and guidance	The criteria for assessing the significance of noise and vibration effects should be clearly set out in the ES with reference to established guidance. Consistency with the Noise Policy Statement for England, the Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) and Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) should be defined for all of the construction, operational and decommissioning noise matters assessed.

3.7 Socio-economics, Land Use and Tourism

(Scoping Report Section 13)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed aspects/ matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.7.1	Paragraphs 13.6.1 to 13.6.5	Socio-economics, land use and tourism	The Applicant proposes to scope out an assessment of socio-economics, land use and tourism from the ES on the basis that the most notable effects would be temporary and only occur during the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. The Inspectorate considers that whilst the construction and decommissioning phases may be relatively short, the potential for significant effects remains and the impacts should be appropriately assessed in the ES. The Scoping Report provides limited information to justify scoping out an entire assessment of socio-economic, land use and tourism effects, particularly with regards to construction and decommissioning. The Inspectorate cannot agree to scope out an assessment of socio-economics, land use and tourism at this stage. The ES should provide an assessment of this aspect, with the matters to be scoped into the assessment as discussed below.
3.7.2	Table 13.1	Employment and Gross Value Added (GVA)	The Applicant proposes to scope out these matters on the basis that permanent employment and GVA benefits arising at each phase of the Proposed Development are likely to be limited. Paragraph 13.5.4 of the Scoping Report notes that an estimated 200-300 workers may be required to relocate during the construction phase. However, a full estimate of the number of temporary workers required during the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development is not provided. The Inspectorate is not content to scope out these matters and advises that the number and types of jobs created should be

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed aspects/ matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			estimated in the ES and considered in the context of the available workforce in the area during each phase of the Proposed Development. The ES should also provide an estimate of the duration of temporary employment during the construction and decommissioning phases.
3.7.3	Paragraph 13.5.4 and Table 13.1	Effects on local services	The Scoping Report states that an estimated 200-300 workers may be required to relocate during the construction phase, however, the Applicant considers that the temporary increase in demand on health and other services during construction of the Proposed Development would only result in a marginal effect on local services and proposes to scope this matter out of further assessment. The Inspectorate considers that the ES should define a worst-case scenario of construction worker numbers and assess impacts on the availability of local accommodation and services during the construction and decommissioning phases.
3.7.4	Table 13.1	Volume and value of visitor economy – construction and decommissioning	The Applicant proposes to scope out this matter on the basis that the local area is not a well-established tourism destination and potential effects during construction and decommissioning would be mitigated through a CEMP. However, the Scoping Report states that there is a range of visitor accommodation in the area. Whilst the Inspectorate notes the geographical location and separation of the Proposed Development from the nearest settlements, tourism is not restricted to these settlements and limited justification is provided to explain how mitigation measures might be implemented to limit impacts to the visitor economy. In the absence of information detailing the measures proposed to mitigate effects during construction and decommissioning, the Inspectorate considers that the ES should include an assessment of visitor economy effects

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed aspects/ matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			during the construction phase and identify any likely impacts during the decommissioning phase.
3.7.5	Table 13.1	Volume and value of visitor economy - operation	The Inspectorate considers that due to the limited number of workers estimated to be at the site at any one time during operation of the Proposed Development, significant effects are not likely to occur and agrees that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment.
3.7.6	Table 13.1	Fiscal impacts	The Scoping Report states that fiscal impacts from the Proposed Development would be minor, however no figures for potential fiscal benefits have been provided. Without additional information it is not possible to assess the significance of potential effects and the Inspectorate cannot agree to scope this matter out at this stage. The ES should include an assessment of fiscal impacts during operation of the Proposed Development or provide information to demonstrate the absence of LSE.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.7.7	Paragraph 13.4.4	Data sources	The data sources included should state the age of the data, so it is clear whether the most up to date information is used, and if not, then the ES should provide justification to explain why the information included in the assessment represents the most robust baseline.

3.8 Traffic and Transport

(Scoping Report Section 14)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.8.1	Paragraph 14.2.5	Traffic impacts on the A1	Paragraph 14.2.5 of the Scoping Report states that the traffic impacts on the A1 have not been considered as part of the assessment on the basis that the trip generation from the site to this route will be low. No evidence has been provided to confirm how trafficked the A1 is in this location. Moreover, additional information is required regarding which phase this is relevant to, as there could be significant effects in the construction and decommissioning phases. The Inspectorate considers that this matter should be subject to further assessment in the ES, or supporting evidence should be provided demonstrating the absence of LSE and agreement with the relevant consultation bodies.
3.8.2	Paragraphs 14.5.9 to 14.5.11	Transport effects - operation	The Applicant proposes to scope out transport effects during the operational phase on the basis that anticipated traffic would be minimal. The traffic levels expected to be generated are based on the assumption that 10 to 16 permanent staff would be on-site at any one time using four-wheel drive vehicles or vans. HGV access to the site is described as being rare and associated with the repair and replacement of on-site infrastructure. The Inspectorate has considered the characteristics of the operational phase of the Proposed Development and based on the low levels of anticipated traffic generation is content that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment. The ES description of the operational phase of the Proposed Development should clearly set out the operational vehicle types and numbers to justify this position.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.8.3	Paragraphs 14.5.12 to 14.5.14	Transport effects - decommissioning	The Applicant proposes to scope out a standalone assessment for the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development. Decommissioning is anticipated to be similar in duration and nature to the construction phase and impacts are expected to be similar to the construction phase. The Scoping Report states that the vehicle movements required during decommissioning are not known at this stage and that a DEMP will be prepared in due course. The Inspectorate is content that a standalone assessment for the decommissioning phase is not required at this stage provided that an oDEMP is submitted with the application.
3.8.4	Table 14.7	Hazardous loads	The Scoping Report states that there are no nearby road features which suggest that the transfer of materials poses a risk beyond what would be expected on the general highway network. The Inspectorate has considered the characteristics of the Proposed Development and considers that this matter may be scoped out of further assessment, however the ES should explain the measures employed to ensure safe vehicular transport of components, such as panels and batteries, to and from the site.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.8.5	Paragraph 14.3.7	Guidance	The Scoping Report states that the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) Guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement (1993) has been used to determine the scope of the assessment. This guidance has now been superseded by the Environmental Assessment of Traffic and

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			Movement guidance from IEMA, which was published in July 2023 and should be referred to in the ES.
3.8.6	Paragraph 14.4.16	PRoW surveys	A PRoW Management Plan is proposed to be submitted with the DCO as there are numerous PRoWs in proximity to the site. The PRoW Management Plan should be informed by surveys of the PRoWs affected to ensure that the baseline usage of the PRoWs has been accounted for. A figure of the PRoW locations should also be provided, and the ES should assess impacts to PRoW receptors where significant effects are likely to occur.
3.8.7	Paragraph 14.6.9	Magnitude of impact	The Scoping Report states that an increase of fewer than 30 trips regardless of proportional increase is a negligible impact. This is stated to be derived from professional judgement and experience. Any use of professional judgement to assess effects should be fully justified within the ES.
3.8.8	Paragraph 14.6.18	Transport Assessment (TA)	The TA is described in the Scoping Report as including "*estimated trip generation including a description of the methodology used to describe forecast development trips*". The Applicant should state and explain which modelling software they will be using such as the newly updated Department for Transport (DfT) TEMPRO model, and how the inputted traffic movements have been predicted. The relationship between the TA outcomes and the ES should also be made clear, with a suggestion to agree parameters with the Local Highway Authority.

3.9 Climate Change

(Scoping Report Section 15)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.9.1	Paragraphs 15.5.2 and 15.7.2	Climate change effects - construction and decommissioning	The Inspectorate agrees that changes in precipitation, frequency and magnitude of wind and storms, summer temperatures and changes in cloud cover as a result of climate change are unlikely to give rise to significant effects on the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. Therefore, the Inspectorate is content to scope these matters out of further assessment. However, the ES should explain how the Proposed Development has been designed to be resilient to such effects.
3.9.2	Paragraphs 15.5.3 and 15.5.5	Changes in water availability	The Scoping Report identifies the potential for changes in water availability to alter soil acidity, which can increase the deterioration of building materials. Given that paragraph 15.5.5 states that materials used will be chosen to be appropriate for existing ground conditions and would be able to withstand changes in soil acidity as a result of changes in water availability, the Inspectorate is content to scope this matter out. The ES should explain how the use such materials would be secured in the application.
3.9.3	Paragraph 15.5.3 and Table 15.4	Sea level rise	The Applicant explains that the Proposed Development is not located in an area that is susceptible to sea level rise. The Inspectorate agrees that significant effects are not likely to occur and an assessment of sea level rise in the climate change chapter can be scoped out of further assessment.
3.9.4	Paragraph 15.5.4 and Table 15.4	Changes to snow and ice	The Inspectorate agrees to scope this matter out on the basis that UKCP18 predictions anticipate less snow and ice than the current

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			baseline and that the risk from snow and ice is not anticipated to increase with climate change.
3.9.5	Table 15.4	Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions of the following: • construction and operation: ○ emissions from on-site decommissioning activities; and ○ transportation and disposal of waste materials. • operation and decommissioning: ○ raw material extraction, manufacturing of products and transportation of raw materials to the place of manufacturing; ○ transportation of product to the Proposed Development; ○ emissions from on-site construction activities; and	The ES should provide an assessment of GHG emissions for the whole lifetime of the Proposed Development. This includes consideration of GHG emissions from the listed activities during construction, operation and decommissioning. Therefore, these matters should be assessed for the lifetime of the Proposed Development and the Inspectorate does not agree to scope these matters out of further assessment.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
		○ transportation of construction materials (where not included in the product-stage embodied GHG emissions). • construction and decommissioning: ○ energy generated.	
3.9.6	Table 15.4	GHG emissions related to the leakage of GHGs - construction and decommissioning	Notwithstanding the advice set out in ID 3.9.5 above, that the ES should include an assessment of GHG emissions for the whole lifetime of the Proposed Development, the Inspectorate agrees to scope this matter out of further assessment on the basis that impacts would be limited to the operational phase only, for which an operational phase assessment has been proposed.
3.9.7	Table 15.4	Travel of construction workers	The Applicant proposes to scope this matter out on the basis that emissions from the travel of construction workers are expected to be negligible in context of the other sources of emissions during construction and the overall GHG emissions savings associated with the Proposed Development. In the absence of further detail, the Inspectorate cannot agree to scope this matter out at this time. The ES should provide an assessment of the GHG emissions associated with the travel of construction workers or provide evidence to demonstrate the absence of LSE including agreement with relevant consultation bodies.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.9.8	Table 15.4	Energy consumption, material and waste generation from ongoing site maintenance	The Scoping Report states that operational emissions related to maintenance are expected to be negligible in context to the overall GHG emissions and proposes to scope this matter out. As advised above, the ES should provide an assessment of GHG emissions for the entire lifetime of the Proposed Development, including as a result of energy consumption, material and waste generation from ongoing site maintenance. Therefore, the Inspectorate cannot agree to scope out this matter from further assessment.
3.9.9	Table 15.4	Travel for workers	The Applicant proposes to scope this matter out on the basis that emissions from the travel of workers are expected to be negligible in context of the other sources of emissions and the overall GHG emission savings associated with the Proposed Development. In the absence of further detail, the Inspectorate cannot agree to scope this matter out at this time. The ES should provide an assessment of the GHG emissions associated with the travel of workers or provide evidence to demonstrate the absence of LSE including agreement with relevant consultation bodies.
3.9.10	Table 15.4	Loss of peat	The Applicant explains that peat is not present at the site. The Inspectorate agrees that on this basis significant effects are not likely to occur and an assessment of the loss of peat in the climate change chapter can be scoped out of further assessment. However, should peat be discovered on-site, the ES should provide an assessment of the potential effects on GHG emissions from the loss of peat during construction of the Proposed Development.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.9.11	Table 15.4	Energy consumption from the provision of clean water and treatment of wastewater	The Applicant proposes to scope this matter out on the basis that energy consumption from the provision of clean water and treatment of wastewater is expected to be negligible in context to the overall GHG emission savings. In the absence of further detail, the Inspectorate cannot agree to scope this matter out at this time. The ES should provide an assessment of potential GHG emissions associated with energy consumption from the provision of clean water and treatment of wastewater related to the Proposed Development or provide evidence to demonstrate the absence of LSE.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.9.12	N/A	Cumulative effects	The ES should consider how other developments cumulatively may affect the vulnerability of the Proposed Development to climate change eg any changes in flood flows, and cumulative GHG emissions/ savings. The Applicant should seek to agree the approach to the climate change cumulative effects assessment with relevant consultation bodies.

3.10 Air Quality

(Scoping Report Section 16)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.10.1	Paragraphs 16.5.8 and 16.5.9	Non-road mobile machinery (NRMM) and plant exhaust emissions	The Inspectorate does not agree that emissions from NRMM can be scoped out as no information has been provided on the type, number and location of such machinery within the Proposed Development site. In the absence of information such as evidence demonstrating clear agreement with relevant statutory bodies, the Inspectorate is not in a position to agree to scope this matter from the assessment. Accordingly, the ES should include an assessment of this matter, or the information referred to demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of LSE.
3.10.2	Paragraphs 16.5.10 and 16.5.11	On-road vehicle exhaust emissions – operation	The Inspectorate agrees that operational vehicle emissions may be scoped out from further assessment, subject to the description of development demonstrating that vehicle numbers are sufficiently low as to not trigger the thresholds for an air quality assessment.
3.10.3	Paragraph 16.5.12 and Table 16.4	Dust emissions – operation	The Inspectorate agrees that once operational, the Proposed Development is unlikely to result in significant air quality effects as the components of the Proposed Development do not generate dust emissions. The Inspectorate is content to scope this matter out of further assessment on this basis.
3.10.4	Paragraph 16.5.13 and 16.5.14	Dust and on-road vehicle exhaust emissions – decommissioning	The Scoping Report states that potential air quality effects during decommissioning are anticipated to be of lesser magnitude than the construction phase and proposes to scope this matter out. However, limited details regarding the potential decommissioning activities have been provided in the Scoping Report.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			In the absence of information such as evidence demonstrating that decommissioning activities would not result in dust and on-road exhaust emission effects greater than construction or clear agreement with relevant statutory bodies, the Inspectorate is not in a position to agree to scope these matters from the assessment. Accordingly, the ES should include an assessment of these matters or provide information demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of LSE.
3.10.5	Paragraph 16.5.18 and 16.5.19	Cumulative effects – operation and decommissioning	As stated in ID 3.10.2 to 3.10.4 above, additional information is required from the Applicant to confirm that there will not be significant effects in the operational and decommissioning phases. The ES should provide information on the cumulative nature of traffic movements with other developments during the operational and decommissioning phases and confirm these projections fall below the relevant thresholds set out in guidance. In the absence of this information, the Inspectorate is not a position to scope these matters out at this stage. Accordingly, the ES should include an assessment of these matters or provide information demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of LSE.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.10.6	Paragraph 16.2.5 and 16.2.6	Vehicle exhaust emissions study area	The Inspectorate notes that it is intended for the study area relating to vehicle exhaust emissions to account for receptors within 200m of the access/ egress points off the public highway. However, the Inspectorate notes that it is intended for the Proposed Development to utilise a temporary haul road through the site. The Inspectorate is of the view that this haul road should also be considered with regards

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			to construction vehicle emissions, and any potential receptors located within 200m of the haul road should be included in the assessment.
3.10.7	Paragraph 16.6.1	Baseline data	The Scoping Report states that ambient air quality monitoring is not considered necessary to inform the air quality assessment in the ES but is subject to review and confirmation. Efforts should be made to reach agreement regarding the requirement and extent of air quality monitoring with the relevant Local Planning Authorities.
3.10.8	Paragraph 16.6.4	Plan	The ES should be accompanied by an appropriate plan illustrating the location of sensitive air quality receptors within the vicinity of the Proposed Development to aid understanding of the extent of effects.
3.10.9	Paragraph 16.6.12	Defining significance	Paragraph 16.6.2 of the Scoping Report sets out the factors that will be considered in order to determine whether a predicted effect is significant. However, the Scoping Report does not refer to any guidance regarding assessing significance of air quality effects. The ES should explain how air quality impacts have been identified and the methodology that will be used to determine the significance of effects, including reference to any relevant guidance. Any use of professional judgement to assess significance should be fully justified within the ES.

3.11 Land and Soils

(Scoping Report Section 17)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.11.1	Paragraphs 17.5.6 and 17.5.7 and Table 17.3	Impacts on agricultural land – construction and decommissioning	The Applicant proposes to scope out effects on agricultural land during construction and decommissioning on the basis that any effects would be short-term and would relate to potential impacts on soil rather than agricultural productivity. These phases are anticipated to last up to 24 months each. Considering the relatively short-term nature of the construction and decommissioning phases, the Inspectorate is content that an individual assessment of agricultural land loss for the construction and decommissioning phases it not required. However, the ES should ensure that effects of agricultural land loss are assessed over the entire lifetime of the Proposed Development including the construction, operational, and decommissioning phases.
3.11.2	Paragraphs 17.5.9 and 17.5.11 and Table 17.3	Impacts on soils – operation	The Applicant proposes to scope out effects during the operational phase on the basis that the temporary removal of parts of the site from arable cultivation would have beneficial effects on soils by allowing soil to "*rest*" and promote carbon sequestration. Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations state that both positive and negative effects should be reported. As such, the Inspectorate does not agree to scope this matter out of further assessment. The ES should provide an assessment of any beneficial and adverse effects of the Proposed Development on soil resources during operation.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.11.3	Paragraph 17.4.10 and Appendix 17-1	Agricultural land classification (ALC) surveys	Paragraph 17.4.10 states that "*the Applicant has undertaken a detailed Agricultural Land Classification survey for the site…in accordance with Natural England guidance*", however it is stated in paragraph 1.7 of the ALC Report (Scoping Report, Appendix 17-1) that surveys were undertaken at one auger per four hectares. It is noted (in paragraph 1.7 of Appendix 17-1) that this is due to the "*large area of agricultural land*". Natural England (NE) guidance (namely Technical Information Note TIN049) states that a detailed ALC survey requires a frequency of one boring per hectare. The ES should justify the extent of survey efforts and ensure that the text is consistent between the ES and any associated appendices.
3.11.4	Paragraph 17.4.11	ALC surveys for the grid corridor	The Scoping Report states that a detailed ALC survey was conducted for East Park Sites A to D (included as Appendix 17-1 of the Scoping Report). It is stated that a survey of the grid corridor route was not conducted on the basis that impacts would be temporary and for a short duration, with soils being reinstated in line with guidance. Effects and surveys should be considered for the grid connection corridor as well as the solar PV sites where there is potential for significant effects to occur.
3.11.5	Paragraphs 17.5.2 and 17.7.1	Sheep grazing	The Scoping Report states that sheep grazing is assumed under the PV panels however it is noted (in paragraph 17.7.1) that it is not currently confirmed how the land will be managed. Where the ES relies upon grazing as mitigation, it should be demonstrated that the land is not subject to restrictive covenants that would prevent such use and that such mitigation is secured in respect of the operation of the Proposed Development.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.11.6	N/A	Effects on farm businesses	The ES should identify the agricultural land uses that will be displaced by the Proposed Development. Potential effects on farm businesses, loss of agricultural production and implications for food security from both the PV solar site and grid connection should be considered where there is potential for significant effects to occur. This should consider both effects alone and cumulatively with other projects. Effects such as severance to farm access or changes to the scale and long-term viability of farm holdings affected by the Proposed Development should also be considered.

3.12 Other Environmental Topics

(Scoping Report Section 18)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed aspects to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.12.1	Section 18.2	Human health	The Scoping Report states that effects of the Proposed Development which have the potential to affect human health would be adequately covered within the proposed scope of the ES and a standalone human health assessment is not required. The Inspectorate agrees that a standalone chapter can be scoped out of further assessment provided that effects on human health, including impacts on mental health and wellbeing, are considered within other aspect chapters where relevant. The EIA Methodology chapter should provide clear cross-referencing to where the relevant direct and indirect impacts on human health receptors are considered in the ES. Where human health impacts have been assessed in the ES, consideration should be given to relevant guidance such as the IEMA 2022 guidance 'Determining Significance For Human Health In Environmental Impact Assessment'.
3.12.2	Section 18.3	Major accidents and disasters	An assessment of major accidents and disasters is proposed to be scoped out of the ES. The Inspectorate considers that a standalone chapter can be scoped out of further assessment, but the potential risks should be considered in other ES Chapters where relevant. For the avoidance of doubt, the risk of fire associated with battery storage facilities should be assessed in the ES and relevant mitigation, such as fire-fighting and containment measures, should be set out and secured in the DCO, with reference to the proposed Outline Battery Safety Management Plan.
3.12.3	Section 18.4	Waste	The Applicant proposes to scope out an assessment of waste. The Scoping Report concludes that significant effects as a result of waste

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed aspects to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			are unlikely due to the recycling value of most the solar panel's component parts. The Inspectorate notes the commitment to describe the approach to waste management in the ES and to provide a Construction Site Waste Management Plan (CSWMP) and Decommissioning Resource Management Plan (DRMP). Having noted this, the Inspectorate considers that the ES should provide an assessment of the likely significant effects from waste at decommissioning to the extent that it is possible at this time. The ES should also include estimates, by type and quantity, of expected residues, and emissions, and quantities, and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases in line with Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations. As such, the Inspectorate is not content to scope this aspect out.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.12.4	Paragraphs 3.3.4 and 3.3.16 to 3.3.18	Electromagnetic Fields (EMF)	The Inspectorate draws the Applicant's attention to the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) consultation response (see Appendix 2 of this Opinion). The Scoping Report states that the voltage of the grid connection cables between the onsite East Park substation and the existing National Grid Eaton Socon substation are likely to be 400kV. In line with relevant guidance (DECC Power Lines: Demonstrating compliance with EMF public exposure guidelines, A Voluntary Code of Practice 2012), cables above 132kV have potential to cause EMF effects. The Inspectorate considers that the ES should demonstrate the design measures taken to avoid the potential for EMF effects on receptors.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.12.5	Paragraph 18.4.5	Waste generated	The Scoping Report does not identify panel or battery degradation leading to replacement, as a type of waste that may be produced during the life of the Proposed Development. This would entail larger amounts of waste than described in the Scoping Report. This potential waste and how this will be managed, as well as any arising significant effects, should be addressed in the ES.

APPENDIX 1: CONSULTATION BODIES FORMALLY CONSULTED

TABLE A1: PRESCRIBED CONSULTATION BODIES[1]

SCHEDULE 1 DESCRIPTION	ORGANISATION
The Health and Safety Executive	Health and Safety Executive
The National Health Service Commissioning Board	NHS England
The relevant Integrated Care Board(s)	NHS Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board
	NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board
Natural England	Natural England
The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England	Historic England
The relevant fire and rescue authority(s)	Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
	Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service
The relevant police and crime commissioner(s)	Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner
	Police and Crime Commissioner Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
The relevant parish council(s)	Bolnhurst and Keysoe Parish Council
	Great Staughton Parish Council
	Hail Weston Parish Council
	Little Staughton Parish Council
	Pertenhall and Swineshead Parish Council
	Staploe Parish Council

[1] Schedule 1 of The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (the 'APFP Regulations')

SCHEDULE 1 DESCRIPTION	ORGANISATION
	St. Neots Town Council
The Environment Agency	Environment Agency
The Civil Aviation Authority	Civil Aviation Authority
The relevant highways authority(s)	Bedford Borough Council
	Cambridgeshire County Council
The relevant strategic highways company	National Highways
The relevant internal drainage board(s)	Alconbury and Ellington Internal Drainage Board
	Bedfordshire and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board
The Canal and River Trust	The Canal and River Trust
United Kingdom Health Security Agency	United Kingdom Health Security Agency
The Forestry Commission	The Forestry Commission
The Secretary of State for Defence	Ministry of Defence

TABLE A2: RELEVANT STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS[2]

STATUTORY UNDERTAKER	ORGANISATION
The relevant Integrated Care Board(s)	NHS Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board
	NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board
The National Health Service Commissioning Board	NHS England
The relevant NHS Trust	East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust

[2] 'Statutory Undertaker' is defined in the APFP Regulations as having the same meaning as in Section 127 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008)

STATUTORY UNDERTAKER	ORGANISATION
Railways	Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd
	National Highways Historical Railways Estate
Canal Or Inland Navigation Authorities	The Canal and River Trust
	Environment Agency
Civil Aviation Authority	Civil Aviation Authority
Licence Holder (Chapter 1 Of Part 1 Of Transport Act 2000)	NATS En-Route Safeguarding
Universal Service Provider	Royal Mail Group
Homes and Communities Agency	Homes England
The relevant Environment Agency	Environment Agency
The relevant water and sewage undertaker	Anglian Water
The relevant public gas transporter	Cadent Gas Limited
	Northern Gas Networks Limited
	Scotland Gas Networks Plc
	Southern Gas Networks Plc
	Wales and West Utilities Ltd
	Energy Assets Pipelines Limited
	ES Pipelines Ltd
	ESP Connections Ltd
	ESP Networks Ltd
	ESP Pipelines Ltd
	Fulcrum Pipelines Limited
	GTC Pipelines Limited
	Harlaxton Gas Networks Limited

STATUTORY UNDERTAKER	ORGANISATION
	Independent Pipelines Limited
	Indigo Pipelines Limited
	Last Mile Gas Ltd
	Leep Gas Networks Limited
	Quadrant Pipelines Limited
	Squire Energy Limited
	National Gas
The relevant electricity distributor with CPO Powers	Eclipse Power Network Limited
	Energy Assets Networks Limited
	ESP Electricity Limited
	Fulcrum Electricity Assets Limited
	Harlaxton Energy Networks Limited
	Independent Power Networks Limited
	Indigo Power Limited
	Last Mile Electricity Ltd
	Leep Electricity Networks Limited
	Mua Electricity Limited
	Optimal Power Networks Limited
	The Electricity Network Company Limited
	UK Power Distribution Limited
	Utility Assets Limited
	Vattenfall Networks Limited
	UK Power Networks Limited
The relevant electricity transmitter with CPO Powers	National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc

STATUTORY UNDERTAKER	ORGANISATION
	National Grid Electricity System Operation Limited

TABLE A3: SECTION 43 LOCAL AUTHORITIES (FOR THE PURPOSES OF SECTION 42(1)(B))[3]

LOCAL AUTHORITY[4]
Bedford Borough Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Central Bedfordshire Council
East Cambridgeshire District Council
Essex County Council
Fenland District Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
Lincolnshire County Council
Milton Keynes Council
Norfolk County Council
North Northamptonshire Council
Peterborough City Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Suffolk County Council

[3] Sections 43 and 42(B) of the PA2008

[4] As defined in Section 43(3) of the PA2008

TABLE A4: NON-PRESCRIBED CONSULTATION BODIES

ORGANISATION
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

APPENDIX 2: RESPONDENTS TO CONSULTATION AND COPIES OF REPLIES

CONSULTATION BODIES WHO REPLIED BY THE STATUTORY DEADLINE:
Anglian Water
Bedford Borough Council
Bedfordshire and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board
Bolnhurst and Keysoe Parish Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Canal and River Trust
East Cambridgeshire District Council
East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Environment Agency
Forestry Commission
Great Staughton Parish Council
Hail Weston Parish Council
Historic England
Huntingdonshire District Council
Little Staughton Parish Council
National Gas
National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc
National Highways
NATS En-Route Safeguarding
North Northamptonshire Council
Northern Gas
Pertenhall and Swineshead Parish Council

Staploe Parish Council
United Kingdom Health Security Agency

Anglian Water Services
Lancaster House, Lancaster Way,
Ermine Business Park, Huntingdon,
Cambridgeshire. PE29 6XU

www.anglianwater.co.uk

Our ref: EPE/ScopingResponse

Environmental Services Operations Group 3
Planning Inspectorate
Via email (eastparkenergyproject@planning inspectorate.gov.uk)

28th November 2023

Dear Jack,

Application by RNA Energy Ltd (the Applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for East Park Energy (the Proposed Development)
Anglian Water scoping consultation response

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the scoping report for the above project which is within Huntingdonshire District Council and Bedford Borough Council areas. Anglian Water is the appointed water and sewerage undertaker for main site and the cable route/grid connection shown on Figure 1-2 Site References.

The following response is submitted on behalf of Anglian Water in its statutory capacity and relates to potable water and water assets along with wastewater and water recycling assets.

The Scheme – Anglian Water existing infrastructure
There are existing Anglian Water assets including water mains within the identified site area and in roads and areas serving communities within the cable route. Supply pipes also cross the cable route, including critical mains water transfer pipelines in Area D from Grafham Reservoir to the north that will require specific protection measures. Water recycling assets including a foul sewer also runs through Area B. It is noted that reference is made to the fact that the site is crossed by a number of utilities and that easements, separation distances and safe working practices will need to be agreed with the utility operators (para. 18.3.7). We agree that buffers will be required and will inform the construction and operation of the proposed scheme, and its layout and design, following necessary ground investigations.

Anglian Water would want to ensure the location and nature of our assets serving local communities and strategic water supply infrastructure, are identified and protected. To reduce the need for diversions and the associated carbon impacts of those works, ground investigations would enable the promoter to design out these potential impacts and so also reduce the potential impact on services if construction works cause a pipe burst or damage to supporting infrastructure. The Construction Environment Management Plan (3.4.9-3.4.11) and Construction Traffic Management Plan should

include steps to remove the risk of damage to Anglian Water assets from plant and machinery (compaction and vibration during the construction phase) including haul and access roads. We agree that vibration from construction traffic should be scoped in, to take account of potential effects on our assets within the site (para. 12.5.8). Further advice on minimising and then relocating (where feasible) Anglian Water existing assets can be obtained from: connections@anglianwater.co.uk

Maps of Anglian Water's assets are available to view at the following address: https://utilities.digdat.co.uk/

Flood Risk, Drainage and Surface Water

Anglian Water notes the absence of any reference to Anglian Water in the Scoping Report in terms of:

- Whether the management of surface water will require a public sewer connection
- If water recycling/sewerage services are required for the construction or operation of the scheme
- If a water supply is required for the construction and operation of the scheme

On the question of Flood Risk Assessment and surface water drainage strategy (paras. 9.5.10, 9.5.15 and 9.5.22) we would welcome engagement on Anglian Water's existing drainage apparatus. However, we would advise that in accordance with the drainage hierarchy, surface water should first look to be managed by Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and note that SuDS are mentioned in reference to control rates of overland flow in combination with permeable access tracks and vegetation.

It is also noted that run-off from proposed building infrastructure and hardstanding areas associated with the BESS and East Park Substation, more formal drainage features would be provided (para. 9.5.22), whilst it is stated that a formal drainage outfall is unlikely to be necessary, we would seek the surface water drainage strategy to follow the drainage hierarchy for impermeable areas of the scheme. Only if the promoter could demonstrably prove that infiltration rates for example precluded SuDS in a specific location would Anglian Water consider surface water connections to the public sewer. We consider that SuDS and the potential for rainwater harvesting to serve any non-potable water requirements, should be used at the BESS and East Park Substation compound. Anglian Water would currently resist a provision providing for a surface water connection to the public sewer in the draft DCO Order.

In view of the guidance in the National Policy Statements we would have anticipated that the scoping would have included and then considered the approach to water supply and water resources. Anglian Water requests that these points are assessed early in the EIA to set out how the project will be supplied with water, its wastewater managed, how water assets serving residents and business will be protected and how design has been altered to reduce the need for new water infrastructure or the diversion of existing assets.

Water Resources

The site within the Ruthamford South Water Resource Zone (WRZ) and Ruthamford North WRZ. We note that whilst the scoping considers water environment impacts it does not look at impacts on water resources. As the site is within an area designated by the Environment Agency as 'seriously water stressed' and water may be used in the project construction and operation, this indicates that water resources should be assessed in the EIA. There is no reference to assessment of the carbon costs of relocating water infrastructure if assets are impacted during construction or operation. Anglian Water notes that the applicant has not sought to scope these matters out by providing sufficient information to reach a conclusion that the projects impact regarding water supply as well as water recycling and water quality, are not significant. It is noted that under Climate Change Resilience, changes in water availability have been scoped out in terms of construction, operation and decommissioning. Whilst it is stated that operationally the scheme does not have a significant water demand with water usage being purely for cleaning purposes (pg. 263 and 327) there is no reference to water demands through construction, or if connections to our network are required.

Anglian Water now advise that new non household water supply requests (construction and operational phases) may be declined as these could compromise our regulatory priority of supplying existing and planned domestic growth. The flows needed to fill water storage tanks for example (in the event that the promoter decides not to use rainwater harvesting on site to meet this non potable demand) will need to be assessed by Anglian Water to advise whether a supply is feasible when assessed in terms of the potential to jeopardise domestic supply or at a significant financial or environmental cost. Our new position on non- household supply is due to our joint aim with the Environment Agency of reducing abstraction to protect sensitive environments. The promoter will need to submit a water resources assessment setting out a daily demand for each stage of the project and whether this is for domestic or non-domestic uses. Water use during construction means that the promoter will need to establish whether concrete production, for example, would be offsite or would need an on-site supply in order to assess the water supply options with Anglian Water. Further advice on water and wastewater capacity and options can be obtained by contacting Anglian Water's Pre-Development Team at: planningliasion@anglianwater.co.uk

Engagement

Anglian Water would welcome the instigation of discussions with RNA Energy (East Park Energy) as the prospective applicant, in line with the requirements of the 2008 Planning Act and guidance. Experience has shown that early engagement and agreement is required between NSIP applicants and statutory undertakers during design and assessment and well before submission of the draft DCO for examination. Consultation at the statutory PEIR stage would in our view be too late to inform design and may result in delays to the project. On the basis that fuller consideration of water supply and water recycling matters does identify resources, assets and services may be impacted by the project we would recommend discussion on the following issues:

1. Impact of development on Anglian Water's assets and the need for mitigation

2. The design of the project to minimise interaction with Anglian Water assets/critical infrastructure and specifically to avoid the need for diversions which have associated carbon costs
3. Requirement for potable and raw water supplies
4. Requirement for water recycling (surface water/foul drainage) connections
5. Confirmation of the project's cumulative impacts (if any) with Anglian Water projects
6. Draft Protective Provisions

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require clarification on the above response or during the pre- application to decision stages of the project.

Yours sincerely,

Phil Jones
Growth & Strategy Manager – Sustainable Growth

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Borough Charter granted in 1166

disability confident EMPLOYER

Chief Executive: Laura Church

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE ORDER

BBC APPLICATION NO: 23/02405/LPA

To: The Planning Inspectorate

Bedford Borough Council has the following COMMENTS to make with regard to the request about the development as set out on your website for application reference no **EN010141.**

APPLICANT : The Planning Inspectorate

LOCATION : Land At And Between Keysoe Pertenhall And Little Staughton Staughton Road Little Staughton Bedfordshire

PARTICULARS OF DEVELOPMENT :

(This application is not being determined by Bedford Borough Council. Please contact the Applicant for details or to make comments)
Ref EN010141 - Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) - Regulations 10 and 11, Application by RNA Energy Ltd (the Applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for East Park Energy (the Proposed Development) Scoping consultation and notification of the Applicant's contact details and duty to make available information to the Applicant if requested.
To view online go to http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/document/EN010141-000010

COMMENT

In terms of your letter, 31 October 2023, notifying Bedford Borough Council (BBC) as a statutory consultee to the above Application regarding the Scoping Opinion, we have reviewed the Applicant's Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report, dated October 2023/ Version 01 and, as requested, comment accordingly/ inform the Planning Inspectorate of information that we consider should be provided in the Environmental Statement.

(For ease of reading, we structure our response to accord with the Applicant's chapter and paragraph headings)

Further, we refer to PINs Advice Note regarding use of terms, namely:
(PINs Advice Note 7; §3.14) Aspects: The Planning Inspectorate refers to 'aspects' as meaning the relevant descriptions of the environment identified in accordance with the EIA Regulations; and,
(PINs Advice Note 7; §5.7) Matters: The Planning Inspectorate uses the term 'matters' referring to those parts that are a subdivision of the aspect, for example an assessment of a particular species is a 'matter' to the aspect of biodiversity.

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY' STATUTORY CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Description (the 'Development'):
In terms of absolute clarity, Bedford Borough Council (BBC) suggests that the Application be described as follows:

Planning, 4th Floor, Borough Hall,
Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP
Telephone (01234) 718068 Fax (01234) 718084

'The Application comprises the construction of a new ground-mounted solar photovoltaic energy generating station (upto 400MW), an on-site Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)(storage upto 100MW) and East Park substation, infrastructure for connection to the national grid at the Eaton Socon National Grid Substation, a storage and maintenance building and associated parking, site accesses, internal access tracks, and associated landscaping and biodiversity enhancements on (circa 768 hectares) land to the north-west of St Neots between Keysoe Pertenhall and Little Staughton, Bedfordshire'.

Chp1 to 6
(§1.1.2) Capacity: 'The precise generating capacity and storage capacity will be subject to detailed design'. This flexibility would accord with PINs Advice Note 9 and is therefore in principle acceptable.
[BBC note: EN-3 stresses the need to ensure the significant effects of a Proposed Development have been properly assessed - Applicants need to ensure that the criteria in paragraph 1.4 of Advice Note 9 are achieved - this seems to have been acknowledged by the Applicant in §3.2.5 and §3.2.6 of the Scoping Report].

(§1.2.12) Planning policy: in light of the advanced stage of the preparation of the Bedford Borough Council Local Plan 2040 (Examination stage Reg 19), we would suggest that the Reg19 Plan and supporting evidence should be viewed as a material consideration.

(§3.1.6) Site boundary: we are in broad agreement with the single Red Line boundary, noting that the Applicant has requested some flexibility (Ref. PINs Meeting Note July 2022). This flexibility would accord with PINs Advice Note 9 and is therefore in principle acceptable, on the basis that any change in the Red Line boundary would similarly need to be addressed in the LVIA assessment, the zone of influence, and the zone of theoretical visibility.

It is however noted that the Red Line boundary is INCLUSIVE of several Public Highways (roads). BBC question if this is the correct approach as the single Red Line boundary does not reflect the complexity of more detailed site boundary screening conditions to individual parcels that will need to be addressed.

(§3.3.30) Public Rights of Way: 'to be set within wide green corridors'. BBC is concerned that this is not imperially defined and would like to see the proviso of a minimum PRoW width set at 8m for footpaths and 9m for bridleways; and, an assessment of how these are to be retained, managed, and enhanced within any Outline CEMP and Outline LEMP. BBC's concern is that these are important public routes which need to be assessed as 'sequential visual effects' (§7.6.3iv) corridors, rather than as a single viewpoint within a LVIA study; and, PRoWs form important habitat and landscape corridors, rather than as narrow pathways, hence the matter of width. This aspect should be recognised at the onset of the Application.

In this regard we draw you attention to the Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum's response (dated 14 November 2023) and the British Horse Society's response (dated 14 November 2023), which addresses the issue of Public Rights of Way used as footpaths and bridleways and proposed corridor widths. Their responses have been submitted by independent cover.

(§3.3.31) Design Code: 'The layout and design of the green infrastructure will be advanced prior to the preparation of the ES, with key elements either fixed on the proposal drawings, or commitments made within a design code document'. While BBC notes that the Design Code will be submitted as part of the Application, a provisional Design Code that sets out the matters to be addressed (e.g. design, materiality, etc) would be an important consideration to inform reading of the Environmental Statement and how each document has influenced/

informed the other. We would therefore suggest that a provisional Design Code is prepared alongside the Environmental Statement to enable discussions.

(§3.4.12); (§3.5.1) 40-year landscape management: 'operational lifespan of up to 40-years'; and, (§7.5.29) 'LEMP…landscape mitigation and ecological mitigation…and would also set out how this would be managed by the Applicant over the lifespan of the Scheme': BBC would like to understand how the Applicant assesses and address the management and maintenance of the existing mature and a new maturing landscape habitat over the operational lifespan of the project (circa 40-years). This represents a significant financial and staffing commitment which is currently not evidenced.

(§4.1.3) Site selection/ alternatives: BBC would like to see the sequential approach used to test for a range of sites sizes (to demonstrate address of LP Policy 46S). This would evidence if a series of smaller sites, not necessarily located in the same geographical area (adjacencies), could come forward; and, BBC would also like to understand the extent of the Applicant's sub-regional search area, assessment, and outcomes (acknowledging that the NPPF does not ask of this). This would be useful in understanding the effect of cumulative impact of major development at a sub-regional scale.

(Chp6.8) (§6.8.3) §6.8.5) (§6.8.7) Zone of Influence: BBC would like to see the Applicant state what the minimum ZoI would be (miles) to assess cumulative effect. Currently individual effect is referenced, but cumulative ZoI is not defined.
[BBC note: §3.1.1 of Advice Note 17 states that the ZOI for each aspect considered within the ES should be determined by the Applicant]. We would like to expand this statement to include 'in discussion with and to the approval of the local planning authority and/or statutory consultees'.

(§6.8.4) (§6.8.5) 'other developments': in principle, BBC will assist in identifying both significant and/or major development within the Borough, however, as some of these applications are/ may be at the pre-application stage and/or are confidential, we reserve the right to screen the list accordingly.

(§6.9.4) (§6.9.7) (Table 20.1) Scoping out (with reference to PINs Advice Note 7; §5.10 and §5.12): BBC has responded in detail to each scoping aspect/matter and inclusion/ exclusion in the chapter headings below. BBC reserves the right to review the scoping exclusion list as the Applicant undertakes more detailed surveys and assessments should these identify matters of significant effect and/or concern.

In terms of policy, we draw the Applicant's attention to Thurleigh Airfield Safeguarding Zone and mitigation measures. This aspect has not been addressed in the Scoping.

Chp7. Landscape and Visual
(§7.4.53) Zone of Theoretical Visibility: 'The ZTV is based on the 'Indicative Solar and Associated Infrastructure' zoning shown on Figures 3-2a to 3-2c. The initial ZTV has been modelled based on a height of 3m to reflect the maximum height above ground of the solar arrays across the Site'. BBC notes that as part of this Application, the Applicant has stated associated buildings and infrastructure heights as follows - storage buildings at 4,5m (§3.3.23), switchgear 8m (§3.3.16), and transformers 12m; also ref. Fig. 7-5 & 7-6. These associated buildings and infrastructure heights would need to be assessed in the LVIA.

(§14.5.5) It is noted that no reference is made in the LVIA to any security fencing, which may impact on landscape setting and views. Further, §14.5.5 raises the issues of a) gates and perimeter fencing; b) site access tracks and hard standing areas; and, c) control and

switchgear buildings. BBC note that all infrastructure works should be addressed in the Environmental Statement.

(§7.4.63) (Table 7.3) Viewpoints LVIA: 'Rather it is the people that would be experiencing the view from it. Receptor groups within the study area that are likely to experience views of the Scheme include: …ii) Users of public rights of way, and other routes/ land with public access…': It is unclear how the 'sequential visual effects' (§7.6.3iv) along Public Right of Ways (Fig. 14-2) has been provisionally assessed in Fig. 7-7 Viewpoint Locations. BBC would, apart from what is already presented, require a more localised LVIA with regards to both PRoWs and heritage assets.

(§7.5.13 & 15) Glint & glare: BBC accept the Applicant's reasoning that solar panels absorb light and that this may not be an issue. However, the Applicant would need to address the matter raised in Policy 57(ix) regarding possible impact on aviation in this regard.

Table 7.4 (Landscape and Visual) Summary of matters proposed to be scoped in/out. BBC review:
1. Night-time effects (Lighting) - all stages scoped out: the Applicant has not referenced how during the operational stage the scheme will be maintained during the darker winter months; and, emergency works and security aspects when lighting may be required. Suggest that this is defined as 'lighting' and scoped in for the operational stage.
2. Table: refer to concluding statement.

Chp8. Ecology and Nature Conservation
(§8.4.37) Field boundary hedgerows: 'Given the embedded retention of higher suitability field boundary habitats'; (§8.5.9) 'The Scheme's design evolution will seek to avoid areas of significant biodiversity value, such as field boundary hedgerows and ditch networks. Habitat enhancement measures and ongoing management practices will be proposed in line with guidance published by the Building Research Establishment (Biodiversity Guidance for Solar Developments) (2014) that will enhance and safeguard key habitats for the benefit of wildlife…': BBC would like to see a) specific address and evaluation of the cumulative value of habitat corridors (i.e. field boundary hedgerows) with the proviso of a minimum width corridor as set above; and, b) how these are to be retained, mitigated, and enhanced within any (§8.5.13) Outline CEMP and Outline LEMP. BBC's concern is that as these important habitat and landscape corridors mature in height, they have the potential to throw direct and long shadows onto the solar panels. The impact of such should be recognised at the onset of the Application.

Further, the Application will need to address adjacencies of existing and proposed solar farms and how maturing screen landscapes and habitat corridors to their site may impact shadow patterns on these adjacent solar farms; and visa versa.

Further, the Applicant does not appear to give consideration to (treed) hedgerows that potentially form an integral part of a field system pre-dating the Inclosure Acts. The same matter arises regarding Country Wildlife Sites and Ancient Woodlands (i.e. which require 15m buffers). BBC note that this matter requires more detailed considerations in all stages of the Development.

(§8.4.58) 10% BNG: while BBC's Local Plan 2030 does not set the % of BNG to be attained, Policy 43 does require a 'net increase in biodiversity'. This matter is addressed by the Applicant. However, we refer the Applicant to the DRAFT BBC Local Plan 2040, Policy DM7 which requires 'securing a minimum of 10% BNG'; and, further §6.62 'the environmental agenda has moved on and it is now suggested we should go further than biodiversity net gain and adopt an environmental net gain approach in planning and development. The Local

Plan 2040 provides an opportunity to update our policy. Environmental net gain is defined as: Environmental net gain = biodiversity net gain + natural capital gain'. We suggest that the Applicant is minded of this approach.

(§8.7.1) Surveys: 'Field surveys commenced in 2021 and will continue through 2023/24 …The surveys may highlight new important ecological features …These would be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the local authorities, Natural England and other statutory and non-statutory consultees as appropriate'. BBC, in-principle acceptance, subject to a potential review of the extent of the Zone of Influence and/or Zone of Theoretical Visibility should this be required in response to new survey information noted above.
[BBC note: all parties will note that surveys are time sensitive, CIEEM guidelines state that if the age of data is between 12-18 months old the report authors should highlight whether they consider it likely to be necessary to update the surveys. If between 18-months and 3-years an updated survey and report will be required. Anything more than 3-years old the report is unlikely to still be valid and most, if not all, of the surveys will likely to need to be updated].

Table 8.1 (Ecology and Nature Conservation) Summary of matters proposed to be scoped in/out. BBC review:
1. Priority Habitats - operation and decommissioning scoped out: the Applicant will need to assess and evidence how during these two stage the scheme will manage, maintain, and restore these habitats as required by the Act; suggest stages to be scoped in.
2. Other on-site habitats - operation scoped out: suggest stages to be scoped in.
3. Amphibians - operation scoped out: suggest stages to be scoped in. Further, see attached submission by NatureSpace which concludes 'We are in agreement that great crested newt should be scoped into the Environmental Statement. In line with guidance from Natural England (Great crested newts: District Level Licensing for development projects, Natural England, March 2021), there is a reasonable likelihood that great crested newts would be impacted by the development proposals. It is therefore considered likely that a licence would be required to implement the proposal' (NatureSpace comment sheet; 24/11/2023).
4. Bats (roosting) - all stages scoped out. In light of the fact that 'Bats (Foraging and commuting)' for construction and operation are scoped in, to allow for a consistent assessment, Bats (roosting) should be scoped in.
5. Badgers - all stages scoped out. In light of the fact that badgers are territorial and maintain main, annex and outlying setts, collectively this will need to be surveyed, assessed, and possible mitigation proposed. Construction and operation should be scoped in.
6. Table: refer to concluding statement.

Chp9. Flood Risk, Drainage and Surface Water
(§9.5.19) Pollution: 'onsite maintenance' i.e. chemical spills/cleaning materials to PV units; and, (§9.5.26) '… the impact of chemical pollution during the operational stage is proposed to be scoped out'. BBC express concern regarding possible soil and groundwater pollution arising from the 40-year operational stage and possible effect on agriculturally arable soils; matter should be assessed (it is noted that mitigation measures to form part of a LEMP condition if consent granted).

Table 9.1 (Flood risk, drainage, and surface water) Summary of matters proposed to be scoped in/out. BBC review:
Table: refer to concluding statement.

Chp10. Ground Conditions (land contamination)
(§10.5.8) Pollution: 'pollutant-receptor-linkages and the siting of compounds and any fuels will need to be kept well away from the banks of any stream and other watercourses'. BBC

express concern regarding possible soil and groundwater pollution arising from the 40-year operational stage and possible effect on agriculturally arable soils.

Table 10.1 (Ground condition - land contamination) Summary of matters proposed to be scoped in/out. BBC review:
1. Controlled waters - operational scoped out. In light of possible chemical spills and contamination, operational should be scoped in.
2. Table: refer to concluding statement.

Chp11. Cultural Heritage and Archaeology
BBC note that due to the Applicant's extensive data base of cultural heritage, listed buildings, and archaeology information, we have not been able to respond in detail regarding their proposed assessment and mitigation methodology of heritage assets. We note that cultural heritage, listed buildings, and archaeology matters (and potential loss of important hedgerow under the Hedgerow Regulations and Inclosure Act) should be assessed within the broader landscape in which they sit; the setting (and views) plays a significant part in understanding and contributing to the cultural and physical value of the asset and should be addressed as such in the Environmental Statement.

Chapter 11 outlines the baseline cultural heritage conditions at the site and the methodology for the identification and assessment of potential effects on heritage assets in the Environmental Statement.
(§11.1.1) the Scoping Report notes 'highlights where mitigation measures may be required'. However, there appears to be no discussion in the Chapter as to how it is proposed to potentially mitigate against impacts on heritage assets during the operational stage, or where enhancements to the significance of heritage assets may be secured as per §5.9.13 of EN-1. For example, will screening, retention of important views of assets or the omission of areas of the site from development potentially be employed as mitigation measures where significant impacts are identified?
(§11.2.1 (ii)) From a built heritage perspective, a 3km study area is proposed for the assessment of potential impacts on the setting of designated heritage assets, including listed buildings and conservation areas. This approach is considered reasonable and sufficient to understand the likely effects of the proposed development - given the evidence base (including the ZTV). BBC agreed with the Applicant's statement that it is unlikely that assets located outside of this area would be significantly adversely affected by the development. The Scoping Report confirms that there will be no direct impacts on above-ground heritage assets - as such it is agreed that direct impacts on heritage assets beyond the Development Boundary can be scoped out of the assessment.
(§11.3.9) BBC note that it is appropriate to refer to Historic England's "Commercial Renewable Energy Development and the Historic Environment: Historic England Advice Note 15", which includes guidance on physical and non-physical impacts on heritage assets arising from renewable energy development, as well as potential mitigation measures.
(§11.5.10) BBC notes that visualisations will be produced where necessary, which is in accordance with best practice. BBC reserves the right to request additional visualisations beyond what the Applicant has submitted, should this be required to review and assess impact(s) on assets.
(§11.5.12) The Applicant note that they intend to scope out of the assessment all non-designated heritage assets located outside the Site unless these are considered to be potentially of national importance. The reasoning is that 'these assets are generally considered less sensitive to changes in their settings and are judged to be unlikely to be subject to significant settings effects'. Whilst it is accepted that indirect impacts on non-designated heritage assets are unlikely to weigh heavily against the proposal given the 'balanced judgement' required by the decision-maker and the public benefits likely to flow from the development; §5.9.7 of EN-1 confirms that the SoS should consider the impacts on

non-designated heritage assets. Furthermore, the contribution made by the setting to the significance of a heritage asset is not usually dependent on the inherent significance of the asset, or whether it is of national or local importance (see §11.6.8 and §11.6.10 of the Scoping Report make the same point). BBC suggests that the Applicant undertake further site visits to identify non-designated heritage assets located within the 3km area - any resulting assessments should be included in the ES.
BBC refers you to concerns raised by the Archaeological Officer (Memo; 24/11/2023) namely, pre-DCO archaeological evaluation, mitigation and enhancement measures which should be addressed within the Environmental Statement.
The assessment methodology set out in Section 11 appears to be acceptable for a development of this magnitude (notwithstanding concerns that non-designated heritage assets outside the site have been scoped out). It will be important for the setting assessments detailed under §11.6.11 onwards to be carried out separately from the LVIA, as an assessment of setting impact (where the asset is the receptor) is different from an LVIA, where the viewer is the receptor. That said, there is overlap and the Applicant is encouraged to carry out the two assessments parallel with each other.
For the purposes of this response, the Applicant should be minded of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (PLBCA) (the Act) which states that special regard should be paid to the desirability of preserving the settings of listed buildings, where those settings would be affected by proposed development.

Table 11.7 (Cultural Heritage and Archaeology) Summary of matters proposed to be scoped in/out. BBC review:
1. We refer to matters raised in the attached Archaeological Officer's Memo (24/11/2023).
2. Table: refer to concluding statement.

Chp12. Noise and Vibration
Table 12.3 (Noise and Vibration) Summary of matters proposed to be scoped in/out. BBC review:
Table: refer to concluding statement.

Chp13. Socio-Economics, Land Use and Tourism
Table 13.1 (Socio-Economics, Land Use and Tourism) Summary of matters proposed to be scoped in/out. BBC review:
1. We note that traffic noise and plant and machinery impacts are being scoped in for construction and operational phases, and consequently should be included in the decommissioning stage.
2. Table: refer to concluding statement.

[BBC note: we raise significant concern regarding the extent of land (c. 768ha) been taken out of food production in this Application. This concern needs to be read further against the cumulative effect of consented applications and pending applications within the sub-region that have similarly taken/ propose to take productive soils out of agricultural use. The Applicant will need to assess and evidence this matter specifically in relation to the ongoing tensions between the Government's energy strategy and the Government's food strategy].

BBC note that the value of infrastructure investment and the potential for local employment opportunity that this scheme represents will be of interest to Members and will need more detailed assessment in the Applicant's report.

Chp14. Traffic and Transport
BBC notes that due to staffing resources and the relatively short period in which to respond to the Applicant's Scoping Report, we have not been able to respond in detail regarding methodology, assessment, and mitigation on this aspect.

(§14.5.9) Staff activity: 'During the operational phase it is anticipated that there will be around 10-16 staff on-site at any one time, primarily undertaking maintenance tasks'. BBC note that the effect of staffing accommodation located on site (i.e. kitchen and loo facilities and related wastewater/sewage) is not addressed within other aspects and require inclusion in all stages of the scheme. Further, no information is provided in the Scoping Report regarding the construction compounds and movement of staff between them and the location of the solar arrays, BESS, landscape maintenance, etc. during both construction and the decommissioning stages. This requires further address.

It is noted that the required access route to the indicative East Park substation and BESS facility, located in Site C (Fig. 3-2b), potentially requiring access for large, industrial vehicles, is not noted in the Scoping Report. Similarly, the location of the storage and maintenance building is not noted. The impact, and mitigation, of vehicle movement to these facilities will need to be addressed in the Environmental Statement.

Table 14.7 (Traffic and Transport) Summary of matters proposed to be scoped in/out. BBC review:
Table: refer to concluding statement.

Chp15. Climate Change
(§15.2.2) Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG): '…consider all emissions of GHG emissions within the Site and indirect emissions from activities outside the Site';
(§15.5.7) Stages: 'Product manufacturing stage: i) Raw material extraction, transportation and manufacturing of products required for the Scheme; and, ii) Transportation of products to the Scheme. Construction stage: i) On-site construction activities including construction compounds - emissions from plant, vehicles and generators; ii) Transportation of construction materials - where not included in the product-stage embodied GHG emissions'. Decommissioning stage: ii) Transportation and disposal of waste materials'; and,
Table 15.4 Topic: 9) Raw material extraction and manufacturing of products required for the Scheme and transportation of raw materials to the place of manufacturing; and, 10) Transportation of product to the Scheme; to be read against,
(§18.4.2) 'Many of the infrastructure elements would be prefabricated offsite i.e. PV panels, racks, inverters and transformers, BESS units, substation components. As such, the generation of waste resulting from the construction of these elements will be minimal'.

BBC note that the Applicant's Scoping Report does not address where the infrastructure elements/ 'kit-of-parts' are to be manufactured (§13.5.2 'global suppliers') and decommissioned. We would suggest that the full life-cycle carbon footprint has to be assessed, including the manufacturing of components made internationally/ sub-regionally and shipped/ railed as freight into/ across the UK.

Table 15.4 (Climate Change) Summary of matters proposed to be scoped in/out. BBC review:
1. Our reading of Table 15.4 suggests that once all infrastructure elements have been installed/ constructed there will be no further need to replace these elements and hence Topics 9 (Raw materials) to 13 and 19 (on-site maintenance) have been scoped out. Over the intended operational period of 40-years these assumptions need to be questioned in light of continually changing technologies, etc. While the Applicant states that effects may be negligible, this is currently not known. Consequently, all topics hereby noted relating to operation (management and maintenance) should be scoped in.
2. (§14.5.9) Travel of workers: there will be '10-16 staff on-site at any one time', 'visitor trips per week', and (§14.5.10) trips associated with staff on-site movement and maintenance.

BBC would wish to see this accounted for, however negligible, as currently the full extent of this activity could be more extensive in regard to the matters above.
3. Table: refer to concluding statement.

Chp16. Air Quality
Table 16.4 (Air Quality) Summary of matters proposed to be scoped in/out. BBC review:
Table: refer to concluding statement.

Chp17. Land and Soils
(§17.5.2) Agricultural soil: 'The Scheme would predominantly result in the temporary loss of agricultural land, albeit over a long-term period. This would include a change in land use from what is currently predominantly arable cultivation, to extensive areas of solar arrays beneath which would be pasture and/or wildflower grasslands. Much of the land is likely to remain in agricultural production through sheep grazing' (bold - our emphasis);
(§17.5.8) 'The construction of the Scheme has the potential to result in soil compaction …mixing of different soil horizons …changes to nutrient values and soil fertility';
(§17.5.9) 'The temporary removal …of the Site from arable cultivation (over long-term period) would 'rest' the soils and has the potential to deliver significant environmental benefits through an increase in organic matter that simultaneously delivers carbon sequestration. An increase in the organic matter in soils also has the potential for delivering other ecosystem services such as reducing surface water run-off and increasing microbial diversity' (bold - our emphasis); and,
(§17.7.1) 'It is not currently confirmed how the land will be managed under and around the solar PV modules, however it is assumed that sheep grazing will be undertaken on at least some of the fields'.

BBC is not in agreement with these statements regarding protecting the quality (productivity) of agricultural soil. Soils are living habitats that require annual soil augmentation to remain active ecosystems. Soils kept in partial shade and with no or limited cultivation or augmentation over a 40-years period has the potential to irreversible harm the liveability and productivity of the soil. BBC would want to see considerable assessment, statement, and a long-term maintenance methodology regarding this matter to support the Applicant's approach that this is temporary and that the soils can be brought back into productive agricultural use.

Table 17.3 (Land and Soil) Summary of matters proposed to be scoped in/out. BBC review:
1. Effects on soil - operation scoped out. In light of the above, operational should be scoped in.
2. Table: refer to concluding statement.

Chp18. Other Environmental Topics
(§18.3.11) Major Accidents or Disasters: 'The battery units have the potential to generate heat and therefore there is a risk of a fire developing'. BBC notes that the BESS is a battery unit and would therefore need an assessment as to possible ground and soil contamination/ potential for hazardous pollution.
(§18.4.6) Waste: 'In relation to decommissioning, waste arisings will be generated from the removal of PV panels, PV mounting structures, cabling, electrical equipment, fencing and foundations', and the BESS battery unit.
(§18.4.9) The nature of the battery units has not been stated and therefore, to err on caution, BBC would need to understand the life-cycle management of and possible long-term contamination/ waste disposal of these materials. BBC would like to see this scoped in.

Chp19. Structure of the Environmental Statement

(§19.1.2) Aspects and Matters as set-out, and the overall structure of Environmental Statement including cumulative and intra-project effect: refer to concluding statement.

Chp20. Summary and Conclusion
(§20.1.1) 'This Scoping Report represents a notification under Regulation 8(1)(b) of the EIA Regulations that the Applicant will undertake EIA for the Scheme and prepare an Environmental Statement to report the findings of the EIA for submission with the DCO application';
(§20.1.2) 'The Scoping Report is also a request under Regulation 10 of the EIA Regulations for a formal Scoping Opinion on the information to be provided with the ES'; namely,

basis on reasonable assumptions having been made by the Applicant in the submitted Environmental Impact Scoping Report, BBC have an in-principle acceptance of the Scoping Report; however, due to aspects and matters raised above and/or not evidenced by the Applicant, BBC reserve their right to comment and request further assessment in the Environmental Statement accordingly.

Due to staffing resources and the relatively short period in which to respond to the Applicant's extensive Environmental Impact Scoping Report, the Council has not been able to revert with all internal consultation from technical consultees, including highways, the Local Lead Flood Risk Officer, and Planning Policy. We note that BBC has initiated joint discussions with Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council and that BBC's response has been shared with them. However, the response above is solely that of Bedford Borough Council, submitted without prejudice.

Should you require any clarification, please contact Peter Dijkhuis (Peter.dijkhuis@bedford.gov.uk).

Signed:

C Austin Director of Environment

Decision Date: 28 November 2023

Case Ref: 23/02405/LPA	Date: 24/11/2023
From: NatureSpace	Scoping – further information will be required for a future application

Comments:

Ref EN010141 - Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) - Regulations 10 and 11, Application by RNA Energy Ltd (the Applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for East Park Energy (the Proposed Development) Scoping consultation and notification of the Applicant's contact details and duty to make available information to the Applicant if requested

These comments relate to Bedford Borough sections of the East Park Energy project, Land At and between Keysoe Pertenhall and Little Staughton, Staughton Road, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire.

Summary

1. The proposed development falls within areas of red, amber, green and white impact risk zones for great crested newts. Impact risk zones have been derived through advanced modelling to create a species distribution map which predicts likely presence. In the red and amber impact zones, there is suitable habitat and a high likelihood of great crested newt presence.

2. 56 ponds have been identified within 500m of the development proposal; 3 of these are located within the site boundary, 28 are within 250 metres (m) of the site boundary and the remaining 25 are between 250m and 500m of the site boundary.

3. There are 3 existing records for great crested newts within 500m of the site boundary; 1 is on site, 1 is approximately 105m from the site and the last is approximately 415m from the site.

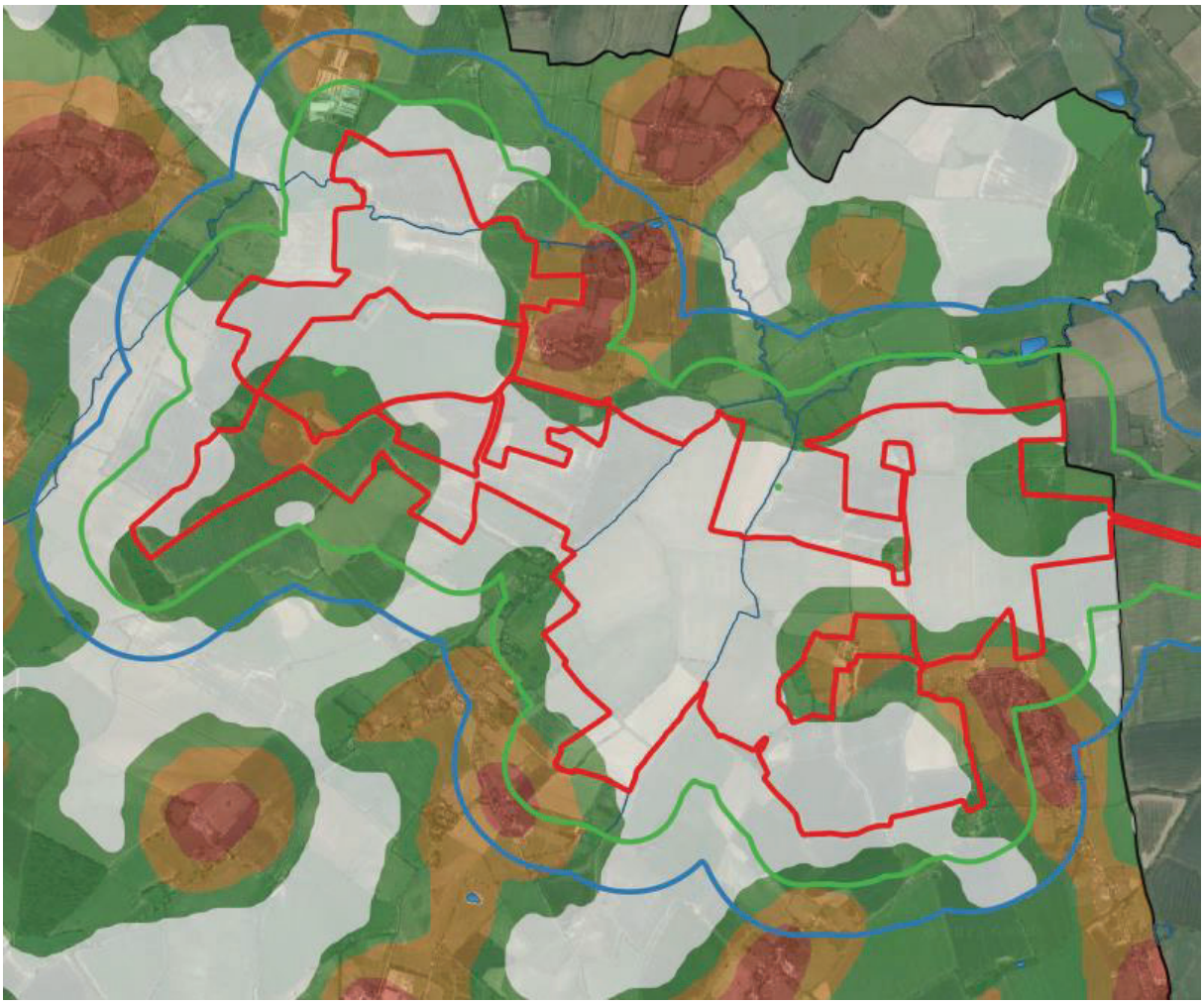
4. The Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report (East Park Energy, October 2023) provides some additional survey data, including 5 positive eDNA records from ponds within 250m of the site, and acknowledges the need for further survey effort. The report concludes that great crested newts should be considered as present within the site.

5. Depending on the exact impacts of the proposed development, it is considered to be likely that a licensed approach would be required. There are 2 licensing options available within Bedford Borough:

    - Bedford Borough Council holds a District Licence for great crested newts, through which developers can be authorised to undertake works that could impact great crested newts. This option reduces the need for specialist surveys and incorporates the provision of compensatory habitat off-site in

strategic locations to benefit great crested newts at a population and landscape scale. The use of the District Licence can be incorporated into the Development Consent Order (DCO) process at the time of application to the Planning Inspectorate. For more information on the details of this, please contact info@naturespaceuk.com

- Carry out full great crested newt surveys and provide a detailed mitigation strategy as part of the application to the Planning Inspectorate (for example data from surveys of ponds that are ecologically connected to the site and proposals on how potential impacts will be mitigated/compensated for), and then apply for a European Protected Species Licence from Natural England after permission has been granted.



Figures above: Outline of the Bedford Borough sections of the site (red) in the context of the surrounding landscape, including the Impact Risk Zones for GCN. Ponds are shown in light blue (not all ponds are shown). A 250m buffer is shown around the site in green and a 500m buffer in blue. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

Ecological Information

The applicant's Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report (East Park Energy, October 2023) includes the following:

- Status of 10 ponds that were subject to survey: 1 pond was assessed as being poor, 2 as below average, 1 as average, 1 as good and 5 as excellent using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment;
- Confirms the presence of great crested newts in 5 ponds (positive eDNA results) with 3 returning negative results and two others that were dry at the time of the survey);
- The other remaining ponds could not be surveyed due to a lack of access permission. However, it is hoped that access will be obtained for further surveys during 2024.
- Confirms that the site provides suitable aquatic habitats for great crested newts and other amphibians, and sub-optimal terrestrial habitat (predominantly arable land).
- Proposes that the majority of suitable habitats can be retained and protected through embedded avoidance and on-site mitigation measures.

- Concludes that there will be impacts to this species arising as a result of the construction of the proposed development and that this species should be scoped into the Environmental Statement.

Conclusion

We are in agreement that great crested newt should be scoped into the Environmental Statement. In line with guidance from Natural England (Great crested newts: District Level Licensing for development projects, Natural England, March 2021), there is a reasonable likelihood that great crested newts would be impacted by the development proposals. It is therefore considered likely that a licence would be required to implement the proposal.

The applicant has two options for licensing in Bedford Borough, which should be considered at an early stage in the project to ensure that sufficient information is provided as part of a future application to the Planning Inspectorate.

1. Authorisation by Bedford Borough Council to use their District Licence, which is administered on their behalf by NatureSpace Partnership. This licence can be incorporated into the DCO process at the time of application to the Planning Inspectorate (this has been achieved in other similar cases). This type of licence does not require the same amount of survey or on-site mitigation (subject to consideration of the mitigation hierarchy) as the traditional route through Natural England. The applicant is therefore advised to contact NatureSpace for more information on this approach.

More details on the District Licensing Scheme can be found at www.naturespaceuk.com

2. Apply for a European Protected Species Licence from Natural England. This type of licence can only be applied for once the DCO has been granted. This would require further surveys to determine presence/likely absence in the remaining ponds and population size class assessments may need to be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist in accordance with Natural England's Standing Advice (Great crested newts: advice for making planning decisions – GOV.UK) (and if using eDNA surveys, the Great Crested Newt Environmental eDNA Technical Advice Note, Natural England 2014). As great crested newts have been identified on-site, appropriate mitigation and compensatory measures would need to be identified to satisfy planning requirements.

Contact details: info@naturespaceuk.com

Relationship between NatureSpace and Bedford Borough Council
Bedford Borough Council holds a Great Crested Newt Organisational (or "District") Licence granted by Natural England. This is administered by NatureSpace Partnership through their District Licensing Scheme as the council's delivery partner. A dedicated Newt Officer is employed by NatureSpace to provide impartial advice to the council and help guide them and planning applicants through the process. All services and arrangements are facilitated

in an unbiased, independent and transparent manner. You can find out more at www.naturespaceuk.com

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Reasonable Likelihood of Protected Species

Permission can be refused if adequate information on protected species is not provided by an applicant, as it will be unable to assess the impacts on the species and thus meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), ODPM Circular 06/2005 or the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Council has the power to request information under Article 4 of the Town and Country (Planning Applications) Regulations 1988 (SI1988.1812) (S3) which covers general information for full applications. CLG 2007 'The validation of planning applications' states that applications should not be registered if there is a requirement for an assessment of the impacts of a development on biodiversity interests.

Section 99 of ODPM Circular 06/2005 states:

"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted. However, bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved, developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by development. Where this is the case, the survey should be completed and any necessary measures to protect the species should be in place, through conditions and / or planning obligations before permission is granted."

Great crested newts

Great crested newts and their habitats are fully protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Therefore, it is illegal to deliberately capture, injure, kill, disturb or take great crested newts or to damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is illegal to intentionally or recklessly disturb any great crested newts occupying a place of shelter or protection, or to obstruct access to any place of shelter or protection (see the legislation or seek legal advice for full details). Local planning authorities have a statutory duty in exercising of all their functions to '*have regard, so far is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity*,' as stated under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended), as well as a duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive. As a result, GCN and their habitats are a material consideration in the planning process.

Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys

Validity of ecological reports and surveys can become compromised overtime due to being out-of-date. CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (CIEEM, 2017) states, if the

age of data is between 12-18 months, "*the report authors should highlight whether they consider it likely to be necessary to update surveys*". If the age of the data is between 18 months to 3 years an updated survey and report will be required and anything more than 3 years old "*The report is unlikely to still be valid and most, if not all, of the surveys are likely to need to be updated".*

Historic Environment Officer's Memo

To: Peter Diijkhuis

From: Vanessa Clarke – Principal Archaeological Officer

Appl. No: **PINS Reference: EN010141**

Date: 24/11/2023

East Park Energy - PINS Reference: EN010141

Development Consent for East Park Energy (the Proposed Development). Scoping consultation and notification of the Applicant's contact details and duty to make available information to the Applicant if requested.

Land at and Between Keysoe, Pertenhall and Little Staughton, Staughton Road, Little Staughton Bedfordshire.

Background to the Scoping Opinion Request:

Thank you for consulting the Bedford Borough Historic Environment Team (Archaeology) on the above 'Solar NSIP' which is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) with a requirement to apply for a Development Consent Order from the Secretary of State. It will be a cross boundary application and draft DCO Order Limits currently extend to c.768 hectares, which includes land for solar arrays, a battery energy storage facility, the grid connection corridor and extensive land set aside for green infrastructure. Within Bedford Borough will lie the point of connection and solar areas in the west, and the grid connection corridor straddles both administrative areas. Solar areas to the east, battery facility, and on-site substation area in Huntingdonshire. The DCO application would be for a forty-year operational life, at which point the development could be decommissioned, or re applied for, depending on national or local energy requirements at that time.

The applicant has asked under Regulation 10(1) of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations'), the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State for its opinion (a Scoping Opinion) as to the information to be provided in an Environmental Statement (ES) relating to the Proposed Development. A report, *Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report* (V01, October 2023) accompanies the request for a Scoping Opinion.

National Policy Statement Policies:

The Secretary of State must decide applications for NSIPs in line with policies set out in National Policy Statements (NPSs). The overarching NPS EN-1 for energy (published 22 November 2023) and the NPS EN-3 for renewable energy infrastructure (published 22 November 2023) set out the principles the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State should follow when examining applications for development consent and what the applicant must provide to ensure that this examination can proceed.

The overarching NPS EN-1 for energy sets out in section 5.9: Historic Environment, what the historic environment comprises and lists the categories of 'heritage assets' which are those elements of the historic environment that hold value to this and future generations because of their 'interest'.

In sections 5.9.9 to 5.9.10, it describes what should be included in the applicant's Environmental Impact Assessment and Statement:

5.9.9 The applicant should undertake an assessment of any likely significant heritage impacts of the proposed development as part of the EIA, and describe these along with how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied in the ES (see Section 4.3). This should include consideration of heritage assets above, at, and below the surface of the ground. Consideration will also need to be given to the possible impacts, including cumulative, on the wider historic environment. The assessment should include reference to any historic landscape or seascape character assessment and associated studies as a means of assessing impacts relevant to the proposed project.

5.9.10 As part of the ES the applicant should provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposed development, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage assets and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum, the applicant should have consulted the relevant Historic Environment Record (or, where the development is in English or Welsh waters, Historic England or Cadw) and assessed the heritage assets themselves using expertise where necessary according to the proposed development's impact.

In sections 5.9.11 in particular, it describes what should be included where there is known or potential archaeology and why, and more broadly what information should be included for all heritage assets affected:

5.9.11 - *Where a development site includes, or the available evidence suggests it has the potential to include, heritage assets with an archaeological interest, the applicant should carry out appropriate desk-based assessment and, where such desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation. Where proposed development will affect the setting of a heritage asset, representative visualisations may be necessary to explain the impact.*

5.9.12 - *The applicant should ensure that the extent of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of any heritage assets affected can be adequately understood from the application and supporting documents. Studies will be required on those heritage assets affected by noise, vibration, light and indirect impacts, the extent and detail of these studies will be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset affected.*

5.9.13 - *The applicant is encouraged, where opportunities exist, to prepare proposals which can make a positive contribution to the historic environment, and to consider how their*

scheme takes account of the significance of heritage assets affected. This can include, where possible:

- *enhancing, through a range of measures such a sensitive design, the significance of heritage assets or setting affected*
- *considering where required the development of archive capacity which could deliver significant public benefits*
- *considering how visual or noise impacts can affect heritage assets, and whether there may be opportunities to enhance access to, or interpretation, understanding and appreciation of, the heritage assets affected by the scheme*

5.9.14 - Careful consideration in preparing the scheme will be required on whether the impacts on the historic environment will be direct or indirect, temporary, or permanent.

5.9.15 - Applicants should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

The National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) sets out under 'Technical considerations' – sections 2.10.107- 2.10.126 – how cultural heritage should be considered as part of applications for Solar PV developments:

2.10.107 The impacts of solar PV developments on the historic environment will require expert assessment in most cases and may have effect both above and below ground.

2.10.108 Above ground impacts may include the effects on the setting of Listed Buildings and other designated heritage assets as well as on Historic Landscape Character.

2.10.109 Below ground impacts, although generally limited, may include direct impacts on archaeological deposits through ground disturbance associated with trenching, cabling, foundations, fencing, temporary haul routes etc.

2.10.110 Equally solar PV developments may have a positive effect, for example archaeological assets may be protected by a solar PV farm as the site is removed from regular ploughing and shoes or low-level piling is stipulated. *94*

94 The results of pre-determination archaeological evaluation inform the design of the scheme and related archaeological planning conditions.

2.10.111 Generic historic environment impacts are covered in Section 5.9 of EN-1. 2.10.112 Applicant assessments should be informed by information from Historic Environment Records (HERs) or the local authority.

2.10.113 Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to, include heritage assets with archaeological interest, the applicant should submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. These should

be carried out, using expertise where necessary and in consultation with the local planning authority, and should identify archaeological study areas and propose appropriate schemes of investigation, and design measures, to ensure the protection of relevant heritage assets.

2.10.114 In some instances, field studies may include investigative work (and may include trial trenching beyond the boundary of the proposed site) to assess the impacts of any ground disturbance, such as proposed cabling, substation foundations or mounting supports for solar panels on archaeological assets.

2.10.115 The extent of investigative work should be proportionate to the sensitivity of, and extent of proposed ground disturbance in, the associated study area.

2.10.116 Applicants should take account of the results of historic environment assessments in their design proposal.

2.10.117 Applicants should consider what steps can be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting.

2.10.118 As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large-scale solar farms which depending on their scale, design and prominence, may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset.

2.10.119 Applicants may need to include visualisations to demonstrate the effects of a proposed solar farm on the setting of heritage assets.

Comments:

The submitted scoping report sets out its purpose including the proposed scope of work and methods to be applied in carrying out the EIA, and the proposed structure and coverage of the ES to be submitted with the DCO application.

The two sections of the submitted scoping report of particular relevance to the historic environment are Section 7.0 – *Landscape and Visual* and Section 11 – *Cultural Heritage and Archaeology.* In regard to 'cultural heritage' – section 11, please note that the National Policy Statements referred to have been superseded and that the scoping baseline data – a search of the Bedford Borough HER (data obtained July 2022) is now out-of-date.

Visualisations and Setting Assessments:

Regards 'visualisations', the setting assessments referred to under section 11.6.11 should be undertaken by a heritage professional, as an assessment of effects upon significance through changes to the setting of a heritage asset (where the asset is the receptor) is different from a Landscape Visualisation Impact Assessment Impact Assessment (LVIA) as set out in chapter 7, where the viewer is the receptor. However, it is important that the two assessments are informed by each other and there is much opportunity to integrate the findings of the two assessments than the scoping report suggests. This could perhaps be achieved by widening out the sources and scope of work listed in section 7 to include key

viewpoints of, to, or through affected heritage assets from fixed locations and as a dynamic experience, to aid heritage assessment. In regard to the latter, as it already considers some heritage assets, the scope of work under sections 7.4.6.2-7.4.65 would benefit from being widened out to include not only views from the designated heritage assets in the list i.e., listed buildings (currently limited to churches) and scheduled monuments, but also include views which take in both development and asset(s) and how these change as part of a dynamic experience. The ES should also justify why non-ecclesiastical listed buildings appear to have been scoped out of consideration as part of the LVIA whereas listed ecclesiastical buildings are included. Table 7.4 could also include heritage assets, to be informed by pieces of assessment work undertaken by both heritage and landscape professionals; this would accord with EN3 2.10.108 & 2.10.119. For further guidance, the following should be consulted: Historic England (2019) – Project Number 7792: Visualising the Impacts on the Setting of Heritage Assets; Historic England (2017): The Setting of Heritage Assets – Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition); Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment: Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition – sections 5.7 -5.11 and 5.16); and Historic England (2021): Commercial Renewable Energy Development and the Historic Environment: Historic England Advice Note 15. These should also be added to the list in 11.3.9 of the Scoping Report.

Non-designated Heritage Assets:
Section 11.5.12 proposes to exclude assessing impacts on the settings of non-designated cultural heritage assets and features, with the exception of those considered to potentially be of national importance (in line with footnote 68 of the NPPF) on the basis that, *these assets are generally considered less sensitive to changes in their settings and are judged to be unlikely to be subject to significant settings effects.* We would not concur with the first line as a non-designated heritage asset may be very sensitive to change in their setting, albeit given their lower level of importance, when the degree of effect is considered along with importance and sensitivity to change, it may lead to a low level of harm upon significance. This matter requires some clarification as to exactly why non-designated heritage assets have been scoped out. This does not appear to accord with 11.6 as written.

Historic Landscape Character:
Providing information on, and the assessment of the potential impacts on historic landscape character from physical change, should also be produced to inform the forthcoming ES chapter. At present, whilst it is proposed to obtain HLC data from Historic Environment Records where it exists, there is no methodology given for assessing potential impacts. The Bedford Borough Historic Environment Team (BBHET) would be happy to discuss a detailed methodology with the developer's historic environment consultants.

Pre-DCO Archaeological Evaluation:
Section 11.5.7 sets out the intention to undertake geophysical survey to inform the forthcoming ES and appears to suggest that any further evaluation required/and or mitigation works would be secured by a written scheme of investigation in accordance with a DCO condition. **We do not support this approach** as not only is there potential for nationally important remains equivalent to a scheduled monument to be identified (given proximity to existing scheduled monuments) after further assessment (additional data is

required that is only achievable by intrusive evaluation) and which may ultimately require areas of preservation in situ by design, we do not consider in general that all archaeological remains can be readily detected by either aerial photography or geophysical survey; smaller and dispersed archaeological features such as burials, cremations and pits, postholes, slots and gulleys which may represent unenclosed structures and associated settlement activity can be difficult to detect from the air and/or by geophysical prospection, and remains can also be masked by the presence of e.g. ridge and furrow, alluvium, drift etc. Trial-trenching will enable the results of the geophysical survey to be ground-truthed, testing its validity which can be affected on occasion by geology and the magnetic contrast between archaeological features and background magnetisation. We have several examples in the borough where large-scale features have not been picked up be geophysical survey.

This additional information will enable PINS to properly consider the environmental impacts of the scheme and any necessary avoidance or mitigation measures, as well as the securing of heritage benefits e.g., interpretation, community engagement etc. The ground truthing of the geophysical survey by trial-trenching should be added to the list in 11.6.1 and scope of 11.6.2 updated in line with this, in accordance with EN3 - 2.10.113 -14

Mitigation Measures:
Paragraph 11.1.1 of the Scoping Report, states that it *highlights where mitigation measures may be required'*. However, there appears to be no discussion in the Chapter as to how it is proposed to potentially mitigate against impacts on heritage assets during the operational stage, or where enhancements to the significance of heritage assets may be secured as per paragraph 5.9.13 of EN-1. For example, will screening, retention of important views of assets or the omission of areas of the site from development potentially be employed as mitigation measures where significant impacts are identified?

It may also be worth noting in relation to section 7.5.28, that proposed 'landscape and visual mitigation' may dovetail with mitigation in relation to the historic environment and/or provide opportunities for enhancement.

Enhancement Measures:
As a whole, the Scoping Report doesn't appear to commit to considering the positive/beneficial effects that the proposed development could bring to the historic environment. EN-3 sets out example opportunities within paragraphs 2.10.110, and 5.9.13 of EN-1 provides similar, and could include cross-theme opportunities such as new green infrastructure – new paths/cycle routes, public green spaces etc. also acting as wayfinders to heritage sites and opening up some of the latter with improved presentation and interpretation. Other opportunities could be the retention and enhancement of existing historic hedgerows and field patterns through new planting and maintenance which also act as GI. Section 3.3.31 refers to how the layout and design of green infrastructure will be advanced prior to the preparation of the ES, so these opportunities will need to be considered at an early stage.

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Borough Charter granted in 1166

Chief Executive: Laura Church

Jack Patten
EIA Advisor
The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Please ask for: Sam Smith
Direct line: [redacted]
E-mail: [redacted]@milton-keynes.gov.uk
Date: 28/11/2023
PINS Ref: EN010141

By email only to: eastparkenergyproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Dear Jack Patten

Planning Act 2008 (As Amended) and The Infrastructure Planning Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

RE: Bedford Borough Council (BBC) Public Health response to ES Scoping Report for East Park Energy by RNA Energy Ltd.

I write on behalf of Vicky Head, Director of Public Health at Bedford Borough Council, to provide feedback towards the ES Scoping Report for the development. Public Health were notified by OHID (the successor organisation to the Strategic Health Authority as defined within the 2009 regulations).

Under Section 73A(1) of the NHS Act 2006 (As Amended), the Director of Public Health is responsible for all of their Council's duties to take steps to improve the health of the people in its area.

I have noted that whilst there is a proposed scope for human health as a dedicated chapter within the ES, it is currently being considered within other themed chapters, specifically the noise, air quality, transport, and landscape chapters. If this approach is accepted, it is asked that the developer prepares a dedicated health chapter if any of the other chapters identify any significant effects.

Importantly, the proposed human health scope does not consider the mental health and mental wellbeing implications of the proposed development on the resident population. If the development causes changes in its immediate and wider areas, both during and after construction, these changes may have an impact on the mental health and mental wellbeing of the resident population. These impacts may be significant and/or require mitigation, which will require assessment. I therefore request that consideration to providing this information within the ES is considered when adopting the Scoping Opinion.

Vicky Head, Director of Public Health
Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP

DX 117105 Bedford 4 Phone: (01234) 267422 Minicom: (01234) 221827
Web: www.bedford.gov.uk

If you or the applicant wishes to discuss this response, please contact myself at Milton Keynes City Council in the first instance.

Please note that this response is provided solely from Public Health in addition to any other response(s) from Bedford Borough Council and is made without prejudice.

Yours sincerely,

Sam Smith
Public Health Principal (Built Environment)
For and on behalf of Vicky Head, Director of Public Health.
Bedford Borough Council.

Public Health is a shared service for Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, and Milton Keynes City.

BEDFORDSHIRE AND RIVER IVEL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Vale House
Broadmead Road
Stewartby
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8 November 2023

Environmental Services
Operations Group 3
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

eastparkenergyproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

BY E-MAIL ONLY

For the attention of **Jack Patten, EIA Advisor**

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Application Number:	**EN010141**
Location:	**Land at and between Keysoe, Pertenhall and Little Staughton**
Proposal:	**Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) – Regulations 10 and 11** **Application by RNA Energy Ltd (the Applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for East Park Energy (the Proposed Development)** **Scoping consultation and notification of the Applicant's contact details and duty to make available information to the Applicant if requested**
Grid Reference:	**509100,263800**

This proposal falls outside the Board's district. The principal watercourses affected will be Pertenhall Brook, River Kym, Duloe Brook and Colmworth Brook. None of these drain into the Board's district. As such we have no comment to make.

Please direct any reply to Scott Brewster at the Board's offices.

Yours faithfully

Scott Brewster
Senior Engineer
[redacted]

Bolnhurst & Keysoe
PARISH COUNCIL

EastParkEnergyProject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Ref: EN010141

Response to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of RNA Energy Ltd (the Applicant) for an order granting Development Consent for East Park Energy (the Proposed Development).

The East Park Energy Solar project is a planned development which if it gains planning approval and becomes a reality is likely to become the LARGEST solar farm in Europe.
Our objection relates not only to the overwhelming size of the planned development but specifically to the subsequent affect and effect on the Rural setting of Bolnhurst & Keysoe.
With an area of up to 2700 acres under threat of being lost as agricultural land one question must be "where will these developments stop." The Prime Minister – Rishi Sunak – has stated "on my watch we will not lose swathes of our best farmland to solar farms. Instead, we should be making sure that Solar Panels are installed on Commercial Buildings, on sheds and properties." In addition, The Secretary of State for Environment. Food and Rural Affairs – Therese Coffey – states "It is really important that we make the best use of our land to have that food security… which by and large most people would agree, let's use our best agricultural land for farming and make use of brownfield sites for a lot of these energy projects."
Government guidance states that renewable energy developments should be acceptable for their proposed location. Government guidance notes "The deployment of large-scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes." Factors that the local planning authorities for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire will need to consider include:

1. Encouraging the effective use of land by focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value.
2. Where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land.

The current application **does not comply** with this guidance.
The Bedford Local Plan 2030 is clearly written based upon the National Planning Policy Framework. It addresses the development of Renewable Energy as outlined by Policies 56 and 57.
Policy 56 identifies suitable locations for large scale solar energy developments, these being areas of lower quality agricultural land, existing built-up areas and other areas of previously developed land. Areas of Grade 2 land are not included. Yet much of the land proposed for this development is identified in the Government's Agricultural Land classification as Grade 2 (very good). Some of the land is Grade 3a. It is national planning policy to protect both Grade 2 and Grade 3a land.

Policy 57 requires that a range of impacts have been fully addressed if a proposal is to be supported. These include the visual appearance and landscape character, local land use, social and economic impacts, surface and ground water, the best and most versatile agricultural land.

The current proposal does not meet the requirements of Policies 56 and 57 in any respect. **This proposed development should be rejected.**

If RNA Energy/East Park Energy gets "the go ahead" to develop their planned Solar Farm, much of North Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire in which the villages of Great Staughton, Hail Weston, Keysoe, Little Staughton and Pertenhall are situated will be turned from a delightful rural area with attractive small villages into a massive jungle of Solar Panels. The proposal will drastically change forever the local landscape and settlement character of the area in a very negative way. The villages affected will no longer be small settlements nor located in attractive open countryside.

The character of the landscape will be destroyed yet Policy 37 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 requires that development proposals will protect and enhance the key landscape features and visual sensitivities of the landscape character areas. This proposed development clearly does not protect and enhance the character of the local landscape. It does not protect and enhance key views. It does not protect the landscape setting and contribute to maintaining the individual and distinct character, and separate identity of settlements.

The proposal will drastically change forever the local landscape and settlement character of the area in a very negative way. The villages affected will no longer be small settlements located in attractive open countryside.

The current proposed development IGNORES these requirements and **SHOULD BE REJECTED.**

Thought must be given as to how the planned development will affect the environment, wild animals, water courses, the likelihood of flooding as well as the movement of construction vehicles on rural/country roads. Bolnhurst & Keysoe is fortunate in having a huge number of Public Rights of Way which currently provide a must enjoyed amenity to Parishioners.

The plan of the development produced by East Park Energy suggests that many properties will be directly affected by the construction process with residents likely to be bombarded by construction traffic and noise. Whilst "View" is not considered a "Material Planning Matter" the location and size of the planned development suggests that there will be numerous properties as well as Rights of Way ultimately surrounded by Solar Panels or situated within close proximity to the installation and Residents will be greatly concerned as a result. There are already a number of solar farms constructed within a 15 mile radius of the proposed East Park Energy project development and this new massive project is seen as further seriously damaging the rural countryside.

Reviewing the proposed development not only from the local perspective of the villages of Bolnhurst and Keysoe but taking into account the whole area likely to be involved, we make additional comments:

It is our overall opinion that the Solar Farm development is excessive and disproportionately large and too close to all the villages. We are generally very supportive of renewable energy projects as has been demonstrated in the support of projects such as the Solar Farms in Pertenhall and on Staughton Moor which are neither intrusive nor excessive.

We make the following points in relation to our objections:

The siting of the panels on site C in Great Staughton would be north facing, which is suboptimal and would involve more land mass than necessary elsewhere (to prevent shadowing over the solar panels). Likewise a significant portion of the fields in East Park B are north facing and not optimal for producing solar power.The proposed location of East Park Energy site C would destroy a very important view across the Kym Valley and of the village of Great Staughton - including views of the ancient Manor and the Church. The footpath across the ridge on the Moor affords these special views. The Solar Farm would destroy this view and screening would only make it worse as the view would not be visible because of the screening.

The walks designed around the village of Great Staughton - Footpaths 23, 34, and 40 - would be seriously impacted by the Solar Farms together with bridleway 7 into Hail Weston Parish. These walks were specifically designed in the 1990's with the co-operation of the landowners, the local Parish Council, and the community to provide easy access to the countryside for the residents of the Parish.

The recent public exhibitions hosted by Lexington on behalf of the developer identified that there is a sub-station and battery depot within site C. These details are not reflected on the distributed literature nor on the East Park Energy website.

We are concerned about the siting of the storage batteries (BESS) which are due to be located on site C of the development. As stated above these were not shown in the developers distributed literature and should a fire by overheating occur in any of the battery plant, access is almost impossible. It should be noted that there have been several incidents of battery failure in recent years. Should the batteries ignite there is a significant danger from water run off which will most certainly affect crops, wildlife and watercourses. Precise details of what is proposed in terms of these buildings as regards size and shape should be made clear.

The area detailed as Site C, if covered with solar panels, may well not have the same ability to absorb rainwater as the current agricultural land. This could result in faster run off of water into the River Kym and then downstream. This whole area involved for the proposed development is already subject to regular flooding resulting in properties being flooded near the B6 45 bridge over the River Kym and both Pertenhall Road as well as Kimbolton Road in Pertenhall and Keysoe. These road have, at times, been closed on a number of occasions due to flooding. We believe that these issues may well be exacerbated by the potential increased run off from the Solar Farm.

The loss of important reasonable quality agricultural land is exacerbated by the North facing aspect. We note that the majority of the land proposed for this development is identified in

the Governments Agricultural Land Classification as grade 2 with much of the minority remainder as grade 3A. Grade 2 is classed as "very good" and grade 3 is "good to moderate". It is National Planning Policy to protect grade 2 and grade 3A land. Therefore **THIS PROPOSAL SHOULD BE REJECTED FOR THIS REASON ALONE.**

We feel that the Solar Farm site C impacts on the heritage aspects of Great Staughton exemplified in the Conservation and Listed Buildings area along the Highway and the Causeway along the Southern perimeter of site C.

We would like a clear statement as to whether there is any pollution due to noise from the proposed Solar Farm development.

We do not see any provision for how construction vehicles would approach the various sites that are detailed in the proposed plan. The whole area involved is served by relatively narrow Classification B roads that were neither designed nor constructed for heavy goods vehicles and construction traffic.

A local resident has penned a truly excellent statement which we copy below:

“Like all people who reside here, and the many who also visit this tranquil part of the Bedfordshire wolds, I am livid that remote solar opportunists like you are allowed to propose such a monstrous installation in our midst with the hope of getting planning permissions to sell on to a developer. You are preying on a community in a special beautiful rural location by offering financial incentives to landowners to get your 'foot in the door'. I detest your simplistic 'PR company-laden' questionnaires, with 'leading' questions. I hate your deliberately innocuous mailers with their oversized fairytale, 'wild-flower' photos and the tiny site maps where the enormity of your plans are deliberately disguised. You didn't ask the main question...the same one you would ask were this consultation on your own doorstep...

"As a local resident, do you want East Park Energy to build a 2500 acre industrial solar farm here which will make us lots of money but completely wreck your locality and countryside".

My answer (and yours, if you lived here...) to that 'missing' question from your questionnaire is a resounding 'NO"! So take your speculative industrial site plans to the correct location for renewables energy - 'brownfield' and 'rooftops' and away from our beautiful countryside on perfectly viable arable land.

If you argue the 'moral high ground' – that this location 'truly and honestly the only place it can be sited to generate the energy needed for the good of the country' (... it isn't!), then at least have the decency and good manners to approach and offer to buy nearby properties of all those who live here so they have an option to move on to rural locations anew, which this area will no longer be if you get your way. Your tentative and current vague offers to fund community initiatives will not compensate, and are transparent, just 'box ticking'. I suggest it will eventually amount to financial 'peanuts' in whatever form it's given. The same promises were made by the previous Solar installation here, and to my knowledge the community received not a single penny.

I do have another idea to help if it really, really has to be located here and there is no where else... How about you propose to give significant ongoing payments from the energy generation profits to residents for screwing over our home locality? (...and I don't mean £100 off our electricity bills). You already compensate the landowners for using their land, so how about recognising you are ruining most resident's situations too and so pay them appropriately if your plan gets the go ahead? If you were sincere in your objectives, you would sacrifice future profits to correctly compensate the people in the communities and localities you intend to ruin.

As your proposal develops, it will require reconfiguration and reduction in size from the first proposal (which you will have already planned for), but in whatever form... even if half the proposed size this will still be an enormous, inappropriate, ugly industrial installation which changes the nature of our wider locality alongside existing planned developments, all contributing to ruin the amenity and character of the landscape for all, but particularly for those who live close by. You have no interest in us, our homes, or our locality, only your own financial gain driven by government subsidy-aided opportunism. We chose to live here in the countryside. What right do you as external speculators have to propose carpeting 2500 acre... that's 2500 acres, not 25 acres, of it with an ugly massive industrial fenced glass power station right next to homes. I am certain you wouldn't propose isolating your own homes ringed by a sea of solar panels so why propose it here?

Finally, what perhaps you have not considered, is that your oversized project has subjected very many local people like me to sleepless nights again and worry over what's to come. With this 'consultation' you have automatically lit the touchpaper to a process committing the residents of several villages to future uncertainty and condemned them to countless hours battling with you and the national bureaucratic planning system. It creates much torment and pain which will be costly to us not only in monetary terms, but will also drag on as we fight to protect our countryside and our homes whilst you continually slither and slide throughout, altering the shape and size of the site, continually shifting application plans and details to try and justify their acceptance. Don't forget, many of us have been here before with the first Solar farm and I personally won't forgive you for subjecting us all again to this worry, and the future grief required to engage with that process again. I also suggest our existing local solar farms and the countless wind turbines on every horizon means this locality is already playing our part in helping reach net zero. Time to consider somewhere else where there are no homes or countryside to ruin. I absolutely and venomously oppose your application and I implore you to do the decent thing and withdraw it now and find a proper suitable location. This agricultural land which has been successfully farmed for generations should stay as such, and if the landowners don't want to farm it then let them sell to someone who does, and not be ruined by this particular generation's custodians for an easy profit at the expense of the rest of us.

As stated by HM Government’s Chancellor of The Exchequer in last weeks Autumn Statement in the House of Commons “...it's also taking too long for clean energy businesses to access the electricity grid so after talking to businesses such as National Grid, Octopus Energy and SSE we today publish our full response to the "Winser review and connections

action plan - these measures will cut grid access delays by 90% and offer up to £10,000 off electricity bills for those living near to electricity infrastructure.”””

The government has published guidance for renewable and low carbon energy. This states that renewable energy developments should be acceptable for their proposed location. It notes that "The deployment of large scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes." A number of the fields in the proposed area are significantly sloping.

There is an existing natural gas supply pipeline running underneath the proposed development area.

Due to the proposed high fences to be deployed to protect the sites, a significant impact on wildlife is anticipated.

The Council for Protection of Rural England (CPRE Bedfordshire) has major concerns that a Solar Farm on this scale in this location is completely unacceptable because:
1. The Natural England Agricultural Land Classification map for the Eastern Region shows the vast majority of the areas of land proposed for this development are classified as Grade 2, “Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land”
2. The proposal fails to give sufficient weight to landscape and visual impact concerns in this extensive area of quiet Open Countryside and Small Rural Villages

The plans for the East Park Energy development as submitted indicate that 74% of the total land coverage is on land deemed to be "Best and Most Versatile" land. **For this reason, this application should be refused.**

In summary **The Parish Council of Bolnhurst & Keysoe do not support the RNA Energy/East Park Energy project and urge the Planning Inspectorate to turn down any planning application that may be submitted.**

28th November 2023

Mrs S Langley
Clerk to Bolnhurst & Keysoe Parish Council
clerk@bolnhurstkeysoe-pc.gov.uk

Place and Sustainability
Planning, Growth and Environment
New Shire Hall
Emery Crescent
Enterprise Campus
Alconbury Weald
PE28 4YE

Application by RNA Energy Ltd (the Applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for East Park Energy (the Proposed Development)

Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping consultation - Response from Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)

EN010141-000010-EPEP - Scoping Report.pdf (planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

Please find below the Council's formal response to the Applicant's Scoping report for the Development Consent Order (DCO) detailed above.

The response has been divided into separate sections covering technical specialisms.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

The Council welcomes the inclusion of ecology within the proposed Environmental Statement (ES), however we do not support the scoping out of any ecological features from the ES until further detailed survey work has been completed and reviewed by the Council. It is also unclear why ecological features scoped into the construction phase due to habitat loss, have been scoped out of the operational phase, given that habitat loss will continue throughout the operational phase.

Insufficient detail has been provided for the decommissioning phase for the Council to agree scoping out of any ecological features. The Council would expect priority habitats, habitats of local-county importance or those supporting notable species created / managed during the operational phase to be retained during decommissioning and long-term management secured. We recommend the Application include an Outline Decommissioning Environment Management Plan to help inform the ES.

The Council does not agree with the proposed Zone of Influence (ZoI) for ecological features (paragraph 8.3.2). For example:

- ZoI for European Sites designated for bats should be expanded to 30km (including Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation).
- ZoI for Water Vole / Otter should be expanded to land within the Site and immediately surround habitat (including 500m section of watercourses downstream

of the site, watercourses within 10m of development, and other suitable aquatic and terrestrial habitats).
- ZoI for arable field margins / arable flora should be included for land within the Site and immediately surrounding habitat (impacted by shading / hydrological links).

The additional targeted / update ecological surveys of the Site (paragraph 8.4.5) should be expanded to address the above concerns regarding ZoI, including detailed botanical surveys for arable flora and priority habitats, barbastelle bats and water vole / otter. Surveys /assessment should be based on the latest guidelines (e.g. bats, badgers, breeding birds and Biodiversity Net Gain). The assessment should also be based on background habitat data and habitat opportunity mapping that is available from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre.

The Applicant's commitment to delivery of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is welcomed (paragraph 8.4.58). However, developments should aspire to deliver 20% BNG given ti is a part of the Environmental Principles regionally agreed for the Oxford to Cambridge (OxCam) Arc development vision. Delivering 20% BNG would also support Natural Cambridgeshire's Doubling Nature vision and Cambridgeshire County Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy to double nature. The BNG assessment will also need to take into account the interim Nature Recovery Network for Huntingdonshire and the Local Naure Recovery Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (both are currently in production, to be published in 2024/25).

The Council suggests that a Habitats Regulations Assessment screening with Natural England would be beneficial given the site is located within 30km of Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation.

Flood Risk, Drainage, and Surface Water

The general principle is fine and the recognition of the existing flood risk is noted. However, this will need to be managed and designed out in a way that ensures that the development will not increase flood risk or pose a risk to the proposed scheme.

The proposals to manage water through the construction and operation phases is noted in the report. Details will be provided as the design develops, at this stage there are no major concerns and the drainage proposals can be discussed and agreed throughout the pre-application stages.

There is a general approach that the development will not increase the risk of surface water flooding in the operational stage, as the areas of the BESS, access and maintenance tracks etc. will manage runoff and the solar panels will have a negligible impact. The Lead Local Flood Authority will engage further as the design progresses.

General interception principles should be incorporated in the design of the surface water network, to reduce the risks around any generated overland flows.

Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

In respect of Archaeology, the view is that insufficient information has been proposed for inclusion in the Environmental Statement (ES).

The following points are noted for consideration:

- Para. 3.10.104 of the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (2023) states that "where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to, include heritage assets with archaeological interest, the applicant should submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation" to support their application.

  In this case, para. 11.5.7 of the applicant's Scoping Report proposes only a geophysical survey to inform the ES and proposes that intrusive field evaluation follows 'by way of a requirement of the DCO'. We are not in agreement with this approach.

- A Geophysical survey alone does not sufficiently evaluate an area of land. The success of magnetometer surveys relies greatly on geology, magnetic contrast between archaeological features and background magnetisation, and the absence of any magnetic disturbance. Even a successful magnetometer survey will tend to only reliably pick up ditched or enclosed archaeology, and is very poor at identifying and characterising remains defined by discrete features such as postholes, pits, and (particularly) graves containing human remains. If remains are found by a magnetometer survey, it will generally be impossible to fully characterise them, and therefore ascertain their significance, without intrusive field evaluation (trial trenching).

- It is standard practice in Cambridgeshire and regionally to intrusively evaluate solar developments predetermination to identify areas that might require preservation in situ, by nature of the significance of the archaeology or potential impractical expense to the developer of archaeological mitigation excavation. Large areas of significant or dense archaeology can in theory make a solar development unviable, as common 'no dig' solutions for panels and cabling can be considered inappropriate, depending on the depth, significance and fragility of the archaeology. It is therefore imperative to fully evaluate the proposed development site predetermination (see also NPS EN-3 para. 3.10.101 footnote 86).

Traffic and Transport

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

CCC is generally content with the approach that has been outlined, but wishes to make the following comments:

- Mitigation options for the impact that the development will have on PROW users should not be confined to the development boundary. The development will have a lasting impact on the landscape that cannot be removed during the lifespan of the solar park. Compensation for this enduring change should be provided in the form of improvements to public access in adjoining communities.

- Cambridgeshire's *Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)*[1] should be considered by the applicant when proposing temporary and permanent alterations to the PROW network affected by the solar park. CCC will challenge the imposition of any changes that are contrary to the ambitions of the ROWIP.

- Any PROW Management Plan must be subject to the consent of the relevant Local Highway Authority. CCC will not be able to support any alteration to PROW that commences prior to the agreement of such a document.

Transport Assessment

The Transport Assessment should give details of the following:

- A profile of the likely daily (2 way) traffic associated with the construction phase over the 24-month construction period and decommissioning periods
- This should be further broken down into vehicle classifications with particular emphasis of the type of HGV's that will be used and any 'abnormal' or oversized vehicle movements.
- The proposed routing of vehicles to and from the Strategic Road Network with pinch points such as congested links and or junction being identified. It is noted that baseline surveys have been undertaken in 2022 which is acceptable.
- The applicant should refer to Cambridgeshire County Council's 'Transport Assessment Requirements, which sets out the trigger points for further link or junction analysis to be undertaken. It should not be assumed that these are the same as those used for EIA purposes (see later comments)

Non-Motorised User and Road Safety Audits must be carried out where the proposal could result in increased conflict between vehicles and Non-Motorised Users and where the nature of the highway infrastructure changes such that there may be consequential Road Safet issues across all user groups.

There is likely to be a requirement for enhanced NMU infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the large volumes of Heavy Goods Vehicles associated with construction and

[1] https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-plans-and-policies/rights-of-way-improvement-plan

decommissioning phases. The applicant should ensure that the DCO boundary is sufficient to accommodate any infrastructure works required to mitigate these impacts.

A Travel Plan for the construction phase should be submitted albeit that the targets for any car sharing or minibus services must be realistic and backed by evidence that these interventions are viable and will be utilised.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The applicant should ensure that the Transport Assessment and EIA do not contradict each other. That is to say that the data used for the Transport Assessment must be consistent with the data used in the EIA.

As stated in comments above, it should not be assumed that the EIA triggers can be used as a measure of transport impacts in the Transport Assessment.

With reference to Section 14.8 of the EIA SCoping doucment, it is not acceptable to scope out the decommissioning phase therefore this must be included in both the Transport Assessment and EIA at this stage.

Highway Development Management

For the proposed development the following points should be considered:

The assessments should include separate consideration of the Construction, Operational and Decommissioning phases.

Abnormal loads, please show tracking for abnormal loads from the Trunk Road network to the site accesses indicating any temporary improvements/works that may be required to the existing network to facilitate the movement of these vehicles. Any improvement works required need to be within the public highway or within the DCO red line area.

Outline Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and **Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)** should include the following:

1. Details of On-site parking, turning and loading/ unloading for all vehicles associated with the scheme construction phase, across the construction accesses and operational areas.
2. On-site compounds and storage, location and access.
3. Methods of cleaning vehicles to stop debris migrating onto the highway. Use of wheel wash, pressure washers, sweepers etc.

Details of vehicle movements should include type of vehicle and number associated with each phase of the development, using which access and timings/ duration of such. Movements associated with the operation and decommissioning phase, and which accesses will be utilised for such purposes.

- **Details of any apparatus,** details of any apparatus within the highway or crossing the highway and methods of installation.
- **Details of Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs),** details should clarify whether TTROs are required and if so, the location, nature and duration.

Three accesses are proposed for construction purposes within Cambridgeshire, two from the B645 and one from Moor Road, Great Staughton, which is a 'C' Classified Road (C169). The following points detail CCC's comments and requirements in respect of the access:

1. Access South of Hail Weston adjacent Sharps Barnes:
    - Vehicle to vehicle visibility in accordance with Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) for the posted speeds of vehicles or actual speeds of vehicles derived from speed survey caried out in accordance with CA185. Visibility should be shown in both vertical and horizontal planes, to ensure compliance with DMRB SSD. The splays are to be included within the DCO red line drawing where they fall outside the highway boundary.
    - Tracking of two of the largest vehicles likely to use the access, and the geometry of the access should be derived from this tracking which would allow vehicles to pas clear of the public highways. Any access/ highway improvement works required must to be within the highway or within the DCO red line area.
    - Access width must be suitable to allow for two large vehicles to pass for the minimum width of 20m from the highway edge (or as required by tracking).
    - A resultant junction layout should be provided including width/ radii, visibility, ditch/ drain culvert (if any), surfacing to prevent mud/ debris being onto highway, drainage of accesses, clearance of vegetation etc.

2. Access North East of Hail Weston Adjacent Wood View:
    - Vehicle to vehicle visibility in accordance with DMRB for the posted speeds of vehicles or actual speeds of vehicles derived from speed survey caried out in accordance with CA185. Visibility should be shown in both vertical and horizontal planes, to ensure compliance with DMRB SSD. The splays are to be included within the DCO red line drawing where they fall outside the highway boundary.
    - Tracking of two of the largest vehicles likely to use the access, and the geometry of the access should be derived from this tracking which would allow vehicles to pas clear of the public highways. Any access/ highway improvement works required must be within the highway or within the DCO red line area.
    - Access width must be suitable to allow for two large vehicles to pass for the minimum width of 20m from the highway edge (or as required by tracking).
    - A resultant junction layout should be provided including width/ radii, visibility, ditch/ drain culvert (if any), surfacing to prevent mud/ debris being onto highway, drainage of accesses, clearance of vegetation etc.

3. Junction Moor Road/ B645 - Great Staughton.
    - Vehicle to vehicle visibility in accordance with DMRB for the posted speeds of vehicles or actual speeds of vehicles derived from speed survey caried out in accordance with CA185. Visibility should be shown in both vertical and horizontal planes, to ensure compliance with DMRB SSD. The splays are to be included within the DCO red line drawing where they fall outside the highway boundary.
    - Tracking of two of the largest vehicles likely to use the access, and the geometry of the access should be derived from this tracking which would allow vehicles to pas

clear of the public highways. Any access/ highway improvement works required must be within the highway or within the DCO red line area.

- Access width must be suitable to allow for two large vehicles to pass for the minimum width of 20m from the highway edge (or as required by tracking).
- A resultant junction layout should be provided including width/ radii, visibility, ditch/ drain culvert (if any), surfacing to prevent mud/ debris being onto highway, drainage of accesses, clearance of vegetation etc.

4. Moor Road (B645 to Access C-D). Commentary:
    - Moor Road is considered to be of inadequate width to cater for construction vehicles/ existing vehicle movements to pass. The use of this road will therefore most likely cause damage to the verges from a maintenance point of view, possibly tracking mud and debris onto the road possibly causing safety issues and damaging the fabric of the highway. It is likely therefore that mitigation measures will be required for the use of this route by construction/ decommissioning vehicles.
    - Standard mitigation measures may comprise the provision of passing places every 200m of unobstructed forward visibility and at changes in direction. Given the geometry of this road the passing places are likely to be numerous.
    - The passing places will need to be constructed to a suitable standard (width, length and construction) to allow passing of both commercial vehicles associated with the development and the existing commercial and agricultural vehicles utilising Moor Road.
    - The highway boundary will need to be checked at any proposed locations of passing places to ensure they can be delivered within the highway or land included within the red line of the application.
    - Condition surveys of the approach road will be required pre-construction, together with mitigation measures for any damage to the highway which may result from the development.

5. Access from Moor Road for both sites C and D
    - Vehicle to vehicle visibility in accordance with DMRB for the posted speeds of vehicles or actual speeds of vehicles derived from speed survey caried out in accordance with CA185. Visibility should be shown in both vertical and horizontal planes, to ensure compliance with DMRB SSD. The splays are to be included within the DCO red line drawing where they fall outside the highway boundary.
    - Tracking of two of the largest vehicles likely to use the access, and the geometry of the access should be derived from this tracking which would allow vehicles to pas clear of the public highways. Any access/ highway improvement works required must to be within the highway or within the DCO red line area.
    - Access width must be suitable to allow for two large vehicles to pass for the minimum width of 20m from the highway edge (or as required by tracking).
    - A resultant junction layout should be provided including width/ radii, visibility, ditch/ drain culvert (if any), surfacing to prevent mud/ debris being onto highway, drainage of accesses, clearance of vegetation etc.

6. Possible alternatives to using Moor Road as a construction access.

Preferred Option: We note that indicative internal site access tracks/haul roads span between sites C and D. The preferred option is to have both parcels constructed using only the two proposed construction accesses directly served from the B645 (1 & 2 above) and utilise the on-site tracks / haul roads, directly crossing Moor Road (with suitable visibility and geometry indicated above), and thus, removing the need to use the public highway Moor Road from the B645 to the site entrances.

Alternative Option: Should the access of Moor Road and the B645 be shown as suitable with regards visibility and geometry, access the site further north possibly north of Mill View, reducing the length of public highway requiring mitigation (the length the construction traffic then travel will still be subject to the above passing place requirements indicated in 4. above)

General Comments

- Obtain *detailed* highway boundary data from CCC Searches Team for all affected public highways;
- CCC will require a separate S278 side agreement to secure highway works;
- Details should clarify permanent and temporary works to the public highway;
- All works to the public highway will accord with CCC Housing Estate Road Construction Specification, or the DMRB as agreed with CCC.

Climate Change

The climate change chapter covers both resilience of the Scheme to the changing climate and quantification of any greenhouse gas emissions or reductions which could contribute to future climate change.

In paragraph 15.4.3, the applicant states that their intention is to the average carbon intensity for current energy generation in the UK in order to calculate the carbon emissions displaced by the electricity generated at the Scheme. However, this method is not acceptable, because it does not take into account the predicted future decarbonisation of the UK electricity grid over the years that the Scheme would be operational. Therefore, that method would not provide a good estimate of the carbon emissions that would be displaced. It is not sufficient to carry out sensitivity analysis of future scenarios with a range of alternative electricity generation carbon intensities (although this would also be helpful as an additional point). Rather, the core case must be one that takes into account projected future decarbonisation over the years, as this must be regarded as the most likely scenario. Using the current year's carbon intensity to calculate future years displaced emissions is not suitable. Predictions of the carbon intensity of the UK electricity grid by year are readily available, published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). Sensitivity analysis may consider the potential change to displaced emissions in the event that the UK electricity grid decarbonises faster or slower than predicted, but it will never be right to use a single carbon intensity for the many years of the full lifetime of the Scheme.

The ES should consider land use and land use change in addition to the other sources of GHG emissions listed in paragraph 15.5.7.

Aside from those points, the climate change chapter appears to be sufficient.

Other Environmental Topics: Human Health and Mineral safeguarding areas

Human Health

The general approach and the topics considered for assessment in Section 18.2 are appropriate, however the impacts on mental health of living next to a Solar Farm should be considered and added to the list of topics to be assessed.

The methodology is not given and there is no mention of a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) which is required by Policy LP 29 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan – depending on the size of the development, There is a lot of overlap between the Environmental Impact Assessment and HIA; in fact the methodologies are very similar. The preferred option is for the applicant produce a combined HIA and EIA (an Integrated Assessment (IA)), The EIA scoping report doesn't mention HIA and therefore the implication is that the applicant will submit a separate HIA, this is acceptable as long as there is clear cross-referencing between the two documents the HIA methodology needs to be agreed with Public Health at the CCC and needs to meet the requirements in the Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan.

Minerals Safeguarding Areas

Parts of the site appear to lie within Brick Clay and/or Sand and Gravel Mineral Safeguarding Areas as identified under Policy 5 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021). The Applicant will wish to address this topic in their Environmental Statement.

END OF COMMENTS FROM CCC.

CCC would be grateful if the Applicant and Planning Inspectorate take the comments detailed above into consideration and address them as considered appropriate. If the Applicant or the Inspectorate have any queries then they can be emailed to NSIPS@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Patten, Jack

From: Anne Denby <[redacted]
Sent: 27 November 2023 18:29
To: East Park Energy
Subject: East Park Energy Scoping consultation

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Jack Patten,

Thank you for your letter notifying the Canal & River Trust of the Scoping consultation with regards to the proposals for East Park Energy.

We are the charity who look after and bring to life 2000 miles of canals & rivers. Our waterways contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time. These historic, natural, and cultural assets form part of the strategic and local green-blue infrastructure network, linking urban and rural communities as well as habitats. By caring for our waterways and promoting their use we believe we can improve the wellbeing of our nation. The Trust is a prescribed consultee in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) process.

The Trust has reviewed the proposals and considering the location of the works in relation to our network, the Trust can confirm that we have no comments to make on the proposals.

If you have any questions, or require more information, please feel free to contact me on the details below.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries you may have.

Kind regards

Anne

Anne Denby
MRTPI
Area Planner

M: [redacted]
E [redacted]

Canal & River Trust
Canal Lane, Hatton, Warwick, CV35 7JL
canalrivertrust.org.uk

Keep in touch
Sign up for the Canal & River Trust e-newsletter [redacted]
Become a fan on h[redacted]
Follow us on [redacted] and [redacted]

Cadw mewn cysylltiad
Cofrestrwch i dderbyn e-gylchlythyr Glandŵr Cymru [redacted]
Cefnogwch ni [redacted]
Dilynwch ni ar [redacted] ac [redacted]

Patten, Jack

From: Holly Chapman <[redacted]
Sent: 03 November 2023 10:20
To: East Park Energy
Cc: Simon Ellis
Subject: RE: EN010141 - East Park Energy - EIA Scoping Notification and Consultation

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: EST

Dear Mr Patten,

Re. EN010141 – East Park Energy NSIP – EIA Scoping Notification and Consultation

I write on behalf of the Planning Manager at East Cambridgeshire District Council with regard to the below consultation.

At this time, the Local Planning Authority does not have any comments to make in relation to the Scoping Opinion or contents of the Environmental Statement.

Please take this email as the LPA's formal response.

Yours sincerely,

Holly Chapman
Senior Planning Officer

East Cambridgeshire District Council
The Grange
Nutholt Lane
Ely
Cambs
CB7 4EE

Phone: [redacted]
[redacted]
Website: www.eastcambs.gov.uk

Pay, report, apply online 24 hours a day

NHS
East of England Ambulance Service
NHS Trust

By Email Only:
eastparkenergyproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Jack Patten
Environmental Services – Operations Group 3
The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol, BS1 6PN

East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Hammond Road
Bedford
MK41 0RG

Date: 24th November 2022

Our Ref: East Park Energy/ZM

Dear Mr Patten

EAST PARK ENERGY PROJECT
PLANNING INSPECTORATE REFERENCE No. EN010141

Scoping Report by RNA Energy Ltd concerning an Order granting Development Consent for the East Park Energy Project, requesting the Planning Inspectorate's Scoping Opinion pursuant to The Planning Act 2008 (as amended) & the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 – Interested Party Submission by The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST)

We write in response to the Planning Inspectorate's (PINS) letter dated 31st October 2023, inviting comment from consultation bodies and interested parties as to the information considered to be included within the East Park Energy Environmental Statement.

EEAST is an **INTERESTED PARTY** in this planning process and notes the timeline for submitting comments to PINS by 28th November 2023.

EEAST has reviewed the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report submitted by RNA Energy Ltd (RNA) and a summary of the key areas for inclusion within either the Environmental Statement (ES) or in an accompanying Technical Assessment (TA) from EEAST's operational perspective are set out overleaf:

East Park Energy Project - Implications for EEAST's Operations

- **Scoping Work –** is required to determine a suitable study area, baseline assessment & approach to identify the likely effects (impacts) of the Project on EEAST's operations

- **Scheme Design, Mitigation & Management Measures -** are required to avoid, reduce, mitigate & compensate for the likely Project impact on EEAST's operations during the construction phase of the development

- **Suitable DCO Requirements &/or Heads of Terms of Agreement, either via a Section 106 planning obligation or Deed of Obligation –** are required to secure funding & new facilities provision, as required, to increase the capacity, response capability & Project Preparedness for EEAST's staff, vehicle fleet and estate assets to mitigate & manage the impacts arising

- **Suitable Terms of Reference, Membership & a Communications Strategy for a Transport, Community Safety, Health & Wellbeing Working Group -** are required to inform & assist the management of the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Project, requiring a coordinated response from EEAST along with its health & blue light partners, as well as organisations such as the East Anglian Air Ambulance.

EEAST, together with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB), Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire Constabularies and Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Services, is therefore keen to work with RNA to address these points and agree/ secure suitable mitigation and management measures either as a DCO Requirement(s) and/ or a Section 106 planning obligation (or Deed of Obligation), at an early stage of the DCO process.

If it is deemed that the matters raised by EEAST are more appropriately addressed by a supporting Technical Assessment to the ES, rather than as 'Other Effects' within the ES, then we would be agreeable to this.

East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust

EEAST is commissioned by Suffolk and North East Essex ICS (SNEE) on behalf of all ICSs to provide emergency and urgent care services throughout Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, and transports patients to 17 acute hospitals amongst other healthcare settings, including within the Bedford Borough and Huntingdonshire District areas covering the Scheme Boundary.

EEAST covers an area of approximately 7,500 sq miles with a resident population of over six million people and employs approximately 4,000 staff operating from 130 sites.

The 999 service is free for the public to call and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, to respond to the population with a personalised contact service when patients:

- Require rapid transportation with life threatening illness/injury or emergencies - category 1 and 2

- Present with lower acuity urgent and less urgent conditions - category 3 and 4 requiring clinical interventions

- Patients may be passed to 999 via other NHS health care systems, including NHS 111

- EEAST receives over 1 million emergency (999) calls per year and 800,000 calls for patients booking non-emergency transport.

EEAST also provides urgent and emergency responses to Healthcare Professionals requiring ambulance assistance, and inter-facility transfers between hospitals and other healthcare settings, where patients require treatment at alternative sites to their current setting.

Details of EEAST's service remit, priorities, staff, vehicle fleet and estate assets, service targets, co-working relationship with other healthcare and blue light partners, along with its operational standards and thresholds, are set out for information at **Annex 1 & Annex 2**.

East Park Energy Project Proposals – Location & Overview

The Project proposes a new solar farm and energy storage scheme to generate and export up to 400MW of power to the National Grid, providing a sustainable energy source for approximately 108,000 households.

Located to the North West of St Neots within the administrative areas of Bedford BC and Huntingdonshire DC, the scheme would connect to the National Grid substation at Eaton Socon, generating, exporting and storing electricity by utilising solar panels and battery storage.

In summary, the Project would comprise of the following elements;

- A scheme boundary of approximately 768 ha – divided into four sites known as East Park Sites A-D, incorporating land for access, cabling & the grid connection to the Eaton Socon Substation;

- The four sites are located as follows;

    - East Park Site A – covering the land west of the B660 road between Pertenhall & Swineshead at the western end of the site, with access feasible via the B660 to the east;

    - East Park Site B – covering the land between Pertenhall, Keysoe & Little Staughton, with access feasible via the B660 & an unnamed road between Little Staughton & Great Staughton;

- East Park Site C – covering the land south of Great Staughton, with access feasible via Moor Road to the south east;
- East Park Site D – covering land around Pastures Farm between Great Staughton & Hail Weston, with access feasible via existing farm tracks from the B645;

- The principal infrastructure of the Scheme would incorporate the following components:
  - Solar PV modules & mounting structures;
  - Inverters & transformers;
  - High voltage (HV) switchgear, control equipment & cabling;
  - East Park Substation & 400kV grid connection;
  - Battery Energy Storage System;
  - Storage building;
  - Fencing & security;
  - Access tracks;
  - Landscaping & green infrastructure;
- During the construction phase one or more temporary construction compounds & temporary roadways would be required to provide access to all the land within the site (scheme boundary).

Construction, Operation & Decommissioning Phases

Construction Phase

A summary of the construction programme and related activities is outlined below;

- Construction programme of 24 months commencing in 2026, with the aim of the Scheme becoming operational in 2028;
- Construction activities incorporating the following;
  - Site preparation & set up of construction compounds & laydown areas;
  - Import of construction materials, plant & equipment to the site;
  - Upgrading of existing site tracks/ access roads & construction of new tracks;

- Upgrading &/or construction of crossing points (bridges/culverts) over drainage ditches & water courses;
- Setting out of fencelines, panel arrays, substations, landscaping & associated infrastructure;
- Fencing installations;
- Site landscaping & habitat creation;
- Erection of PV module mounting structures & mounting of PV modules;
- Installation of inverter, transformer & substations;
- Installation of electric cabling & battery storage units;
- Construction of substation compound;
- Grid connection groundworks;
- Electrical cabling & connection to the Eaton Socon Substation;
- Testing & commissioning;

- Construction access to make use of the Strategic Road Network through to the A1 junction with the B645 to the north west of St Neots – routing traffic along the B645 & via other local roads into the site;

- Three primary access points under consideration (to be used as the primary construction access points into the site) incorporating;
  - Access One – using an existing solar farm access track that has a junction to the B645 at Sharp's Barn approximately 0.7km west of the A1 & providing access to the grid connection corridor;
  - Access Two – using an existing access track that has a junction to the B645 at Wood View approximately 3.3km wet of the A1 & providing access to East Park Site D;
  - Access Three – using an existing access into East Park Site C from Moor Road to the south of Great Staughton;
  - Access from East Park Site C to East Park Site D via temporary haul roads;
  - Access to East Park Site A from East Park B via a crossing of the B660;
  - Other access points as shown on the Indicative Construction Access Strategy Plan (Figure 3-3) as required;

- An Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) would outline the principles, controls & measures to be implemented during construction.

Operational Phase

The Scheme comprises a temporary development with a lifespan of up to 40 years, the expected operational life of the solar pv panels.

Once constructed access to the site would be limited to the East Park Substation, and for routine operations, vegetation management and farming activities.

Maintenance access would be via van, and the storage building would contain spare equipment and tools for routing repairs and maintenance. In the event that more major repairs are required more staff and specialist equipment (cranes & low loaders) would be utilised.

Operational access would be via the existing public highway with limited traffic movements envisaged.

Decommissioning Phase

Once operations cease, the Scheme would be decommissioned.

All solar PV modules, mounting poles, cabling, inverters, transformers, BESS equipment and fencing would be removed from the site, and recycled or disposed of in line with prevailing market conditions and good practice.

The site would be returned to a condition suitable for return to its original use, following decommissioning.

A Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan would be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, with timescales and transportation methods agreed – decommissioning is expected to take 12 – 24 months and could be undertaken in phases.

Potential Impacts on EEAST Service Areas & Capacity

Project Environmental & Social Effects

Review of the RNA EIA Scoping Report indicates that the Project's potential effects (impacts) on EEAST's operational capacity, efficiency and resources (i.e. staff, vehicle fleet and estate assets) are not included. They are not therefore currently proposed to be baselined or assessed, and no potential mitigation parameters are outlined.

EEAST request that the RNA EIA scoping/ preparation processes (and/or an accompanying Technical Assessment) identify and adequately mitigate the likely Project effects (impacts) on EEAST - who are keen to work with RNA to ensure this omission is addressed by information being prepared to inform a robust DCO Application for examination.

This approach would assist the DCO process, and looking ahead, EEAST wish to agree and secure suitable mitigation and management measures as part of the DCO Requirements and/ or via a Section 106 planning obligation (or Deed of Obligation) and reflect this position in advance of the Examination.

EEAST's principal areas of interest and concern are summarised overleaf.

EEAST Principal Areas of Interest & Concern

Information for Inclusion Within Scope of the Environmental Statement &/or within a Technical Assessment with Related Mitigation & Management Measures

The principal areas of Project interest which are likely to significantly impact on EEAST's operational capacity, efficiency and resources requiring necessary and appropriate mitigation and management measures are outlined below - in light of the information and assumptions presented in the RNA Scoping Report.

Highways, Traffic, Transport & Articulated Indivisible Loads (AIL's)

It is evident that a significant level of construction activities/works incorporating two primary access points to the B645, up to seven further existing/proposed access points via the local road network, along with construction crossing points over the public highway north of Little Staughton, south of Great Staughton and east of Dulce.

An unspecified and likely significant level of imported material for constructing extensive haul roads, and imported plant and equipment for the construction phase, and the establishment of construction compounds, with the potential for significant HGV (and an unspecified number of additional AIL led) traffic movements are envisaged.

This would take place as part of a 2-year construction phase program, required to implement the East Park Energy Project.

Information to determine the effects arising from the construction phase of the Project and the likely impact on EEAST's operational capacity, efficiency and resources (including the likely highway disruption and delay) and any related mitigation measures, therefore need to be included within the scope of the ES and/or within a separate Technical Assessment accompanying the application for a DCO.

Once this information is presented and assessed, any necessary mitigation and management measures ought to be secured and implemented through DCO Requirements, and/ or via a Section 106 planning obligation or Deed of Obligation, as part of any Development Consent Order approval.

Major Accidents & Disasters

It is evident that a significant level and duration of construction phase work reliant on the use of heavy lift plant and specialist machinery/ equipment, producing noise, heat, vibration and dust (with work carried out during potentially adverse weather conditions) is likely to present construction site hazards and dangers.

Working on uneven ground with moving machinery lifting and transporting materials, underlines the risks associated with the construction related activities – requiring both

urgent and other medical interventions and transport conveyance (including specialised airborne tasking/ conveyance) to be appropriately planned for and provided.

Indeed, HSE's construction publications for Great Britain - indicate that work related incidents involving serious injury and fatalities, are statistically significantly higher for the construction industry as compared to the 'all industry' rate.

Information to determine the effect of the construction phase and its impact on EEAST's operational capacity, efficiency and resources is currently absent from the EIA Scoping Report, along with any potential mitigation measure parameters.

In the event of a construction phase accident, appropriate procedures would need to be put in place for emergency access, on-site triage, medical assessment and patient identification, stabilisation and transfer to an appropriate healthcare setting.

The processes and procedures developed by RNA, and any outsourced construction organisations, should refer to legislation and technical guidance which places a duty on RNA to have its own response and medical mitigation to take the patient to a place of 'normal access' and handover to EEAST crews.

In the event that any trenching work is required, EEAST would expect any trench collapse considerations to fall under the confined space regulations and RNA, the construction company and/or contractor(s) should have access to a confined space trained team that could extricate a casualty safely.

Plans and contingencies for facilitating emergency access, on-site triage, medical assessment, patient identification, stabilisation, clinical information, safe and efficient handover to EEAST responders, whilst sustaining operationally optimal attendance times (noting the likely delay factors above) which in urgent cases may require Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) access, is therefore considered to be necessary.

The incidence and impact of major accidents (and disasters) on EEAST and its HEMS partner operational capacity, efficiency and resources, including EEAST hazardous area response teams – HART, needs to be presented and assessed, with any necessary mitigation and management measures secured and implemented through DCO Requirements, and/ or via a Section 106 planning obligation or Deed of Obligation, as part of any Development Consent Order approval.

Population Increase, Health & Wellbeing

It is evident that during the anticipated 2 - year construction period, a significant number of construction workers are required to implement the components of the Scheme.

Information to determine the nature of the construction workforce, their home origin, health status, clinical dependencies, location of any temporary accommodation, which are factors likely to directly impact on EEAST's operational capacity, efficiency and resources, including its co-ordinated response with healthcare and blue light partners, is currently absent from the EIA scope, and any related technical report scoping.

This information therefore ought to be presented and assessed, with any necessary mitigation and management measures secured and implemented through DCO Requirements, and/ or via a Section 106 planning obligation or Deed of Obligation, as part of any Development Consent Order approval.

Joint Working With EEAST, Health & Blue Light Partners

Transport, Community Safety, Health & Wellbeing Working Group

In the light of the above, EEAST recommend that appropriate Terms of Reference, Membership and a Communications Strategy for a Transport, Community Safety, Health and Wellbeing Working Group - is established at an early stage in the DCO preparation process, and in advance of the Examination.

This would help to inform and assist the management of relevant aspects of the Project requiring a coordinated response from 'health and blue light partners', incorporating representatives from EEAST, the ICB, Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire Constabularies and Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Services, with liaison maintained with any other relevant organisations such as East Anglian Air Ambulance.

Concluding Remarks

EEAST welcomes the opportunity to respond to the RNA Energy Ltd EIA Scoping Report, and following review of the documentation, consider that it is currently deficient in its proposed assessment of the potential Project impacts on EEAST as outlined above.

EEAST considers that the Project is likely to give rise to significant effects on its operational capacity, efficiency and resources (incorporating its staff, vehicle fleet and estate assets) which ought to be baselined and assessed in order to determine appropriate mitigation and management measures.

The assessment process can be undertaken either as 'Other Effects' within the ES, or within a separate Technical Assessment to accompany the ES.

The Project is likely to adversely affect EEAST's ability to meet and deliver its targets and priorities (statutory duties) as a key healthcare and emergency services provider.

Identified impacts arising from the Project should therefore be addressed by employing appropriate mitigation and management measures - to be secured and implemented through DCO Requirements, and/ or via a Section 106 planning obligation or Deed of Obligation, as part of any Development Consent Order approval.

This approach ought to be reflected in a Statement of Common Ground to clarify the position reached and inform the Examination process in due course.

The measures ought to include a process to assist EEAST and its health and blue light partners to plan for and implement co-ordinated responses to construction phase (and any operational and decommissioning phase) Project impacts and incidents, to optimise patient outcomes.

We trust this is of assistance and look forward to working with RNA to satisfactorily address the points raised.

Yours sincerely

Zoë May
Head of Business Relationships

cc: David Parke, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough ICB
Emma Sheldon, Infrastructure & Sustainability Programme Support Officer
Nikki Barnes, Associate Director of System & ICB Estates, BLMK Integrated Care Board and Integrated Care System
Elly McKee, Cambridgeshire police
Simon Thompson Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue
Gavin Chambers, Assistant Chief Officer, Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service
Trevor Rodenhurst, Chief Constable, Bedfordshire Police

ANNEX 1

EEAST KEY FACTS & SERVICE INFORMATION

This section summarises EEAST's service remit, priorities, staff, vehicle fleet and estate assets, and co-working relationship with other healthcare and blue light partners and service targets

Service Remit & Priorities

The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust provide accident and emergency services and non-emergency patient transport services across the East of England.

The Trust Headquarters is in Melbourn, Cambridgeshire and there are Ambulance Operations Centres (AOC) at each of the three locality offices in Bedford, Chelmsford and Norwich who receive over 1 million emergency calls from across the region each year, as well as 800,000+ calls for patients booking non-emergency transport.

The 999 service is part of the wider NHS system providing integrated patient care. Provision of 999 services is aligned closely with national and regional initiatives driven by:

- Sustainability and Transformational Partnerships
- Integrated Care System
- Integrated Urgent Care systems, i.e. NHS 111, Clinical Assessment Services, Urgent Treatment Centres, GP Out of Hours Services.

Additionally, regional Ambulance Trusts may collaborate closely with other ambulance services, the wider emergency services or wider system providers to deliver appropriate patient care.

To support the service transformation agenda, the key requirements are:

- To deliver the core response and clinical outcome standards as defined by the Ambulance Response Programme
- To fulfil statutory duties relating to emergency preparedness, resilience and response (EPRR)
- Optimisation of call handling and appropriate responses through virtual alignment of NHS 111/999 and call/CAD transfer between ambulance services
- Increase the percentage of lower acuity calls managed through "hear and treat" and "see and treat" options
- Utilise a virtual delivery model to support wider workforce integration for paramedics, call handlers and specialist staff with local urgent care delivery models

- Facilitate cross boundary working and the flexible use of ambulance service resources to support the development of regional Sustainability and Transformational Plans and Integrated Care Systems.

The 999 service is free for the public to call and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, to respond to the population with a personalised contact service when patients:

- Require rapid transportation with life threatening illness/injury or emergencies - category 1 and 2
- Present with lower acuity urgent and less urgent conditions - category 3 and 4 requiring clinical interventions
- Patients may be passed to 999 via other NHS health care systems, including NHS 111
- EEAST receives over 1 million emergency (999) calls per year and 800,000 calls for patients booking non-emergency transport.

EEAST also provides urgent and emergency responses to Healthcare Professionals requiring ambulance assistance, and inter-facility transfers between hospitals and other healthcare settings, where patients require treatment at alternative sites to their current setting.

Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS) provide an essential lifeline for people unable to use public or other transport due to their medical condition. These much-needed journeys support patients who are:

- Attending hospital outpatient clinics or other healthcare locations
- Being admitted to or discharged from hospital wards
- Needing life-saving treatments such as radiotherapy, chemotherapy, renal dialysis or DVT treatment.

Service Assets

EEAST clinicians:

- Emergency Care Support Workers
- Emergency Medical Technicians
- Paramedics
- Specialist Paramedics
- Critical Care Paramedics.

Types and models of response:

- Community First Responder (CFR)
- Patient Transport Service (PTS)
- Clinical See and Treat
- Clinical Hear and Treat (telephone triage)

- Early Intervention Team (EIT)
- Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV)
- Double Staff Ambulance (DSA)
- Hazardous Area Response Team (HART)
- Specialist Operations Response Team (SORT)
- Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS), EEAST utilise 5 aircraft across 3 charities within the region

    - Magpas – 1 x aircraft from RAF Wyton
    - East Anglian Air Ambulance – 2 x aircraft form Cambridge and Norwich Airport
    - Essex and Herts Air Ambulance – 2 x aircraft form North Weald and Earls Colne

Ambulance Operations Centre (AOC) staff:

- 999 Call Handlers
- Emergency Medical Dispatchers
- Tactical Operations Staff.

EEAST support services staff cover all other corporate and administrative functions across the region.

Estates

The Trust is rolling out a Hub and Spoke network with up to 18 hubs to provide regional premises for delivery of operational responses to calls, flow of ambulance preparation via the Make Ready function (cleaning and restocking of ambulances) and despatch of ambulances to local spokes (reporting posts/response posts/standby locations). Support services such as workshop facilities, clinical engineering (medical equipment store and workshop), consumable product stores and support office accommodation are also provided from Hubs.

- Ambulance Station Central Reporting Post - A 24/7 - Permanent reporting base for staff and primary response location for one or more vehicles. Provision of staff facilities.
- Ambulance Station Response Post - A primary response location, which includes staff facilities but is not a reporting base for staff.
- Standby Location - Strategic locations where crews are placed to reach patients quickly. Facilities used by staff are provided on an informal basis only by agreement with the relevant landowner.

Ambulance Stations in the East Park Energy Project and surrounding area are:

St Neots	Bedford
Huntingdon	

Vehicle Fleet

- 387 front line ambulances
- 178 rapid response vehicles

- 175 non-emergency ambulances (PTS and HCRTs vehicles)
- 46 HART/major incident/resilience vehicles located at 2 x Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) bases with a number of specialist vehicle resources.

Workforce & Equipment

Approximately 4,000 staff and 800+ volunteers across 120 sites. Each resource has equipment specific to the operational function of the vehicle and skill level of the staff.

Specialisms

EEAST works collaboratively across our blue light partners and have joint working groups with Police and Fire Services across the region, working in partnership managing responses to incidents and undertaking joint exercises with our dedicated resources to prepare for specialist rescue, major incidents and mass casualty incidents.

EEAST is a Category 1 Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act, 2004, playing a key role in developing multi-agency plans against the county and national risk registers. EEAST also works closely with the Military, US Air Force, Royal Protection Service, Stansted Airport and the Port of Felixstowe Police, Fire and Ambulance services.

EEAST's Emergency Preparedness Resilience Response (EPRR) team lead on the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) working in close partnership with all blue light agencies, the Coastguard and Local Authorities. Specialist resources work with the Police in counter terrorism and developing response plans in the event of a major incident.

EEAST are an integral part of the locality's resilience response sitting on a number of safety advisory groups, east coast flood working groups and hospital emergency planning groups.

Co-working Relationship with other Blue-Light and Healthcare Partners

EEAST is an integral part of the wider healthcare system working closely with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System and Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keyes Integrated Care System (ICS) to deliver emergency and urgent care and are key stakeholders in supporting wider healthcare initiatives.

Within Bedford BC and Huntingdonshire DC, EEAST work with the ICSs in delivering additional care pathways focussing on hospital admission avoidance, this is a partnership with the local acute providers and local authorities. EEAST operate Early Intervention Response vehicles and a Rapid Intervention Vehicle. These resources work

collaboratively within the system to offer holistic care to patients whilst reducing pressure on Emergency Departments.

This is EEAST's response to the requirements of the **NHS Long Term Plan**, with the clear narrative that in order to bring the NHS into financial balance all NHS providers must find mechanisms to treat patients in the community and out of the most expensive care setting, which are acute hospitals. This not only saves the NHS critical funding, but it also improves patient outcomes.

EPRR and Specialist Operations teams routinely train with other blue light agencies in preparedness for major incidents such as terrorist attacks and major incidents with statutory training obligations to respond to local and national incidents.

In continuing to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic, EEAST is working collaboratively with Private Ambulance providers, the Military, volunteer Ambulance Services (such as St John Ambulance and British Red Cross) and local Fire and Rescue Services, to increase its capacity and maintain service delivery to meet the additional demand.

EEAST Service Targets

All NHS organisations are required to report against a set of Core Quality Indicators (CQIs) relevant to their type of organisation. For ambulance trusts, both performance and clinical indicators are set as well as indicators relating to patient safety and experience.

NHS organisations are also required to demonstrate their performance against these indicators to both their commissioners and Regulators (NHS England/Improvement).

It is important to note that EEAST is also measured on how quickly a patient is transported to an appropriate location for definitive care, often in time critical circumstances.

Failure to deliver against these indicators will result in a **Contract Performance Notice** and could result in payment being withheld, as prescribed in **NHS Standard Contract 20/21 General Conditions (Full Length) GC9 9.15.**

ANNEX 2

EEAST Operational Standards & Thresholds
Ambulance Service Response Times

Operational Standards	Threshold	Consequence of Breach
Category 1 (life-threatening) calls – proportion of calls resulting in a response arriving within 15 minutes	Operating standard that 90th centile is no greater than 15 minutes	Issue of a Contract Performance Notice and subsequent process in accordance with GC9. For each second by which the Provider's actual 90th centile performance exceeds 15 minutes, £2.50 per 1,000 Category 1 calls received in the Quarter
Category 1 (life-threatening) calls – mean time taken for a response to arrive	Mean is no greater than 7 minutes	Issue of a Contract Performance Notice and subsequent process in accordance with GC9
Category 2 (emergency) calls – proportion of calls resulting in an appropriate response arriving within 40 minutes	Operating standard that 90th centile is no greater than 40 minutes	Issue of a Contract Performance Notice and subsequent process in accordance with GC9. For each second by which the Provider's actual 90th centile performance exceeds 40 minutes, £2.50 per 1,000 Category 2 calls received in the Quarter
Category 2 (emergency) calls – mean time taken for an appropriate response to arrive	Mean is no greater than 18 minutes	Issue of a Contract Performance Notice and subsequent process in accordance with GC9
Category 3 (urgent) calls – proportion of calls resulting in an appropriate response arriving within 120 minutes	Operating standard that 90th centile is no greater than 120 minutes	Issue of a Contract Performance Notice and subsequent in process accordance with GC9. For each second by which the Provider's actual 90th centile performance exceeds 120 minutes, £2.50 per 1,000 Category 3 calls received in the Quarter
Category 4 (less non-urgent "assess, treat, transport" calls only) – proportion of calls resulting in an appropriate response arriving within 180 minutes	Operating standard that 90th centile is no greater than 180 minutes	Issue of a Contract Performance Notice and subsequent process in accordance with GC9. For each second by which the Provider's actual 90th centile performance exceeds 180 minutes, £2.50 per 1,000 Category 4 calls received in the Quarter

For All Indicators:

Method of Measurement:	See AQI System Indicator Specification at: https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/ambulance-quality-indicators/ Review of Service Quality Performance Reports
Timing of Application of Consequence	Quarterly for all indicators
Application	AM

creating a better place

Environment Agency

Jack Patten
Planning Inspectorate
Environmental Services
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Our ref: DPS XA/2023/100043
Your ref: EN010141

Date: 28 November 2023

Dear Jack Patten

Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) – Regulations 10 and 11

Application by RNA Energy Ltd (the Applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for East Park Energy (the Proposed Development)

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report for the proposed development. We have reviewed the Environment Impact Assessment Scoping Report EN010141, October 2023, Version 01.

For the topics within our remit, we wish to make the following comments.

A) FLOOD RISK

The site boundary includes areas of Flood Zone 3, which is land defined by the planning practice guidance as having a high probability of flooding. As shown in Table 2 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for flood risk and coastal change, development classified as Essential Infrastructure under Annex 3 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is only appropriate in these areas if the exception test is passed alongside the sequential test.

We have no issues with the matters falling under our flood risk remit that the EIA Scoping Report has proposed to be scoped in / out of the EIA. However there are some aspects that have not been considered or have not been addressed sufficiently.

Fluvial flood risk scope
The Environment Agency are a statutory consultee for fluvial and coastal flood risk planning matters, with the Lead Local Flood Authority being the statutory consultee for matters pertaining to surface water flooding. There is no risk of coastal flooding to the site, but given its risk of fluvial flooding, we agree that this should be scoped into the EIA for the construction and operation stages of the development, but that it is not necessary for the decommissioning stage.

Please note that for the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) we expect the applicant to ensure the flood risk impacts to and from the development are considered throughout all stages of construction. It is noted within the Scoping Report that there will be temporary roadways and storage of materials, so it will be necessary to ensure there is no loss of flood storage resulting from any temporary works, regardless of how long they are needed for.

There will likely be more flood risk considerations necessary for the operational stage of the development. For instance, the report states in paragraph 9.5.17 that for Site A, if the solar panels are located within Flood Zone 3 there is the potential for a slight reduction in flood storage volume

Cont/d..

due to the displacement of water by panels and any associated infrastructure/tracks. Therefore, we'd like to remind the applicant that their FRA should:

- Demonstrate that development within the floodplain of the 1% annual exceedance probability (AEP) plus climate change has been avoided where possible (see below further advice on the Sequential Test);

- Ensure there will be no increase in flood risk resulting from the proposed development – please be aware that any increase in built development or raising of ground levels within the floodplain (1% AEP plus an allowance for climate change) will only be considered acceptable if it can be demonstrated the proposed development will not result in a loss of flood storage. Level-for-level and volume-for-volume compensation is the preferred method of mitigation. According to Section 5.8 of National Policy Statement EN-1 development should be designed to ensure there is no increase in flood risk elsewhere, and account for the predicted impacts of climate change throughout the lifetime of the development. There should be no net loss of floodplain storage and any deflection or construction of flood flow route should be safely managed within the site. Mitigation measures should make as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques.

- Demonstrate how the site will remain operational during times of flooding – this is in line with Section 5.8 of NPS EN-1, which states that having resilient energy infrastructure not only reduces the risk of flood damages to the infrastructure, it also reduces the disruptive impacts of flooding on those homes and businesses that rely on that infrastructure. It also states that new energy infrastructure necessary in flood risk areas should be designed and constructed to remain operational in times of flood;

- Consider how site users, e.g. staff needed for operational or maintenance, will be kept safe from any identified flood hazards and any damage minimised (it is worth noting that the River Kym catchment is relatively fast flowing and frequently floods).

Flood risk modelling and data

It is noted that the Local Planning Authority should have undertaken a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) will include local flood risk information to inform the FRA for the proposed development, but this has not been identified as a source of information within the Scoping Report. The SFRA will also identify the areas of Flood Zone 3b (functional floodplain).

The Scoping Report states in paragraph 9.2.2 that 'it is assumed that information provided by the EA models and online mapping is sufficient'. Please be aware that EA models are not designed to assess third party developments, so do not assume that they are suitable for assessing the flood risk associated with the proposal. It is always the applicant's responsibility to assess the suitability of an existing model on their project. Although Environment Agency fluvial flood modelling is often seen as the 'best available' flood modelling, these are created for our own purposes and usually at a catchment-scale. Although they are made available for third parties to use, and it expected that the 'best available' flood modelling be used in informing an FRA, it is up to the applicant to review the modelling and determine whether it appropriately represents flood risk on a site-specific basis or whether any updates or modifications need to be made to improve its usefulness in informing an FRA.

The applicant should also provide evidence of any modelling checks and subsequent updates carried out and document these in the FRA model reporting. Similarly, the Scoping Report states in paragraph 9.7.1 'it is assumed that flood level data associated with fluvial flooding from the Duloe Brook and River Kym will be available and is otherwise sufficient to form an assessment of flood risk to the site and that qualitative assessment of third-party impacts is acceptable, without the requirement for bespoke hydraulic modelling'; again it is up to the applicant to review the flood modelling currently available and determine whether they feel it is appropriate for use in the FRA, or whether further bespoke hydraulic modelling or improvements to existing modelling is required

to be accurately represent the flood risk on site. It is also worth noting that there is new modelling including some changes to the extents on the River Kym due early in 2024, which we'd expect to be reviewed as part of the FRA.

Where watercourses have not been modelled, we agree that EA surface water mapping may be a useful gauge of the risk, but the applicant will still need to determine its usefulness and decide whether additional modelling is required, particularly in relation to future flood risk.

Climate change
We're pleased to see that climate change is considered within the Scoping Report, with elements relating to fluvial flood risk proposed to be scoped into the EIA. However, in terms of flood risk, we feel that having separate flood risk and climate change chapters within the EIA creates a disjointed approach to assessing future flood risk and would recommend the flood risk chapter include its own climate change section so that future flood risk is sufficiently considered, with reference to 'Flood Risk Assessment: climate change allowances'.

The site falls within the Upper and Bedford Ouse Management Catchment peak river flow allowances. Essential infrastructure in flood zone 3 should use the higher central climate change allowance. Given the 40-year lifespan of the proposed development, we would expect the 30% climate change allowance associated with the 2080s epoch to be assessed, given that the development's life span will fall outside of the 2050s epoch band.

Proximity
Although final layouts have not yet been determined given the early scoping stage of the application, there is suggestion throughout the Scoping Report that some works may take place near main river channels. Given that Site A lies either side of the Pertenhall Brook, and that the River Kym forms the northern boundary of Site C, we would recommend the flood risk implications associated with the proximity of the development to the main river channels be scoped into the EIA if works are going to be within 20 metres of a main river channel.

In accordance with paragraph 5.8.17 of NPS EN-1, development (including construction works) should account for any existing watercourses and flood management structures or features, or any land likely to be needed for future structures or features to ensure development does not restrict essential maintenance and emergency access to the river channels. The permanent retention of a continuous unobstructed area is an essential requirement for future maintenance and/or improvement works. Works in close proximity to the main river channel may adversely affect the stability of the riverbank, and compromise its function, potentially resulting in adverse flood risk. Structures may also interfere with natural geomorphological processes and be placed at risk of damage arising from channel migration/erosion.

Please note that the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 require a flood risk activity permit (FRAP) or exemption to be obtained for any activities which will take place:

- On or within 8m of a main river (16 metres if tidal)
- On or within 8m of a flood defence structure or culverted main river (16m if tidal)
- On or within 16m of a sea defence
- Involving quarrying or excavation within 16m of any main river, flood defence (including a remote defence) or culvert
- In the floodplain of a main river if the activity could affect flood flow or storage and potential impacts are not controlled by a planning permission.

If any of the works are likely to require a FRAP under the Environmental Permitting Regulations, we recommend the applicant consider early on whether they might consider the disapplication of the EPR and matters pertaining to FRAPs be considered as Protective Provisions under the DCO.

Sequential Test
Avoiding flood risk through the sequential test is the most effective way of addressing flood risk because it places the least reliance on measures such as flood defences. In line with paragraph 161 of the NPPF, 'all plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of

development – taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change – so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property'. Paragraph 162 of the NPPF states that development 'should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The sequential approach should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from flooding'.

The application of the sequential test is not mentioned as part of the Scoping Report. Although it's not necessary to include as part of the scoping stage of the application, we wanted to use this opportunity to emphasis its importance and ensure it is sufficiently applied and evidenced within the FRA.

Opportunities
In accordance with paragraph 161 of the NPPF, all plans should make use of opportunities provided by the new development and improvements in green and other infrastructure to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, making use of natural flood management techniques as part of an integrated approach to flood risk management.

Essential infrastructure within Flood Zone 3 is also required to pass the Exception Test, part of which requires new development to remain safe for its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, reduces flood risk overall.

Although not essential for the Scoping Report, please be aware that at future stages of the application, particularly for major and/or significant developments, we would expect options for how the development could reduce flood risk overall to be considered. ***For this, it is worth noting that the River Kym contributes a significant volume of water to the Great Ouse, so any measures to absorb water would provide some benefits to the local area. We'd strongly encourage the applicant to investigate Natural Flood Management options possible.***

The site falls within a flashy catchment, with some surface water issues within the land parcels. Surface water and fluvial flood risk are closely interlinked around the site, with the gradient of the land resulting in surface water quickly entering the River Kym during rainfall events. We believe that Natural Flood Management solutions would be possible and desirable within this area and recommend consideration of options that slow the flow of water and seek to hold water at source rather than exacerbate issues of surface water downstream. Opportunities that link in with Biodiversity Net Gain should be explored.

B) PROTECTION OF GROUND AND SURFACE WATER

The site is underlain by superficial deposits including the Oadby Member (Diamicton), River Terrace Deposits (sands and gravels), Glaciofluvial deposits and alluvium. In some areas superficial deposits are absent. The River Terrace, alluvium and glaciofluvial deposits are all classified as Secondary A aquifers.

The bedrock beneath the site comprises the Oxford Clay Formation which is classified as an unproductive aquifer. The site does not lie within a source protection zone. The site is therefore of moderate to low sensitivity for groundwaters.

We are largely satisfied with the matters that are proposed to be scoped in and out of the Environmental Impact Assessment and provide further comments in relation to sections 9 and 10 of the report below with some general informatives about the scheme.

Section 9: Flood Risk, Drainage and Surface Water
Potential risks to private water supplies have been scoped in for the construction and operation phases of the development but scoped out for the decommissioning phase. An impact assessment on the basis of potential contamination pathways will be undertaken as required. We are pleased to see that private water supplies have been considered.

We note that a scheme or plan for managing any potential fire-water has not been mentioned within the report. As there is a battery storage element to the proposed scheme, with a potential fire risk, we would expect the CEMP to include a fire-water management plan to ensure that the groundwater beneath the site, and controlled waters in general, are not at risk from contamination from any fire-waters and fire-fighting additives.

Section 10: Ground Conditions
This section states that ground conditions will be scoped in for further assessment, specifically the potential for remobilisation of contaminants affecting controlled waters. The ground conditions chapter will be supported by a standalone Phase I Geo-Environmental Assessment. We welcome this recommendation. This recommendation is made on the assumption made in section 10.4.10 that the likelihood of contaminated soils and groundwater being present is low and will only be potentially present within small, isolated areas of the site. Based on the information presented to date we are satisfied with this assessment.

If contamination is identified as part of the land contamination assessment works we would expect to see that a foundation works risk assessment is completed for the development. This could be included in the CEMP along with pollution prevention measures to ensure the groundwater beneath the site is not impacted by on-site activities. This includes the use of drilling muds for the horizontal directional drilling that may be employed within the construction element of the scheme. Paragraph 10.6 of the report details the proposed assessment methodology for land contamination. We are satisfied with the proposed approach.

Waste on site
Excavated materials that are recovered via a treatment operation can be re-used on-site under the CL:AIRE Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice. This voluntary Code of Practice provides a framework for determining whether or not excavated material arising from site during remediation and/or land development works are waste.

Developers should ensure that all contaminated materials are adequately characterised both chemically and physically, and that the permitting status of any proposed on site operations are clear. If in doubt, the Environment Agency should be contacted for advice at an early stage to avoid any delays.

The Environment Agency recommends that developers should refer to our:
- Position statement on the Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice and;
- website at https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency for further guidance

Waste to be taken off site
Contaminated soil that is, or must be disposed of, is waste. Therefore, its handling, transport, treatment and disposal is subject to waste management legislation, which includes:
- Duty of Care Regulations 1991
- Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005
- Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010
- The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011

Developers should ensure that all contaminated materials are adequately characterised both chemically and physically in line with British Standards BS EN 14899:2005 'Characterisation of Waste - Sampling of Waste Materials - Framework for the Preparation and Application of a Sampling Plan' and that the permitting status of any proposed treatment or disposal activity is clear. If in doubt, the Environment Agency should be contacted for advice at an early stage to avoid any delays.
If the total quantity of waste material to be produced at or taken off site is hazardous waste and is 500kg or greater in any 12 month period the developer will need to register with us as a hazardous waste producer. Refer to our website at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency for more information.

C) ECOLOGY AND NATURE CONSERVATION

Water Voles & Otter Surveys
In section 8.4.5 we note that both water vole and otter surveys are due to be completed in 2024, however, in sections 8.4.52 – 8.4.55 it is noted that no general surveys are anticipated, unless localised ditch crossings are proposed. Please can this be clarified.

Biodiversity Net Gain
In section 8.4.57 – 8.4.58, we are pleased to see the Scheme will commit to a minimum of 10% BNG. We advise the applicant to consider the opportunities highlighted above for Natural Flood Management and to consider any Local Nature Recovery Strategies and any mitigation measures listed for the affected waterbodies under Water Framework Directive (WFD). We look forward to receiving more detailed plans in due course.

We welcome any enhancements for protected species present on site. We look forward to receiving the WFD assessment with the Environmental Statement.

Ecological Buffer Zone
In section 8.5.12, it is understood that at this stage a 6 metre buffer has been identified for all watercourses and ditches. We would like to see a 10 metre ecological buffer zone of all watercourses and ditches. If encroachment into this 10 metre ecological buffer zone is necessary as the plan develops, we will need to be re-consulted.

In section 8.6.30 – 8.6.3, we note that otters are proposed to be scoped out of the ES. If the 10 metre ecological buffer zone is retained, we agree that otters are unlikely to be impacted during construction or operation. However, we would want to see them screened in and considered for any compounds on site.

In section 8.6.32 – 8.6.33, we note that water voles are proposed to be scoped out of the ES. If the 10 metre ecological buffer zone is retained, we agree that water voles are unlikely to be impacted during construction or operation.

Watercourse crossings
If the need for any crossings of watercourse or ditches is identified these would be subject to a Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) and we would welcome alternatives to culverting.

D) WATER RESOURCES

The construction activities for the scheme describe below ground concrete; trench cut and backfilling; and horizontal directional drilling. The ground conditions section also refers to earthworks, excavations and piling. We note however that a need for de-watering has not been identified as part of these activities. This activity was previously exempt from requiring an abstraction license. Since 01 January 2018, most cases of new planned dewatering operations above 20 cubic meters a day will require a water abstraction license from the Environment Agency, prior to the commencement of dewatering activities at the site.

If dewatering is required, it will require an abstraction licence if it doesn't meet the criteria for exemption in The Water Abstraction and Impounding (Exemptions) Regulations 2017 Section 5: Small scale dewatering in the course of building or engineering works. It may also require a discharge permit if it falls outside of our regulatory position statement for de-watering discharges.

FURTHER ADVICE TO APPLICANT

We welcome the opportunity to further engage and advise further on the matters outlined above, in order to provide you with confidence and clarity in relation to our position on the DCO proposals prior to formal submission and outside the statutory engagement process. This would

fall within the scope of our Cost Recoverable Planning Advice service, and as such would be subject to a fee of £100 per staff hour of time.

Should you have any queries regarding this response, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Simons
Planning Specialist, National Infrastructure Team
Direct e-mail NITeam@environment-agency.gov.uk

cc: RNA Energy Ltd

Patten, Jack

From: Squire, Sandra [redacted]@forestrycommission.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 November 2023 14:20
To: East Park Energy
Subject: EN010141 - East Park Energy Scoping Consultation

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Thank you for consulting the Forestry Commission on this proposal.

As the Governments forestry experts, we endeavour to provide as much relevant information to enable the project to reduce any impact on irreplaceable habitat such as ancient\semi natural Woodland as well as other woodland.

We are particularly concerned about any impact on ancient semi natural woodland and will expect to see careful consideration of any impact and any weightings which might be applied to any assessments of route options/or site choice.

We note there are several fragmented woodlands immediately adjacent to the perimeters of the proposed sites and areas of lowland mixed deciduous woodland within the proposed sites. We also note that the Ancient semi-natural woodland of Huntingdon wood is within 20 metres of the site boundary of the grid connection corridor.

Ancient and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats. As highlighted in Paragraph 180 (c) of the National Planning Policy Framework, which states: *"Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists".*

While Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects are not subject to the NPPF, it sets out the importance of these habitats.

Buffer zones should be provided to protect trees from any potential impacts of the development. For ancient woodlands, you should have a buffer zone of ***at least*** 15 metres to avoid root damage. Where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, you're likely to need a larger buffer zone. These zones should contribute to wider ecological networks and could include further tree planting or a mosaic of semi-natural habitats.

The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) sets out the UK government's approach to sustainable forestry and woodland management, including standards and requirements as a basis for regulation, monitoring and reporting requirements. The UKFS has a general presumption against deforestation. Page 23 of the Standard states that: "Areas of woodland are material considerations in the planning process…." In addition, lowland mixed deciduous woodland is on the Priority Habitat Inventory (England). This recognises that under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan they were recognised as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan has now been superseded by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework but this priority status remains.

It is expected that there will be a thorough assessment of any loss of all trees and woodlands within the project boundary and the development of mitigation measures to minimise any risk of net deforestation because of the scheme. A scheme that bisects any woodland will not

only result in significant loss of woodland cover but will also reduce ecological value and natural heritage impacts due to habitat fragmentation, and have a huge negative impact on the ability of the biodiversity (flora and fauna) to respond to the impacts of climate change. Woodland also provides habitat for a range of Section 41 Priority Species including all bats.

For any woodland within the development boundary, land required for temporary use or land where rights are required for the diversion of utilities you must take into consideration the Root Protection Zone. The Root Protection Zone (as specified in British Standard 5837) is there to protect the roots of trees, which often spread out further than the tree canopy. Protection measures include taking care not to cut tree roots (e.g., by trenching) or causing soil compaction around trees (e.g., through vehicle movements or stacking heavy equipment) or contamination from poisons (e.g., site stored fuel or chemicals).

With the Government aspirations to plant 30,000 ha of woodland per year across the UK by 2025. The Forestry Commission is seeking to ensure that tree planting is a consideration in every development not just as compensation for loss. However, there are a number of issues that need to be considered when proposing significant planting schemes:

- Biosecurity of all planting stock needs to be considered.
- Woodlands need to be climate and pest and disease resilient.
- Maximise the ecosystem services benefits of all new woodland wherever possible (flood reduction)
- Planting contributes to a 'resilient treescape' by maximising connectivity across the landscape.
- Plans are in place to ensure long term management and maintenance of woodland.

We hope these comments are useful to you. If you need any further information on woodland creation or management, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes

Sandra

Sandra Squire

Local Partnership Advisor
East & East Midlands

Tel: [redacted]

Subscribe to our newsletter to be the first to hear about the latest information, advice, and news from the Forestry Commission

Disclaimer

East Farm Solar Park

Response to Planning Inspectorate Re: EN010141 - East Park Energy - EIA Scoping Notification and Consultation

Great Staughton Parish Council would like to make the following response to the proposals for solar Farms in Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire.

The Parish Council's response has been informed by a meeting of a large of number of residents on the subject.

There is an overall opinion that the Solar Farm development is excessive and disproportionately large and too close to villages. The Parish Council is generally very supportive of renewable energy projects as it has demonstrated in its support for projects such as the solar farms on Staughton Moor which are neither intrusive or excessive.

The Parish Council would make the following points in relation to its objections

- Great Staughton is in the process of completing its Neighbourhood Plan which is expected to be made in 2024. Regulation 14 consultations have just been completed. A draft plan was posted on the Parish Council Website prior to the public knowledge of the East Park proposals. This contains details of 8 specific views which are of such importance they require protection under the Neighbourhood Plan. Included in the draft plan there are 2 views namely 11 and 12 which would be seriously affected by the solar farm. There have been supportive comments in the Regulation 14 consultation for the retention of these and other views. It is expected and intended that these will be included in the made version of the plan.

- The siting of the panels on site C in Gt Staughton would be north facing, which is suboptimal and would involve more land mass than necessary elsewhere (to prevent shadowing over the solar panels).

- The proposed location of East Park site C would destroy a very important view across the Kym Valley and of the village of Great Staughton including views of the ancient Manor and the Church. The footpath across the ridge on the Moor affords these special views. The Solar Farm would destroy this view and screening would only make it worse as the view would not be visible because of the screening.

- The walks designed around the village footpaths 23, 34, and 40 would be seriously impacted by solar Farms together with bridleway 7 into Hail Weston Parish. These walks were specifically designed in the 1990's with the co-operation of the landowners, Parish Council, and the community to provide easy access to the countryside for the residents of the Parish.

- The Parish Council has also identified in the exhibitions that there is a sub-station and battery depot within site C. These details are not reflected on the distributed literature nor on the website. We would like precise details of what is proposed in terms of these buildings in terms of size and shape.

- The area covered by Site C if covered with solar panels may well not have the same ability to absorb rainwater as the current agricultural land. This could result in faster run off in water on to the river Kym and then downstream. This area is already subject to regular flooding resulting in properties being flooded near B645 bridge over the Kym. The road has also been closed on a number of occasions resulting from flooding. The Parish Council believes that these issues may well be exacerbated by the potential increased run off from the solar farm.

- The loss of important reasonable quality agricultural land is exacerbated by the North facing aspect.

- The Parish Council feels that the solar farm site C impacts on the heritage aspects of Great Staughton exemplified in the Conservation and listed buildings area along the Highway and the Causeway along the Southern perimeter of site C.

- The Parish Council would also like to establish whether there is any noise pollution from the proposed solar farms.

- The Parish Council does not see any provision for how the construction vehicles would approach the sites along the very rural roads. If constructed it is vital that the construction traffic is routed away from existing rural roads and villages.

HAIL WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

1. We are seeing multiple applications for Solar Parks in the nearby vicinity, yet no clear position or Energy Strategy is available from HDC to help us as a Parish understand HDC's strategic approach to energy infrastructure and to inform our decision-making. This needs to be urgently addressed by HDC so there is a transparent and robust decision-making framework in place aligned to HDC's wider Net Zero Objectives. This will help PCs to not only make informed decisions but also explain the need for developments like these to the local communities. Our Local Communities are obviously concerned by the pace and scale of these developments, with seemingly no wider co-ordination or consideration of the cumulative enviro-social impact of multiple sites in close proximity to each other.
2. Hail Weston is situated in a rural area, with most of the villages surrounding the solar park dependent upon oil. We are limited in our options to decarbonise our heating, with some of the most viable options (e.g. air source heat pumps) resulting in increased energy consumption and making us more vulnerable to spiralling costs due to higher energy prices. The East Park Scheme will generate enough power for approximately 108,000 homes, surely there is a way to provide local, sustainable, secure, and economic energy to the villages that will be impacted by these schemes, thus supporting our transition to a low carbon future, rather than allowing all the energy generated to be supplied to the National Grid. Local communities benefitting from local renewable schemes would be a sustainable and resilient solution. In addition, it would help gain community support and build resilience in rural communities that are limited by insufficient infrastructure and funds.

In terms of the Scoping Report, we would like to request that the following is formally 'Scoped In'

1. Glint and glare during operation.
2. Night time effects throughout the project.
3. Residential visual amenity throughout the project.
4. Non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation throughout (the fences have a significant impact on nature – High Wood, Hail Weston is an ancient woodland).
5. Irreplaceable habitats (eg High Wood, Hail Weston ancient woodland will be surrounded if this project and High Wood solar farm go ahead).
6. Priority habitats throughout (they may be retained but what effect will the fencing, noise, lighting have?).
7. Non-breeding birds during operation (they can dive into the panels thinking it is water.
8. Roosting bats during construction and operation (may be affected by the lighting and fencing).
9. Reptiles should be scoped in as there are a lot of grass snakes in the area.
10. Badgers should be scoped in as there are many in the area and they can be dramatically affected by the fencing.
11. Otters have been returning to the area (seen in Duloe Brook last year) and should be scoped in.

12. Water voles are present in the area and should be scoped in.
13. Invertebrates should be scoped in (we have some rare moths in our area, such as the Small Eggar Moth which may be affected during construction).
14. Water quality from increased siltation should be scoped in during operation as the change in runoff patterns can affect water quality and siltation.
15. Human health should be scoped in because losing green spaces and views to industrial views of panels can affect people's mental health.
16. Setting impacts to designated heritage assets should be scoped in during construction.
17. Non-designated heritage assets should be scoped in because they are of importance locally.
18. Noise impacts should be scoped in during decommissioning.
19. Noise impacts of traffic should be scoped in during decommissioning.
20. Traffic and transport – all aspects should be scoped in during decommissioning as well as construction,
21. Increases in winter precipitation due to climate change should be scoped in during construction and decommissioning.
22. Changes in water availability should be scoped in during operation as they will need to wash the panels.
23. Travel of construction workers should be scoped in.
24. Energy consumption from providing clean water and treatment of waste water – including on site facilities such as toilets,. and for washing of panels during operation should be scoped in.
25. Vehicle emissions should be included during decommissioning as well as construction.
26. Effects on agricultural land use should be included during construction and decommissioning.

A last point that the East Park Energy Website states that the scheme will *'Boost the local economy through increased employment opportunities arising from both construction and operation of the scheme'* and yet the Scoping Report at page 323 states that the Employment and GVA benefits are likely to be limited, and not significant. If the Scoping Report is accurate, which we would assume is the case (otherwise what other information in it may be incorrect), it is disappointing to see statements to the contrary being promoted as a benefit on the website.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment, we look forward to further engagement

Historic England

EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE

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BY EMAIL
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28th November 2023

To The Planning Inspectorate

Request for a Formal EIA Scoping Opinion for the 'East Park Energy' Proposed by RNA Energy Ltd

Historic England has been notified about a scoping request for the proposed East Park Energy solar farm project by the Planning Inspectorate via an email (dated 31st October 2023). The East Park Energy is a proposal by RNA Energy Ltd for construction of a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic energy generating station and an associated on-site Battery Energy Storage System. The scheme includes the associated infrastructure for connection to the national grid at the Eaton Socon National Grid Substation

The project would be capable of generating and exporting of up to 400MW of renewable electricity. The Battery Energy Storage System would allow the storage of up to 100MW of electricity on site. The site area extends to approximately 768 hectares.

The letter is accompanied by the 'East Park Energy Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report' (version 01, dated October 2023).

Historic England, as the governments lead advisors on the historic environment would like to offer our comments on this proposal, taking into consideration the information provided by the applicant in the scoping report.

The scheme would have an electrical generating capacity in excess of 50MW. Therefore, it would be defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under S.14(1)(a) and S.15(2) of the Planning Act 2008.

Historic England understands the scheme falls under The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) which govern the EIA process for NSIP. We note that the Applicant considers the criteria in Schedule 3 to be applicable regarding the characteristics of the development and its location and will therefore produce an Environmental Statement. We support this approach.

Historic England have been notified of the scheme in October 2023. We understand from subsequent meeting with Project Team that moving forward the applicant wishes to seek pre-application advice from Historic England. We welcome this, however, our engagement with this project is in early stages and we did not have the opportunity to provide advice that would inform preparation of the scoping report.

Historic England Advice

Our primary concern in relation to this proposal is the impact of the development upon the significance of designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets, both from construction and within the area surrounding the development. Our comments are set out in sections that correspond to the report structure.

- The proposed scheme includes a number of elements that have the potential to impact buried archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains.
- For some of the elements of the scheme, the below-ground impact has been stated (e.g. the steel uprights of the solar PV arrays will be driven into the ground up to 2.4m, Section 3.3.8), but for other elements (e.g. the East Park Substation, the BESS, the storage building, fencing and the security features) the foundations have either not been discussed or it is not clear what the impact will be. The impacts of above the ground level infrastructure (up to 12m in height) have been specified.
- The cabling within the solar generating areas as well as connections between these areas would cause direct below ground impacts (trenches to be up to 0.8m wide and 1.2 deep) as specified in paragraph 3.3.14. The grid connection would require a corridor of up to 25m wide as specified in paragraph 3.3.19.
- In addition, information would need to be provided for the landscaping and Green Infrastructure that will be utilised, as issues of root penetration and excavation requirements will need to be detailed. The below ground impacts

need to be considered in order to understand the potential effects of the proposed scheme on both designated and non-designated heritage assets.

- It is noted that several of the construction activities listed in Section 3.4.3 have the potential to directly impact buried heritage assets, both known and unknown.
- We are pleased to see that an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) will be submitted as part of the DCO application, but it would be useful to confirm if this document will also deal with issues/impacts on heritage assets.
- It is stated in Section 9.4.5 that online mapping indicated that no peat is present at the Site. An assessment of the BGS Geoindex resource indicates that large areas of the proposed scheme have not been investigated, and so there is still the potential that peat may be present in some parts of the site.
- It should be noted that some of the assesments carried out for other (non-heritage) issues may provide information relevant for understanding archaeological potential and value and the information should be utilised in the cultural heritage assessment.
- These include the sections on the Geology and hydrogeology of the site (Section 9.4.5), and the 'Flood risks, Drainage and Surface Water' (Chapter 9). For example, the Geology and hydrogeology sections (Chapters 9 and 10) may help understand the potential for archaeolgoical and palaeoenvironmental evidence to be present wihtin the proposed area of the Scheme, as well as indicating the likely conditions that may contribute to the preservation of any remains (e.g. waterlogged). For example, it is noted in Section 9.4.1 that several tributaries drain the site and that some of the areas of known heritage sites 'tend to be wet and boggy' (Appendix 11, Asset 610), which suggests that there is the potential for waterlogged remains to be present in some areas of the Site.
- It is stated that several tributaries drain the site (Section 9.4.1); the potential impact of the proposed Scheme on local groundwater levels should be considered. If waterlogged organic archaeolgoical and palaeoenvironmental remains are present on the site, any changes to the groundwater levels may alter the local preservation conditions, which in turn may lead to the degradation and/or loss of any vulnerable remains. The potential for waterlogged organic archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains within these sorts of features would need to be established so that the impact of the proposed scheme can be determined and mitigated.
- We would recommend that the Historic England document '*Preserving Archaeological Remains*' (2016) is referred to: https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/preserving-archaeological-remains.
- The Flood risks, Drainage and Surface water chapter discusses the potential contamination through factors such as chemical spillages/leakages from

construction activities or vehicles (Section 9.5.4). Contamination might have an effect on archaeological preservation and recovery and so would need to be assessed.

- It is stated that the increase in impermeable area of the site caused by changes in the use may increase overland flow of water, which in turn has the potential to increase scour in the watercourses (Section 9.5.6). The potential for archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains to be present in these areas will need to be determined so that the potential impact of scour can be understood and managed.
- Chapter 11 outlines heritage potential of the proposed development site. The site contains a number of non-designated and one designated heritage assets. In addition, it is acknowledged that there is also the potential for previously unknown archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains to be present. Significant number of non-designated and designated heritage assets are located in the landscape surrounding proposed development.
- We are pleased to see that the primary mitigation approach for the proposed scheme is avoidance of impact (Sections 6.6.1 & 11.5.2).
- Paragraph 11.5.3 sets out the mitigation measures for the scheduled monument known as 'Two bowl barrows 900m and 1000m east of Old Manor Farm' (LEN 1020486)' which is partly located within proposed development site boundaries. The outlined mitigation is creation of 20m wide buffer surrounding the monument.
- Historic England supports the proposal to create a buffer around the monument but proposed 20m is not sufficient. We would normally expect 50m buffer as a minimum. The applicant should assess the impact of the development on the significance of the designated heritage asset, including impacts on the setting. The mitigation should be tailored specifically to avoid and minimise this impact.
- We would recommend that mitigation measures, in addition to exclusion from construction, include appropriate management of the whole monument and buffer.
- Paragraphs 11.5.4 & 11.5.5 mention the possibility that the proposed development site contains additional, unknown so far, buried remains associated with the scheduled monuments (Two bowl barrows and Roman Villa complex). If these associated remains are present, they would be of demonstrably equal significance to designated heritage assets and should be considered under the same policies. Therefore, these remains would also need to be considered for exclusion from the scheme with appropriate buffer.
- Where the proposed development has potential for direct impact on the remains associated with designated heritage assets additional flexibility should be built into the scheme to avoid significant impacts. This is particularly important in respect of the cable route.

- Paragraph 11.5.8 proposes that direct impacts on heritage assets beyond the proposed development boundaries will be scoped out of the assessment. It should be noted that any changes to groundwater levels could result in changes to the preservation conditions on sites located outside of the red-line boundary for the Scheme and would be classed a direct impact. We would recommend that this is considered, particularly as a number of Scheduled Monuments are located adjacent to the proposed development area.
- Paragraph 11.5.9 recognises setting impacts on the heritage assets during operation phase of the development. Historic England agrees with this statement; however, we would like to observe that setting impacts could also relate to construction phase.
- To ensure that the setting of designated heritage assets is adequately addressed, it would be useful to illustrate the heritage specific viewpoints with both photographs and photomontages (mentioned in paragraph 11.5.10). The setting of heritage assets is not however just restricted to visual impacts and other factors should also be considered in particular glare, noise, light, traffic and landscape impacts. Historic England's published advice in relation to setting of heritage assets (see Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets').
- It should be assessed if Environmental mitigation could be used to reduce setting impacts on designated heritage assets.
- Paragraph 11.5.13 proposes to scope out the setting impacts on the heritage assets beyond 3km boundary. Historic England cannot confirm at this stage if 3km is sufficient for the setting assessment as the decision to scope in heritage assets for assessment should be based on evidence not the distance. The applicant should clearly demonstrate that the extent of the proposed study area is of the appropriate size to ensure that all heritage assets likely to be affected by this development have been included and can be properly assessed.
- Paragraph 11.5.14 proposes to scope out of the assessment the decommissioning phase of the proposed development. This is not consistent with the summaries provided in Table 11.7.
- Paragraphs 11.5.15-11.5.17 state that cumulative impacts with other developments are possible.
- We agree that cumulative effects with other infrastructural projects in the area would need to be considered. The significant other projects in the area would need to be identified and cumulative impact assessment of the effects on the cultural heritage will need to be undertaken.
- Paragraph 11.6.1 outlines the sources to be used in the collating baseline data for the assessment. Historic England broadly accepts the proposed approach, however we have the following comments on how it should be expanded.

- The copies of the investigation reports of the past archaeological works should be reviewed as part of the process, even if these documents are not available online.
- We note that geophysical surveys have been mentioned. It should be noted that the geology of the proposed Scheme should be considered when selecting the techniques that will be used to evaluate the Site. For example, evaluating areas of alluvium using geophysical techniques can be a challenge: a pilot survey linked with coring or test pitting can provide valuable information to guide the development of a preferred evaluation for the full area of the Scheme (see EAC 2016. *Guidelines for the use of Geophysics in Archaeology*: https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/eac-guidelines-for-use-of-geophysics-in-archaeology/). In wetter areas of the Site (e.g. areas adjacent to the rivers/streams), alternative approaches may be appropriate, such as geoarchaeology and the development of a deposit model.
- Historic England understands that geophysical survey is underway on parts of the site. As we have not been consulted and have not seen the WSI for these works we are unable to provide any comment at present if suitable techniques have been employed.
- We support the need for walkover survey; however, it needs to be recognised that its usefulness is limited to above ground remains only (such as historic buildings and landscape features, historic routes, etc.). We recommend the assessment of potential for unknown buried archaeological remains in the ES should be informed by different survey methods.
- The Walkover Survey should also include a Site Inspection of any heritage assets where a potential impact through changes to setting is identified; in order to inform the baseline setting assessment of heritage assets and impact assessment.
- We also recommend that a programme of archaeological evaluation is undertaken in consultation with the LPA archaeological advisor at an early stage in the process. The obtained data should inform the EIA. We would expect to see the Written Schemes of Investigations (WSIs) for any elements of work.
- Table 11.7 outlines summary of the elements of assessment to be scoped in/out of the assessment.
- We agree that operation and decommissioning phases can be reasonably scoped out when considering direct impact to heritage assets. Construction phase should be scoped in.
- We recommend that setting impacts to the designated heritage assets are required to be scoped in for all three phases (construction, operation, and decommissioning).
- Regarding impacts on the settings of designated heritage assets beyond 3km, as mentioned previously the applicant should clearly demonstrate that the

extent of the proposed study area is of the appropriate size to ensure that all heritage assets likely to be affected by this development have been included and can be properly assessed. Significant effects are possible outside of the set area.

- In our view setting impacts to non-designated heritage assets should be scoped in for construction and operation phases. This is because currently these assets still have to be identified and their value remains to be fully assessed. This means that in certain cases significant effects could result. We would support refinement of the criteria at a later stage, after initial surveys have been undertaken.
- It would have been useful to outline in the scoping report the sort of further mitigation that may be required.

Summary

Overall, we accept the proposed approach to sources, baseline information and the assessment of heritages impact, subject to concerns outlined above. We confirm that historic environment represents a potentially significant issue in EIA terms, and confirm that the historic environment should be 'scoped in' to the assessment.

We support avoidance of impact as preferred mitigation method in case of heritage assets. However, more work needs to be undertaken to understand the significance of these assets and likely effects the proposed development would have on them.

We note the applicant intends to produce an LVIA. We recommend the LVIA is supplemented with heritage specific viewpoints (both photographs and photomontages) that illustrate the ES and support the results of the heritage assessment. If these are to be presented in the Landscape and Visual chapter, then the assessment needs to be clearly set out and cross referenced with the heritage chapter. Ideally though a separate heritage viewpoints appendix should be produced.

The setting of heritage assets is not however just restricted to visual impacts and other factors should also be considered in assessments; in particular noise, light, traffic. Where relevant, the cultural heritage should also be cross-referenced to other relevant chapters, and as above we advise that all supporting technical heritage information is included as appendices.

Whilst standardised EIA matrices are considered in some planning practices to be useful tools, we consider the analysis of setting (and the impact upon it) as a matter of qualitative and expert judgement which cannot be achieved solely by use of systematic matrices or scoring systems. Historic England therefore recommends that these should be in an appendix and seen only as material to support a clearly expressed and non-technical narrative argument within the cultural heritage chapter.

The ES should also use the ideas of benefit, harm and loss (as described in NPPF) to set out 'what matters and why' in terms of the heritage assets' significance and setting, together with the effects of the development upon them. Alongside appropriate mitigation to offset adverse effects on heritage assets we are also looking for explicit and demonstrable heritage enhancements and benefits from the scheme to be set out clearly in the application. This could include Interpretation, public engagement in the archaeological discoveries, heritage education and heritage focus in relation to design and placemaking.

We strongly recommend that the applicant involve the County Councils specialist advisers on archaeological matters and we recognise that they are best placed to provide advice on non-designated heritage assets and to give advice on how the proposal can be tailored to avoid and minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; and of any required mitigation measures. Likewise, the local Conservation Officer will need to be consulted in relation to the built environment.

Given the designated heritage assets within the area, we would strongly recommend that the applicant engages further with Historic England in detailed discussions. This would help to refine the approach to the scope of the ES, to the assessment, enhancements and mitigation.

Recommendation
We broadly accept the approach set out in the scoping report, but we have some specific concerns that would need to be addressed. These are set out in the bullets points above. We consider further refining of the scope would be necessary taking these comments into consideration. This is to fully address heritage matters and to fully consider the impact on the historic environment in relation to policy.

We confirm the historic environment represents a potentially significant issue in EIA terms, and we would support the need for further work to support the publication of an ES.

If you have any queries about any of the above, or would like to discuss anything further, please contact me

Yours sincerely

Slawek Utrata
Inspector of Ancient Monuments
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The Planning Inspectorate
FAO Jack Patten

BY EMAIL ONLY: eastparkenergyproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Our Ref: 23/70097/SCOP
Your Ref: EN010141

28th November 2023

Dear Mr Patten

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY STATUTORY CONSULTATION RESPONSE:

Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) – Regulations 10 and 11

Application by RNA Energy Ltd (the Applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for East Park Energy (the Proposed Development)

Scoping consultation and notification of the Applicant's contact details and duty to make available information to the Applicant if requested

Further to your letter received 31 October 2023 notifying Huntingdonshire District Council as a statutory consultee to the above Application regarding the Scoping Opinion, we have reviewed the East Park Energy Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report, ref. En01041 October 2023 Version 01 and comment as set out below; this reply follows the chapters set out in the Applicants Scoping Report.

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) is a lower tier District Council Host Authority for part of this scheme, the following is provided in relation to HDC matters for consideration. HDC defers to Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) in its role as upper-tier County Council for matters relating to Archaeology, Highways, Drainage and Health and to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority in their role as the Transport Authority. This scheme crosses the administrative boundary with Bedford Borough Council; for clarity, this reply relates to the areas of land within HDC only.

CHAPTERS 1 TO 6 –

Capacity – The Scoping Report states the "precise generating capacity and storage capacity will be subject to detailed design", this flexibility would accord with PINs Advice Note 9 and is therefore considered acceptable in principle.

Site boundary – HDC is in broad agreement with the single Red Line boundary, noting that the Applicant sets out that the amount of land will be refined as the design of the Scheme progresses and proposes flexibility; this is supported in principle, although any change in the

Red Line boundary would need to be reflected in the LVIA assessment and any other impacted documents as the design of the scheme evolves.

Site selection/ alternatives - HDC would like to understand the extent of the Applicant's sub-regional search area, assessment, and outcomes which form part of their formal submission.

No Development Scheme - The applicant proposes not to consider a 'no development' alternative further, HDC considers there needs to be a baseline scenario from which to consider this proposal and suggest this should be a no development scheme option in order to understand the impact upon the environment.

'Other Developments' - HDC will assist in identifying both significant and/or major development within the District; of significance is Planning Application (LPA Ref: 22/01813/FUL) which is currently pending consideration for the "Installation of solar farm (generating up to 50MW) comprising the provision of photovoltaic panels, 18no. inverters, 4no. switchgear housings and 3no. transformer stations together with hardstanding, landscaping, access alterations, fencing and associated works" which seeks to extend the existing solar farm to the south and abuts the Study Area for this proposal – the existing is identified within the Scoping Report (§7.4.23) but it is unclear on how the current cross boundary application (with Bedford Borough Council) has been considered.

CHAPTER 7 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL –

Due to the time period allowed for within this Scoping Request HDC has been unable to respond in detail to the level of information provided.

Study Area - It is noted that an initial radius of 3km has been detailed however the Scoping Report acknowledges that locations beyond 3km site may be visible but not readily identifiable with §7.2.8 stating the "LVIA Study Area…will potentially be reviewed further following the iterative design process and as the LVIA progresses". Notwithstanding the position regarding the no Landscape Specialist involvement, HDC considers that it is premature to limit the study area to 3km from the Proposed Development. The assessment study area should be determined with regard to the extent of the impacts and the potential for significant effects and should also include as assessment of cumulative impacts with other developments.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility – The Scoping Report states "The ZTV is based on the 'Indicative Solar and Associated Infrastructure' zoning shown on Figures 3-2a to 3-2c. The initial ZTV has been modelled based on a height of 3m to reflect the maximum height above ground of the solar arrays across the Site". This application is also proposing associated buildings and infrastructure (storage buildings, switchgear and transformers) with heights above this, HDC consider that these would need to be assessed in the LVIA and Environmental Statement, along with all other infrastructure works (such as perimeter fencing and access tracks).

Viewpoints - The Scoping Report states "A provisional list of 79 viewpoints is set out below, with the intention that a final list is agreed with consultees following receipt of comments (and any further post-scoping consultation that is required). At this time further comment on the viewpoints proposed cannot be provided but HDC welcomes the opportunity to consider these further with the Applicant and in light of other consultee findings.

Glint and Glare - Whilst HDC agrees with Glint and Glare being a separate chapter, in light of the Scoping Report noting "The Scheme will potentially give rise to glint and glare effects, which will be assessed in a technical appendix to the ES, and the conclusions addressed as part of the LVIA", it is suggested this should be Scoped In for the Operational phase to be a requirement of the LVIA.

Residential Visual Amenity – Consider that this should be Scoped In for the operational phase.

Night Time Assessment – The Scoping Report proposes to Scope Out an assessment of night-time landscape and visual effects due to the Scheme not being lit; it is not clear if this is the case during the construction and decommissioning stages (which may occur during winter months with reduced daylight hours) and it is suggested that this be Scoped In for these stages of the scheme.

CHAPTER 8 ECOLOGY AND NATURE CONSERVATION –

Due to the time period allowed for within this Scoping Request and the Applicant's extensive data base HDC has been unable to respond in detail and notes that Natural England is also a Statutory Consultee.

It is noted that some aspects have been Scoped In for a precautionary approach, however this is not the case for other elements. It is not considered that there is sufficient evidence before us to agree that certain species can be scoped out.

CHAPTER 9 FLOOD RISK, DRAINAGE AND SURFACE WATER –

Defer to CCC in their role as Lead Local Flood Authority.

CHAPTER 10 GROUND CONDITIONS –

HDC Environmental Health Officer has reviewed this aspect of the Scoping Report and considers it includes all relevant Environmental Health matters, noting "the national gas mains have been considered, in particular for Huntingdonshire, the gas pipe under the "internal cabling and temporary construction access route" approximately 400m east of Site B, and the gas pipe under Site D. In relation to sites of ancient monuments, Two bowl barrows 900m and 1000m east of Old Manor Farm will be considered (190 and 670 on Figure 11-2c and 13 on Figure 11-4c). A full land contamination investigation and risk assessment is also proposed following the guidance within the Environment Agency's Land Contamination Risk Management (2020) and BS10175:2011+A2:2017."

As such the methodology and details proposed to be Scoped In/Out are considered reasonable.

CHAPTER 11 CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY –

Defer to CCC in relation to detailed archaeological comments. It is also expected that views of Historic England are considered.

In consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer, HDC raises the following:

Data - The Heritage Assets likely to be impacted include listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and non-designated heritage assets. The applicant has provided a Gazetteer of Heritage Assets (Appendix 11-1) alongside plans of those heritage assets. Within the timeframe available a full assessment of the data submitted by the applicant is not possible. However, a basic overlay of submitted plans of heritage assets (Figures 11-4b – 11-4d) does not correlate with LPA mapping of listed buildings; both the Gazetteer and associated plans have notable omissions and inaccuracies. The base map and 3km line used is also noted to be inaccurate, for example excludes Kimbolton Castle (a Grade I listed building) however LPA mapping, based on OS data, would appear to include this site within the study area. Any assessment of impact to heritage assets must start with a full and clearly presented data set.

Designated Heritage Assets - It is proposed to Scope Out the impacts of setting of Designated Heritage Assets which are 3km beyond the Scheme Boundary. HDC has concerns with this distance and considers that this is an arbitrary approach. Given that the extent of setting is not fixed, any designated heritage asset of significance should be assessed by the applicant under NPPF Paragraph 194 and the LPA under NPPF Paragraph 195 in conjunction with the Landscape and Visual Amenity aspect Chapter; further refinement/justification is needed on this point.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets - The applicant has identified non-designated heritage assets within the site and in a 1km study area beyond the site boundary. The Report suggests that the settings of non-designated heritage assets are unlikely to be impacted and should therefore be Scoped Out. It is not accepted that non-designated heritage assets should be arbitrarily excluded from the ES. It is agreed that non designated heritage assets of subterranean archaeological interest are unlikely to have a setting but earthworks such as medieval ridge and furrow or windmill mounds certainly do have a setting in which they can be experienced. One important example is the extant medieval ridge and furrow located to the south of Great Staughton, adjacent to Site C of the proposed scheme. Any ES should include heritage assets that are earthworks; use of LiDAR data and imagery should form the basis of this assessment. Again, further refinement/justification is needed on this point.

Assessment of Harm - The proposed assessment methodology is standard and can be used effectively to screen and identify heritage assets that may be impacted by a proposed scheme. However, it is considered important to note that the use of standardised tables is not reductive in nature and that the proposed impact assessment methodology can identify the specific significance of heritage assets and also take account of impacts to the settings of multiple heritage assets. Viewpoint Assessment locations based on Zones of Theoretical Visibility must be used to screen the impacts not only of single heritage assets but also groups of heritage assets. Specifically (although not exclusively) in this case it would be expected that more Viewpoint Assessments are undertaken of the site from within and between the two Great Staughton conservation areas. All Grade I and Grade II*heritage assets should be subject to Viewpoint Assessment and special attention given to views from heritage assets that are either tall structures or those in elevated locations.

CHAPTER 12 NOISE AND VIBRATION

HDC Environmental Health Officer has reviewed this aspect of the Scoping Report and considers it includes all relevant Environmental Health matters, noting the sensitive receptors will be agreed with the local authorities.

The following noise sensitive receptors for Huntingdonshire are set out below:

1. Wood Farm, Kimbolton Road, Hail Weston PE19 5LA – 200 metres from Grid connection east of East Park Site D.
2. Pastures Farm Cottage, Pastures Farmhouse and The Annex Pastures Farm, Kimbolton Road, Hail Weston PE19 5LB. 60 metres east from East Park Site D.
3. Wood View at Access 2.
4. The Paddocks, Moor Road, Great Staughton PE19 5BJ – 80 metres east of East Park Site C.
5. Roman Field Cottage, Moor Road, Great Staughton PE19 5BJ – 10 metres east of East Park Site C.
6. 67 The Highway, Great Staughton PE19 5DA (and the village of Great Staughton) – 150 metres north-east of East Park Site C.

It is considered that baseline sound monitoring is being undertaken a at range of locations throughout Huntingdonshire and the Environmental Health Officer has provided the following comments;

“P7: Good background location well away from scheme. South of Site C.
P8: Within scheme, north of Site C. Good for Great Staughton background.
P9: South of scheme near country road.
P10: Within scheme, east of Site C. Good for Moor Road.
P11: As above
P18: South of Site C.
P19: On Kimbolton Road so will pick up road noise. Near Wood View at Access 2, Site D. Good to compare road traffic noise between before and after scheme.
P20: Quite near Kimbolton Road. Way east of Site D. Unsure of purpose.
P21: Fair background location, east of Site D.”

As such the methodology and details proposed to be Scoped In/Out are considered reasonable.

CHAPTER 13 SOCIO-ECONOMICS, LAND USE AND TOURISM –

The land is in agricultural (arable) land and there is an expectation that upon decommissioning the land will be returned to agricultural use. The extent of the site and therefore loss of land suitable for food production is noted; whilst there is some crossover with Chapter 17 (Land and Soils) there is a concern that the environmental considerations of these impacts during the operational phase, alongside the cumulative impact of nearby proposals for solar development have not been addressed and further information will be required.

CHAPTER 14 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT –

Defer to CCC in their role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) for Huntingdonshire including Public Rights of Way and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority in their role as the Transport Authority.

CHAPTER 15 CLIMATE CHANGE –

The Scoping Report notes (§15.2.2) that indirect emissions from activities outside of the site will be considered, including embodied GHG emissions within the construction materials and the manufacturing of the equipment to be used for the proposal and proposes to Scope In ‘Raw material extraction and manufacturing of products required for the Scheme and transportation of raw materials to the place of manufacturing’ for the construction stage, ‘Energy generated’ for the operational stage and ‘Transportation and disposal of waste materials’ for the decommissioning stage. Whilst these points are supported in principle it is suggested that the scheme be assessed which reviews the full life-cycle carbon footprint for the scheme.

The operational stage does not appear to consider any necessary replacements elements for the scheme; whilst it is acknowledged that the Scoping Report refers throughout to the detailed design being unknown at this stage, it is suggested that management and maintenance factors should be scoped in.

CHAPTER 16 AIR QUALITY –

HDC Environmental Health Officer has reviewed this aspect of the Scoping Report and considers it includes all relevant Environmental Health matters, noting “Air Quality will been considered at both construction, operation and decommissioning stages. Dust will be managed by the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)”.

As such the methodology and details proposed to be Scoped In/Out are considered reasonable.

CHAPTER 17 LAND AND SOILS –

The Scoping Report proposes to Scope In the 'Effects on soils' for the construction and decommissioning stages with the 'Effects on agricultural land use and loss of BMV land' for the operational stage. This is considered acceptable in principle and HDC remain to be satisfied that, should the scheme progress, that the environmental considerations post decommissioning have been fully considered to ensure that the soil quality is fit for food consumption/productive agricultural use.

CHAPTER 18 OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS –

Human Health – It is agreed that matters pertaining to traffic; air, dust and odour; hazardous waste and substances; noise; exposure to radiation; increases in pests and other matters relevant to human health have been covered within other areas of the Scoping Report and a standalone section of the ES for human health assessment is not considered necessary.

Major Accidents or Disasters – The Scoping Report acknowledges the potential for fire risk due to the battery storage and that measures will be required in the form of those identified within an Outline Battery Safety Management Plan (OBSMP) which would be prepared and submitted with the DCO Application and therefore proposes this is Scoped Out of the ES.

There are concerns that the Scoping Report does not provide a full understanding of the likelihood of an occurrence, or the vulnerability of the development to a potential accident or disaster or the impacts to the surrounding environment in the event of an accident or disaster. The detailed design of this element of the scheme is also not fixed. As such it is considered that a precautionary approach should be taken and this element, along with an understanding of impacts on human health, should be Scoped In.

Waste - The Scoping Report proposes to Scope Out a detailed waste assessment from the ES; this is supported in principle, however waste arising from the development and the wider decommissioning stage is considered relevant although this is to be covered within the scope of Chapter 15 and Climate Change.

CHAPTER 19 STRUCTURE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT –

Whilst technical in nature, and noting the inclusion of a Non-Technical Summary, it is expected that the document will be presented in a way which is accessible and understandable by the general public and the inclusion of figures, tables etc. should, where possible, be included in the main body of the statement rather than appendices (noting that the full technical appendices are proposed in Volume 2); it is currently proposed that figures will be providing in Volume 3 of the ES. Details on how a copy can be obtained (and the cost) should be set out.

CHAPTER 20 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION –

The content of Table 20.1 is noted and should be considered in line with the comments made above.

Due to staffing resources and the relatively short period in which to respond to the Applicant's extensive Environmental Impact Scoping Report, the Council has not been able to revert with all internal consultation from technical consultees. Joint discussions have started with Cambridgeshire County Council and Bedford Borough Council however, the response above is solely that of Huntingdonshire District Council, submitted without prejudice.

Should you require any clarification then please contact Charlotte Fox on the details provided.

Yours sincerely,

Clara Kerr
Chief Planning Officer

Little Staughton Parish Council

Little Staughton Parish Council held a meeting on October 24th 2023 in the village hall attended by many of our residents.
The following response will be submitted to the developer R.N.A. East Park Energy Co.
As a reminder all residents can submit their individual observations to the developer via the website at https://easternenergy.co.uk
Responses are to be submitted no later than November 21st 2023.

A copy of this document will be sent to our M.P. Richard Fuller, Bedford Borough Council and the Mayor of Bedford.

There is going to be an inter Parish working group organised to oppose the proposed development going forward. Two individuals will be required to represent our Parish in this group.

EAST PARK SOLAR FARM - RESPONSE TO DEVELOPER
The Parish Council response has been compiled after a meeting of a large number of residents on the matter. The Parish Council response has given consideration to all of the consultation materials and has decided unanimously to object to the proposal for the following reasons:-

* We are concerned about the siting of the storage batteries (BESS) which are due to be located on site C of the development. These were not shown in the developers distributed literature and should a fire by overheating occur in any of the battery plant, access is almost impossible. It should be noted that there have been several incidents of battery failure.
* Should the batteries ignite there is a significant danger from water run off which will most certainly affect crops, wildlife and watercourses.
* The scheme is far too large for a village of the size of Little Staughton and indeed the surrounding villages. It is too close to many properties and indeed surrounds two properties completely, which we feel is unacceptable.
* The proposal will drastically change forever the local landscape and settlement character of the area in a very negative way. The villages affected will no longer be small settlements located in attractive open countryside.
* The visual aspect from the Little Staughton church looking northwards down the
hill towards Great Staughton will be ruined forever.
* A significant portion of the fields in East Park B are north facing and not optimal for producing solar power.
* The loss of high quality farmland is a major concern from an agricultural and ecological standpoint.
* We note that the majority of the land proposed for this development is identified in the Governments Agricultural Land Classification as grade 2 with much of the minority remainder as grade 3A. Grade 2 is classed as "very good" and grade 3 is "good to moderate".
It is national planning policy to protect grade 2 and grade 3A land. Therefore this proposal should be rejected for this reason alone.
* The government has published guidance for renewable and low carbon energy. This states that renewable energy developments should be acceptable for their proposed location. It notes that "The deployment of large scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes." A number of the

fields in the proposed area are significantly sloping.
* There is an existing gas supply pipeline running underneath the proposed development area.
* Due to the proposed high fences to be deployed to protect the sites, a significant impact on wildlife is anticipated.
* The Parish Council feels very strongly that the Solar Park will significantly impact heritage aspects of Little Staughton.
* We have concerns over potential noise and light pollution generated by the site.
* We have significant concerns regarding how the construction vehicles and equipment would approach the various sites along the very narrow and rural adjacent roads. It would be imperative that any construction traffic be routed away from existing rural villages and roads.
* We are very concerned as to the quality and condition of the land at the end of the forty year lease period.

In summary, Little Staughton Parish Council on behalf of the village residents OBJECTS IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS to this proposal.

National Gas House
Warwick Technology Park
Gallows Hill, Warwick
CV34 6DA

+44 (0) 1926 65 3000
nationalgas.com

Submitted via email to: eastparkenergyproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Date 16th November 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

East Park Energy: Delivering a New Solar Farm & Battery Storage Scheme

I refer to your letter dated 16th October 2023 regarding the above proposed DCO. This is a response on behalf of National Gas Gas PLC (NGT). Having reviewed the consultation documents, NGT wishes to make the following comments regarding gas infrastructure which is located within and in close proximity to the Order limits and therefore may be affected by proposals.

NGT has feeder mains located within or in proximity to the Order limits. Details of this infrastructure is as follows:

- FM7 - Huntingdon to Colmworth
- FM9 - Huntingdon to Willington
- FM26 - Huntingdon to Willingdon
- Ancillary apparatus including cathodic protection apparatus and groundbeds

Please note that NGT has existing easements for these pipelines which provides rights for ongoing access and prevents the erection of permanent / temporary buildings/structures, change to existing ground levels or storage of materials etc within the easement strip.

You should also be aware of NGT's guidance for working in proximity to its assets, further guidance and links are available as follows.

CATHODIC PROTECTION SYSTEM

To ensure a high level of safety and reliability in operation, National Gas Transmission's assets are protected by a cathodic protection system. It is essential that buried steel pipework associated with the transmission and distribution of natural gas is designed, installed, commissioned and maintained to withstand the potentially harmful effects of corrosion and that the corrosion control systems employed are monitored to ensure continued effectiveness. Installations in the vicinity of National Gas Transmission's assets which may potentially interfere with the cathodic protection system must be assessed and approved by National Gas Transmission, and appropriate control measures must be put in place where required.

Installations which have the potential to interfere with National Gas Transmission's Cathodic protection system include (but are not limited to):

1. High voltage cable crossings and parallelism

2. High voltage ac pylon parallelism

3. Battery Energy Storage Systems

4. Third party pipelines with cathodic protection systems

5. PV Solar arrays

Further information on A.C. interference can be found in UKOPA/GPG/027 UKOPA Good Practice Guide.

SOLAR FARMS

Please be aware of the specific guidance for developing solar farms near to gas transmission pipelines:

https://www.nationalgas.com/document/82936/download

UKOPA Good Practice Guide - Requirements for the Siting and Installation of Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Installations in the Vicinity of Buried Pipelines - UKOPA/GP/014 Edition 1

Where the Promoter intends to acquire land, extinguish rights, or interfere with any of NGT's apparatus, NGT will require appropriate protection and further discussion on the impact to its apparatus and rights including adequate Protective Provisions. A Deed of Consent will also be required for any works proposed within the easement strip.

Key Considerations:

- NGT has a Deed of Grant of Easement for each pipeline, which prevents the erection of permanent / temporary buildings, or structures, change to existing ground levels, storage of materials etc within 24.4m (12.2m either side of the pipeline). No development, construction or landscaping will be permitted within the easement without formal approval or a Deed of Consent.

- There are specific criteria that must be adhered to for developing solar farms in close proximity to National Gas Transmission's gas pipelines. Solar Farms can be built adjacent to pipelines but never within the easement.

- Utility crossings over National Gas Transmission's gas pipelines are restricted and will require 'Deeds of Consent'.

- Any large installations which may result in a large population increase in the vicinity of a high pressure gas pipeline must comply with the HSE's Land Use Planning methodology, and the HSE response should be submitted to National Gas Transmission for review

- The below guidance is not exhaustive and all works in the vicinity of NGT's asset shall be subject to review and approval from NGT's plant protection team in advance of commencement of works on site.

General Notes on Pipeline Safety:

- You should be aware of the Health and Safety Executives guidance document HS(G) 47 "Avoiding Danger from Underground Services", and NGT's Dial Before You Dig Specification

for Safe Working in the Vicinity of NGT Assets. There will be additional requirements dictated by NGT's plant protection team.

- NGT will also need to ensure that its pipelines remain accessible during and after completion of the works.
- Our pipelines are normally buried to a depth cover of 1.1 metres, however actual depth and position must be confirmed on site by trial hole investigation under the supervision of a NGT representative. Ground cover above our pipelines should not be reduced or increased.
- If any excavations are planned within 3 metres of NGT High Pressure Pipeline or, within 10 metres of an AGI (Above Ground Installation), or if any embankment or dredging works are proposed then the actual position and depth of the pipeline must be established on site in the presence of a NGT representative. A safe working method agreed prior to any work taking place in order to minimise the risk of damage and ensure the final depth of cover does not affect the integrity of the pipeline.
- Below are some examples of work types that have specific restrictions when being undertaken in the vicinity of gas assets therefore consultation with NGT's Plant Protection team is essential:
  - Demolition
  - Blasting
  - Piling and boring
  - Deep mining
  - Surface mineral extraction
  - Landfilling
  - Trenchless Techniques (e.g. HDD, pipe splitting, tunnelling etc.)
  - Wind turbine installation - minimum separation distance of 1.5x the mast/hub height is required, and any auxiliary installations such as cable or track crossings will require a deed of consent.
  - Solar farm installation
  - Tree planting schemes

Traffic Crossings:

- Where existing roads cannot be used, construction traffic should ONLY cross the pipeline at agreed locations.
- Permanent road crossings will require a surface load calculation, and will require a deed of consent.
- The pipeline shall be protected, at the crossing points, by temporary rafts constructed at ground level. The third party shall review ground conditions, vehicle types and crossing frequencies to determine the type and construction of the raft required.

- The type of raft shall be agreed with NGT prior to installation.
- No protective measures including the installation of concrete slab protection shall be installed over or near to the NGT pipeline without the prior permission of NGT
- NGT will need to agree the material, the dimensions and method of installation of the proposed protective measure.
- The method of installation shall be confirmed through the submission of a formal written method statement from the contractor to NGT.
- An NGT representative shall monitor any works within close proximity to the pipeline to comply with NGT specification T/SP/SSW22

New Asset Crossings:

- New assets (cables/pipelines etc) may cross the pipeline at perpendicular angle to the pipeline i.e. 90 degrees.
- The separation distance for a cable >33kV is 1000mm and pre and post energisation surveys may be required at National Gas Transmission's discretion. A risk assessment/method statement will need to be provided to, and accepted by National Gas Transmission prior to the deed of consent being agreed. Where a new asset is to cross over the pipeline a clearance distance of 0.6 metres between the crown of the pipeline and underside of the service should be maintained. If this cannot be achieved the service shall cross below the pipeline with a clearance distance of 0.6 metres.
- A new service should not be laid parallel within an easement strip
- Clearance must be at least 600mm above or below the pipeline
- An NGT representative shall approve and supervise any cable crossing of a pipeline.
- A Deed of Consent is required for any cable crossing the easement
- New assets with proposed cathodic protection systems - cathodic protection design must be provided to NGT for review to ensure that there is no interference with NGT's system

Where the promoter intends to acquire land, extinguish rights, or interfere with any of NGT apparatus, protective provisions will be required in a form acceptable to it to be included within the DCO. NGT requests to be consulted at the earliest stages to ensure that the most appropriate protective provisions are included within the DCO application to safeguard the integrity of apparatus and to remove the requirement for objection.

Access to NGT pipelines must be maintained at all times during construction and post construction to ensure the safe operation of the network.

National Gas requests that the developer engages for further guidance in the early stages of design to ensure that electrical interference, security, future access, and construction methods can be mutually agreed.

Yours Faithfully

[redacted]

Vicky Cashman
Consultant DCO Liaison Officer

Further Safety Guidance

To download a copy of the HSE Guidance HS(G)47, please use the following link:

https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg47.htm

Working Near National Gas Assets

https://www.nationalgas.com/land-and-assets/working-near-our-assets

Specification for Safe Working in the Vicinity of National Gas High Pressure Pipelines and Associated Installations

https://www.nationalgas.com/document/82951/download

Tree Planting Guidance

https://www.nationalgas.com/document/82976/download

Excavating Safely

https://www.nationalgas.com/document/82971/download

Dial Before You Dig Guidance

https://www.nationalgas.com/document/128751/download

Essential Guidance:

https://www.nationalgas.com/gas-transmission/document/82931/download

Solar Farm Guidance

https://www.nationalgas.com/document/82936/download

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Warwick Technology Park
Gallows Hill, Warwick
CV34 6DA

Tiffany Bate
Development Liaison Officer
Commercial and Customer
Connections (Land)
[redacted]
Tel: [redacted]

www.nationalgrid.com

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY:
eastparkenergyproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

14 November 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION BY RNA Energy Ltd (THE APPLICANT) FOR AN ORDER GRANTING DEVELOPMENT CONSENT FOR THE EAST PARK ENERGY (THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT)

SCOPING CONSULTATION RESPONSE

I refer to your letter dated 31 October 2023 in relation to the above proposed application. This is a response on behalf of National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC (NGET).

Having reviewed the scoping report, I would like to make the following comments regarding NGET existing or future infrastructure within or in close proximity to the scoping area.

NGET has high voltage electricity overhead transmission lines, underground cables and a high voltage substation within the scoping area. The overhead lines and substation forms an essential part of the electricity transmission network in England and Wales.

Existing Infrastructure

Substation

- Eaton Socon 400 kV Substation
- Eaton Socon 132 kV Substation
- Associated overhead and underground apparatus including cables

Overhead Lines

- 4VK OSPELH 400 kV OHL — EATON SOCON - WYMONDLEY MAIN 1
  COTTAM - EATON SOCON - WYMONDLEY 2
- 4VK ONSTAY 400 kV OHL — COTTAM - EATON SOCON - WYMONDLEY 2

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- 4VK376 - 4VK377A -1 COTTAM - EATON SOCON - RYHALL 1
- 4VK376 - 4VK377B -2 EASO - RYHALL - WYMONDLEY 2

Cable Apparatus

- CableFibre BURWELL - EATON SOCON

New Infrastructure

Please also refer to the Holistic Network Design (HND) and the National Grid ESO website to view the strategic vision for the UK's ever growing electricity transmission network. https://www.nationalgrideso.com/future-energy/the-pathway-2030-holistic-network-design/hnd'

These projects are all essential to increase the overall network capability to connect the numerous new offshore wind farms that are being developed, and transport new clean green energy to the homes and businesses where it is needed.

NGET requests that all existing and future assets are given due consideration given their criticality to distribution of energy across the UK. We remain committed to working with the promoter in a proactive manner, enabling both parties to deliver successful projects wherever reasonably possible. As such we encourage that ongoing discussion and consultation between both parties is maintained on interactions with existing or future assets, land interests, connections or consents and any other NGET interests which have the potential to be impacted prior to submission of the Proposed DCO.

I enclose two plans showing the location of NGET's apparatus in the scoping area.

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Gallows Hill, Warwick
CV34 6DA

Specific Comments – Electricity Infrastructure:

- NGET's Overhead Line/s is protected by a Deed of Easement/Wayleave Agreement which provides full right of access to retain, maintain, repair and inspect our asset

- Statutory electrical safety clearances must be maintained at all times. Any proposed buildings must not be closer than 5.3m to the lowest conductor. NGET recommends that no permanent structures are built directly beneath overhead lines. These distances are set out in EN 43 – 8 Technical Specification for "overhead line clearances Issue 3 (2004)".

- If any changes in ground levels are proposed either beneath or in close proximity to our existing overhead lines then this would serve to reduce the safety clearances for such overhead lines. Safe clearances for existing overhead lines must be maintained in all circumstances.

- The relevant guidance in relation to working safely near to existing overhead lines is contained within the Health and Safety Executive's (www.hse.gov.uk) Guidance Note GS 6 "Avoidance of Danger from Overhead Electric Lines" and all relevant site staff should make sure that they are both aware of and understand this guidance.

- Plant, machinery, equipment, buildings or scaffolding should not encroach within 5.3 metres of any of our high voltage conductors when those conductors are under their worse conditions of maximum "sag" and "swing" and overhead line profile (maximum "sag" and "swing") drawings should be obtained using the contact details above.

- If a landscaping scheme is proposed as part of the proposal, we request that only slow and low growing species of trees and shrubs are planted beneath and adjacent to the existing overhead line to reduce the risk of growth to a height which compromises statutory safety clearances.

- Drilling or excavation works should not be undertaken if they have the potential to disturb or adversely affect the foundations or "pillars of support" of any existing tower. These foundations always extend beyond the base area of the existing tower and foundation ("pillar of support") drawings can be obtained using the contact details above.

- NGET high voltage underground cables are protected by a Deed of Grant; Easement; Wayleave Agreement or the provisions of the New Roads and Street Works Act. These provisions provide NGET full right of access to retain, maintain, repair and inspect our assets. Hence we require that no permanent / temporary structures are to be built over our cables or within the easement strip. Any such proposals should be discussed and agreed with NGET prior to any works taking place.

- Ground levels above our cables must not be altered in any way. Any alterations to the depth of our cables will subsequently alter the rating of the circuit and can compromise the reliability, efficiency and safety of our electricity network and requires consultation with National Grid prior to any such changes in both level and construction being implemented.

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Warwick Technology Park
Gallows Hill, Warwick
CV34 6DA

To download a copy of the HSE Guidance HS(G)47, please use the following link:
http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg47.htm

Further Advice

We would request that the potential impact of the proposed scheme on NGET's existing assets as set out above and including any proposed diversions is considered in any subsequent reports, including in the Environmental Statement, and as part of any subsequent application.

Where any diversion of apparatus may be required to facilitate a scheme, NGET is unable to give any certainty with the regard to diversions until such time as adequate conceptual design studies have been undertaken by NGET. Further information relating to this can be obtained by contacting the email address below.

Where the promoter intends to acquire land, extinguish rights, or interfere with any of NGET apparatus, protective provisions will be required in a form acceptable to it to be included within the DCO.

NGET requests to be consulted at the earliest stages to ensure that the most appropriate protective provisions are included within the DCO application to safeguard the integrity of our apparatus and to remove the requirement for objection. All consultations should be sent to the following email address: **box.landandacquisitions@nationalgrid.com**

I hope the above information is useful. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

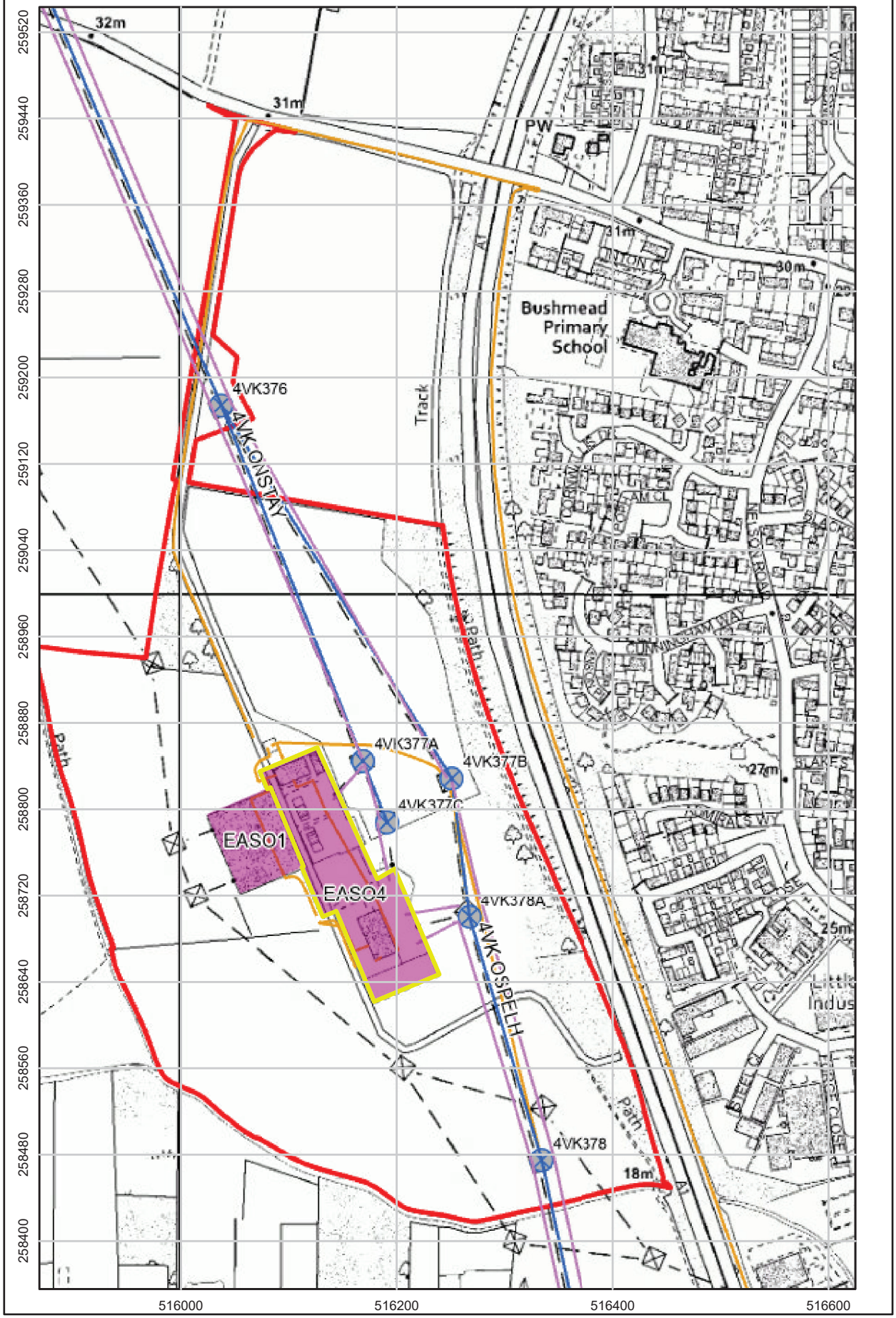
The information in this letter is provided not withstanding any discussions taking place in relation to connections with electricity customer services.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Tiffany Bate
Development Liaison Officer,
Commercial and Customer Connections (Land)

nationalgrid | National Grid Web Map



Legend

- Electric Land Ownership
  - Electric Land Ownership - Freehold
- Telecoms
  - RAMM
- Fibre Cable
  - Fibre Cable Commissioned
- Towers
  - Towers Commissioned
- OHL 400Kv
  - OHL 400Kv Commissioned
- OHL Circuits
  - Commissioned
- Substations
  - Substations Commissioned

Notes

0 0.450.9 1.8 2.7 3.6 km

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Note: Any sketches on the map are approximate and not captured to any particular level of precision.

nationalgrid | National Grid Web Map

Legend

Fibre Cable

- Fibre Cable Commissioned

Towers

- Towers Commissioned

OHL 400Kv

- OHL 400Kv Commissioned

Substations

- Substations Commissioned

Notes

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Technical Guidance Note 287

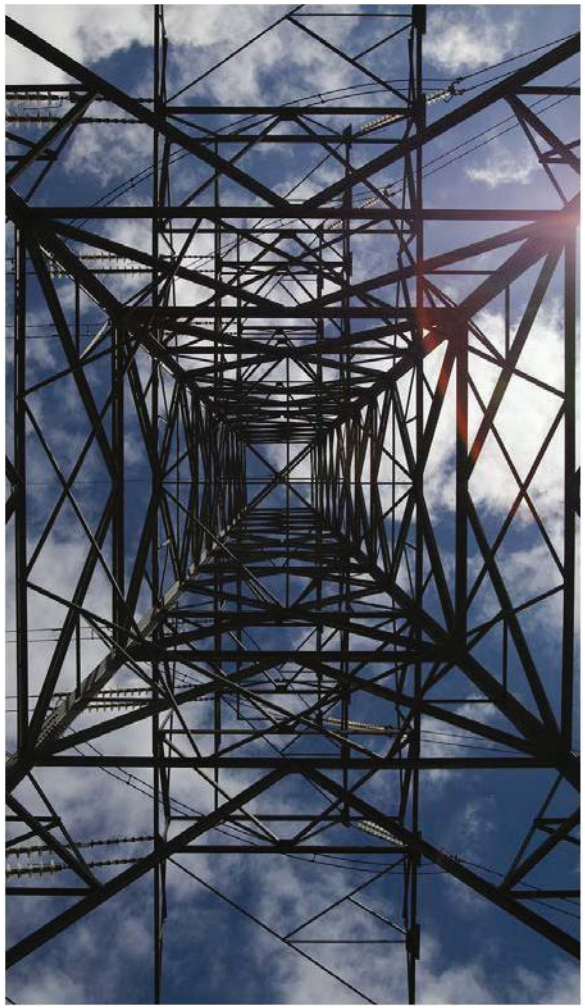
Third-party guidance for working near National Grid Electricity Transmission equipment

Purpose and scope **3**
Contact National Grid 3
How to identify specific National Grid sites 3
Plant protection 3
Emergencies 3

Part 1 – Electricity Transmission infrastructure **4**
Overhead lines 4
Underground cables 4
Substations 4

Part 2 – Statutory requirements for working near high-voltage electricity **4**
Electrical safety clearances 4
Your Responsibilities – Overhead Lines 5

Part 3 – What National Grid will do for you and your development **6**
Provision of information **6**
Drawings 6
Risk of impact identification 6
Risks or hazards to be aware of **7**
Land and access 7
Electrical clearance from overhead lines 7
Underground cables 8
Impressed voltage 8
Earth potential rise 9
Noise 9
Maintenance access 9
Fires and firefighting 10
Excavations, piling or tunnelling 10
Microshocks 10
Specific development guidance **11**
Wind farms 11
Commercial and housing developments 11
Solar farms 12
Asset protection agreements **13**
Contact details **13**
Emergency situations 13
Routine enquiries 13
Appendix A OHL Profile Drawing Guide **14**
Appendix B OHL Tower Stand Off & Reconductoring Area **15**



Purpose and scope

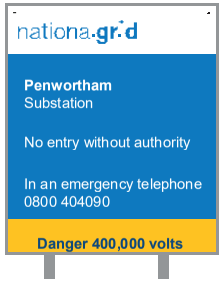
The purpose of this document is to give guidance and information to third parties who are proposing, scheduling or designing developments close to National Grid Electricity Transmission assets.

The scope of the report covers information on basic safety and the location of our assets – and also highlights key issues around particular types of development and risk areas.

In the case of electrical assets, National Grid does not authorise or agree safe systems of work with developers and contractors. However, we will advise on issues such as electrical safety clearances and the location of towers and cables. We also work with developers to minimise the impact of any National Grid assets that are nearby.

How to identify specific National Grid sites

Substations
The name of the Substation and emergency contact number will be on the site sign.



Overhead Lines
The reference number of the tower and the emergency contact number will be on this type of sign.

Contact National Grid

Plant protection

For routine enquiries regarding planned or scheduled works, contact the Asset Protection team online, by email or phone.

www.lsbud.co.uk

Email: assetprotection@nationalgrid.com

Phone: 0800 001 4282

Emergencies

In the event of occurrences such as a cable strike, coming into contact with an overhead line conductor or identifying any hazards or problems with National Grid's equipment, phone our emergency number 0800 404 090 (option 1).

If you have apparatus within 30m of a National Grid asset, please ensure that the emergency number is included in your site's emergency procedures.

Consider safety

Consider the hazards identified in this document when working near electrical equipment

Part 1

Electricity transmission infrastructure

National Grid owns and maintains the high-voltage electricity transmission network in England and Wales (Scotland has its own networks). It's responsible for balancing supply with demand on a minute-by-minute basis across the network.

Overhead lines

Overhead lines consist of two main parts – pylons (also called towers) and conductors (or wires). Pylons are typically steel lattice structures mounted on concrete foundations. A pylon's design can vary due to factors such as voltage, conductor type and the strength of structure required.

Conductors, which are the 'live' part of the overhead line, hang from pylons on insulators. Conductors come in several different designs depending on the amount of power that is transmitted on the circuit.

In addition to the two main components, some Overhead Line Routes carry a Fibre Optic cable between the towers with an final underground connection to the Substations.

In most cases, National Grid's overhead lines operate at 275kV or 400kV.

Underground cables

Underground cables are a growing feature of National Grid's network. They consist of a conducting core surrounded by layers of insulation and armour. Cables can be laid in the road, across open land or in tunnels. They operate at a range of voltages, up to 400kV.

Substations

Substations are found at points on the network where circuits come together or where a rise or fall in voltage is required. Transmission substations tend to be large facilities containing equipment such as power transformers, circuit breakers, reactors and capacitors. In addition Diesel generators and compressed air systems can be located there.

Part 2

Statutory requirements for working near high-voltage electricity

The legal framework that regulates electrical safety in the UK is *The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations (ESQCR) 2002*. This also details the minimum electrical safety clearances, which are used as a basis for the Energy Networks Association (ENA) TS 43-8. These standards have been agreed by CENELEC (European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation) and also form part of the *British Standard BS EN 50341-1:2012 Overhead Electrical Lines exceeding AC 1kV*. All electricity companies are bound by these rules, standards and technical specifications. They are required to uphold them by their operator's licence.

Electrical safety clearances

It is essential that a safe distance is kept between the exposed conductors and people and objects when working near National Grid's electrical assets. A person does not have to touch an exposed conductor to get a life-threatening electric shock. At the voltages National Grid operates at, it is possible for electricity to jump up to several metres from an exposed conductor and kill or cause serious injury to anyone who is nearby. For this reason, there are several legal requirements and safety standards that must be met.

Any breach of legal safety clearances will be enforced in the courts. This can and has resulted in the removal of an infringement, which is normally at the cost of the developer or whoever caused it to be there. Breaching safety clearances, even temporarily, risks a serious incident that could cause serious injury or death.

National Grid will, on request, advise planning authorities, developers or third parties on any safety clearances and associated issues. We can supply detailed drawings of all our overhead line assets marked up with relevant safe areas.

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Your Responsibilities - Overhead lines

Work which takes place near overhead power lines carries a significant risk of coming into proximity with the wires. If any person, object or material gets too close to the wires, electricity could 'flashover' and be conducted to earth, causing death or serious injury. You do not need to touch the wires for this to happen. The law requires that work is carried out in close proximity to live overhead power lines only when there is no alternative, and only when the risks are acceptable and can be properly controlled. Statutory clearances exist which must be maintained, as prescribed by the Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002.

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, you are responsible for preparing a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and safe systems of work, to ensure that risks are managed properly and the safety of your workforce and others is maintained. Your risk assessment must consider and manage all of the significant risks and put in place suitable precautions/controls in order to manage the work safely. You are also responsible for ensuring that the precautions identified are properly implemented and stay in place throughout the work.

Work near overhead power lines must always be conducted in accordance with GS6, 'avoiding danger from overhead power lines', and any legislation which is relevant to the work you are completing.

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What National Grid will provide

National Grid can supply profile drawings in PDF and CAD format showing tower locations and relevant clearances to assist you in the risk assessment process.

What National Grid will not provide

National Grid will not approve safe systems of work or approve design proposals

Part 3

What National Grid will do for you and your development

Provision of information

National Grid should be notified during the planning stage of any works or developments taking place near our electrical assets, ideally a minimum notification period of 8 weeks to allow National Grid to provide the following services:

Drawings

National Grid will provide relevant drawings of overhead lines or underground cables to make sure the presence and location of our services are known. Once a third party or developer has contacted us, we will supply the drawings for free.

Risk or impact identification

National Grid can help identify any hazards or risks that the presence of our assets might bring to any works or developments. This includes both the risk to safety from high-voltage electricity and longer-term issues, such as induced currents, noise and maintenance access that may affect the outcome of the development. National Grid will not authorise specific working procedures, but we can provide advice on best practice.

400kV

The maximum nominal voltage of the underground cables in National Grid's network

Risks or hazards to be aware of

This section includes a brief description of some of the hazards and issues that a third party or developer might face when working or developing close to our electrical infrastructure.

Land and access

National Grid has land rights in place with landowners and occupiers, which cover our existing overhead lines and underground cable network. These agreements, together with legislation set out under the *Electricity Act 1989*, allow us to access our assets to maintain, repair and renew them. The agreements also lay down restrictions and covenants to protect the integrity of our assets and meet safety regulations. Anyone proposing a development close to our assets should carefully examine these agreements.

Our agreements often affect land both inside and outside the immediate vicinity of an asset. Rights will include the provision of access, along with restrictions that ban the development of land through building, changing levels, planting and other operations. Anyone looking to develop close to our assets must consult with National Grid first.

For further information, contact Asset Protection:

Email: assetprotection@nationalgrid.com
Phone: 0800 001 4282

Electrical clearance from overhead lines

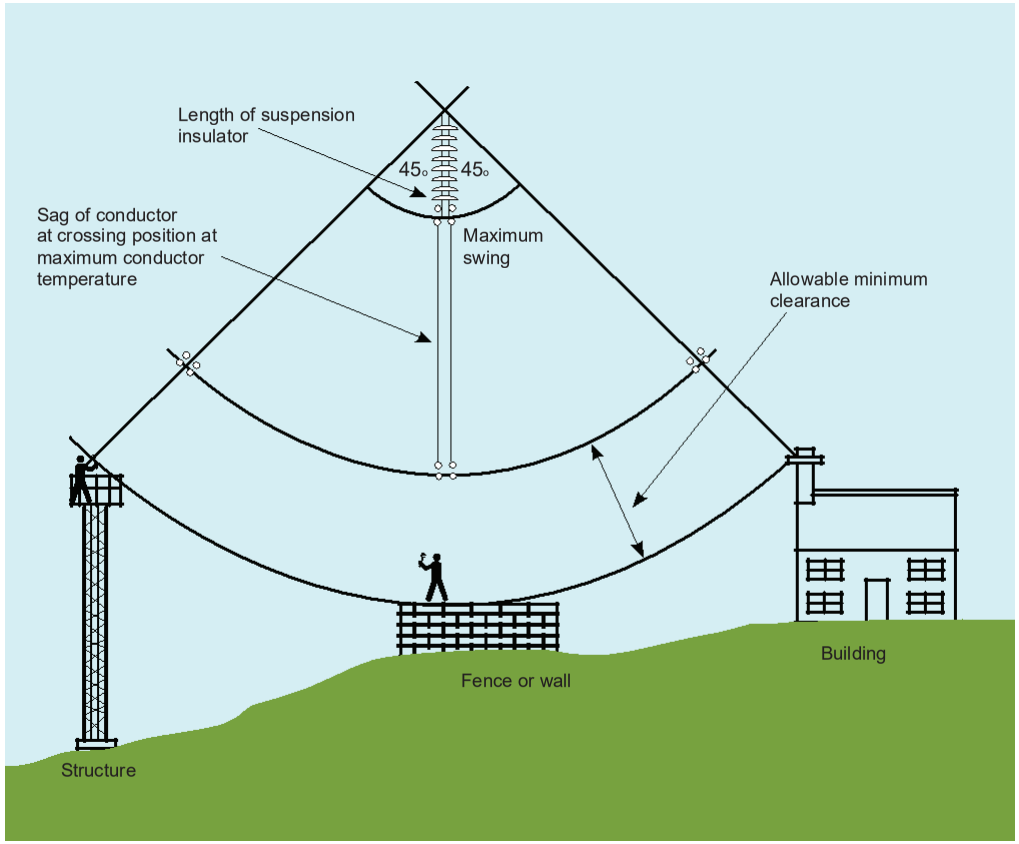
The clearance distances referred to in this section are specific to 400kV overhead lines. National Grid can advise on the distances required around different voltages i.e. 132kV and 275kV.

As we explained earlier, *Electrical Networks Association TS 43-8* details the legal clearances to our overhead lines. The minimum clearance between the conductors of an overhead line and the ground is 7.3m at maximum sag. The sag is the vertical distance between the wire's highest and lowest point. Certain conditions, such as power flow, wind speed and air temperature can cause conductors to move and allowances should be made for this.

The required clearance from the point where a person can stand to the conductors is 5.3m. To be clear, this means there should be at least 5.3m from where someone could stand on any structure (i.e. mobile and construction equipment) to the conductors. Available clearances will be assessed by National Grid on an individual basis.

National Grid expects third parties to implement a safe system of work whenever they are near Overhead Lines.

Diagram not to scale



There should be at least 5.3m between the conductors and any structure someone could stand on

We recommend that guidance such as *HSE Guidance Note GS6 (Avoiding Danger from Overhead Power Lines)* is followed, which provides advice on how to avoid danger from all overhead lines, at all voltages. If you are carrying out work near overhead lines you must contact National Grid, who will provide the relevant profile drawings.

7.3m

The required minimum clearance between the conductors of an overhead line, at maximum sag, and the ground

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The undergrounding of electricity cables at Ross-on-Wye

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Underground cables Underground cables operating at up to 400kV are a significant part of the National Grid Electricity Transmission network. When your works will involve any ground disturbance it is expected that a safe system of work is put in place and that you follow guidance such as *HSG 47 (Avoiding Danger from Underground Services)*.

You must contact National Grid to find out if there are any underground cables near your proposed works. If there are, we will provide cable profiles and location drawings and, if required, on-site supervision of the works. Cables can be laid under roads or across industrial or agricultural land. They can even be layed in canal towpaths and other areas that you would not expect.

Cables crossing any National Grid high-voltage (HV) cables directly buried in the ground are required to maintain a minimum seperation that will be determined by National Grid on a case-by-case basis. National Grid will need to do a rating study on the existing cable to work out if there are any adverse effects on either cable rating. We will only allow a cable to cross such an area once we know the results of the re-rating. As a result, the clearance distance may need to be increased or alternative methods of crossing found.

For other cables and services crossing the path of our HV cables, National Grid will need confirmation that published standards and clearances are met.

Impressed voltage

Any conducting materials installed near high-voltage equipment could be raised to an elevated voltage compared to the local earth, even when there is no direct contact with the high-voltage equipment. These impressed voltages are caused by inductive or capacitive coupling between the high-voltage equipment and nearby conducting materials and can occur at distances of several metres away from the equipment. Impressed voltages may damage your equipment and could potentially injure people and animals, depending on their severity. Third parties should take impressed voltages into account during the early stages and initial design of any development, ensuring that all structures and equipment are adequately earthed at all times.

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Earth potential rise

Under certain system fault conditions – and during lightning storms – a rise in the earth potential from the base of an overhead line tower or substation is possible. This is a rare phenomenon that occurs when large amounts of electricity enter the earth. This can pose a serious hazard to people or equipment that are close by.

We advise that developments and works are not carried out close to our tower bases, particularly during lightning storms.

Noise

Noise is a by-product of National Grid's operations and is carefully assessed during the planning and construction of any of our equipment. Developers should consider the noise emitted from National Grid's sites or overhead lines when planning any developments, particularly housing. Low-frequency hum from substations can, in some circumstances, be heard up to 1km or more from the site, so it is essential that developers find adequate solutions for this in their design. Further information about likely noise levels can be provided by National Grid.

Maintenance access

National Grid needs to have safe access for vehicles around its assets and work that restricts this will not be allowed. In terms of our overhead lines, we wouldn't want to see any excavations made, or permanent structures built, that might affect the foundations of our towers. The size of the foundations around a tower base depends on the type of tower that is built there. If you wish to carry out works within 30m of the tower base, contact National Grid for more information. Our business has to maintain access routes to tower bases with land owners. For that reason, a route wide enough for an HGV must be permanently available. We may need to access our sites, towers, conductors and underground cables at short notice.

30m

If you wish to carry out work within this distance of the tower base, you must contact National Grid for more information

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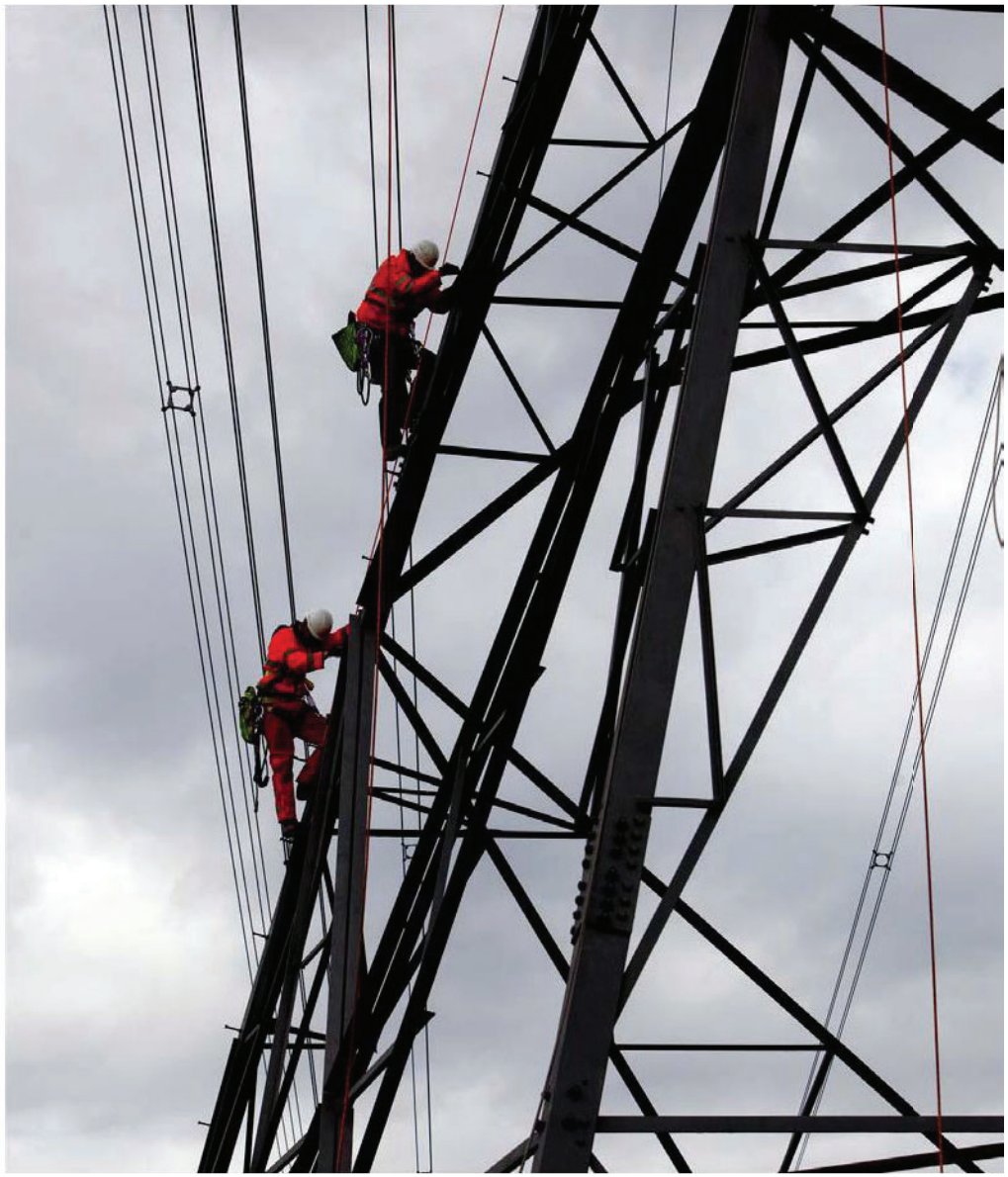

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Fires and firefighting

National Grid does not recommend that any type of flammable material is stored under overhead lines. Developers should be aware that in certain cases the local fire authority will not use water hoses to put out a fire if there are live, high-voltage conductors within 30m of the seat of the fire *(as outlined in ENA TS 43-8)*.

In these situations, National Grid would have to be notified and reconfigure the system – to allow staff to switch out the overhead line – before any firefighting could take place. This could take several hours.

We recommend that any site which has a specific hazard relating to fire or flammable material should include National Grid's emergency contact details (found at the beginning and end of this document) in its fire plan information, so any incidents can be reported.

Developers should also make sure their insurance cover takes into account the challenge of putting out fires near our overhead lines.

Excavations, piling or tunnelling

You must inform National Grid of any works that have the potential to disturb the foundations of our substations or overhead line towers. This will have to be assessed by National Grid engineers before any work begins.

BS ISO 4866:2010 states that a minimum distance of 200m should be maintained when carrying out quarry blasting near our assets. However, this can be reduced with specific site surveys and changes to the maximum instantaneous charge (the amount of explosive detonated at a particular time).

All activities should observe guidance layed out in *BS 5228-2:2009*.

Microshocks

High-voltage overhead power lines produce an electric field. Any person or object inside this field that isn't earthed picks up an electrical charge. When two conducting objects – one that is grounded and one that isn't – touch, the charge can equalise and cause a small shock, known as a microshock. While they are not harmful, they can be disturbing for the person or animal that suffers the shock.

For these reasons, metal-framed and metal-clad buildings which are close to existing overhead lines should be earthed to minimise the risk of microshocks. Anything that isn't earthed, is conductive and sits close to the lines is likely to pick up a charge. Items such as deer fences, metal palisade fencing, chain-link fences and metal gates underneath overhead lines all need to be earthed.

For further information on microshocks please visit **www.emfs.info.**

200m

The minimum distance that should be maintained from National Grid assets when quarry blasting

Specific development guidance

Wind farms

National Grid's policy towards wind farm development is closely connected to the *Electricity Networks Association Engineering Recommendation L44 Separation between Wind Turbines and Overhead Lines, Principles of Good Practice*. The advice is based on national guidelines and global research. It may be adjusted to suit specific local applications.

There are two main criteria in the document:

(i)The turbine shall be far enough away to avoid the possibility of toppling onto the overhead line

(ii)The turbine shall be far enough away to avoid damage to the overhead line from downward wake effects, also known as turbulence

The toppling distance is the minimum horizontal distance between the worst-case pivot point of the wind turbine and the conductors hanging in still air. It is the greater of:

- the tip height of the turbine plus 10%
- or, the tip height of the turbine plus the electrical safety distance that applies to the voltage of the overhead line.

To minimise the downward wake effect on an overhead line, the wind turbine should be three times the rotor distance away from the centre of the overhead line.

Wake effects can prematurely age conductors and fittings, significantly reducing the life of the asset. For that reason, careful consideration should be taken if a wind turbine needs to be sited within the above limits. Agreement from National Grid will be required.

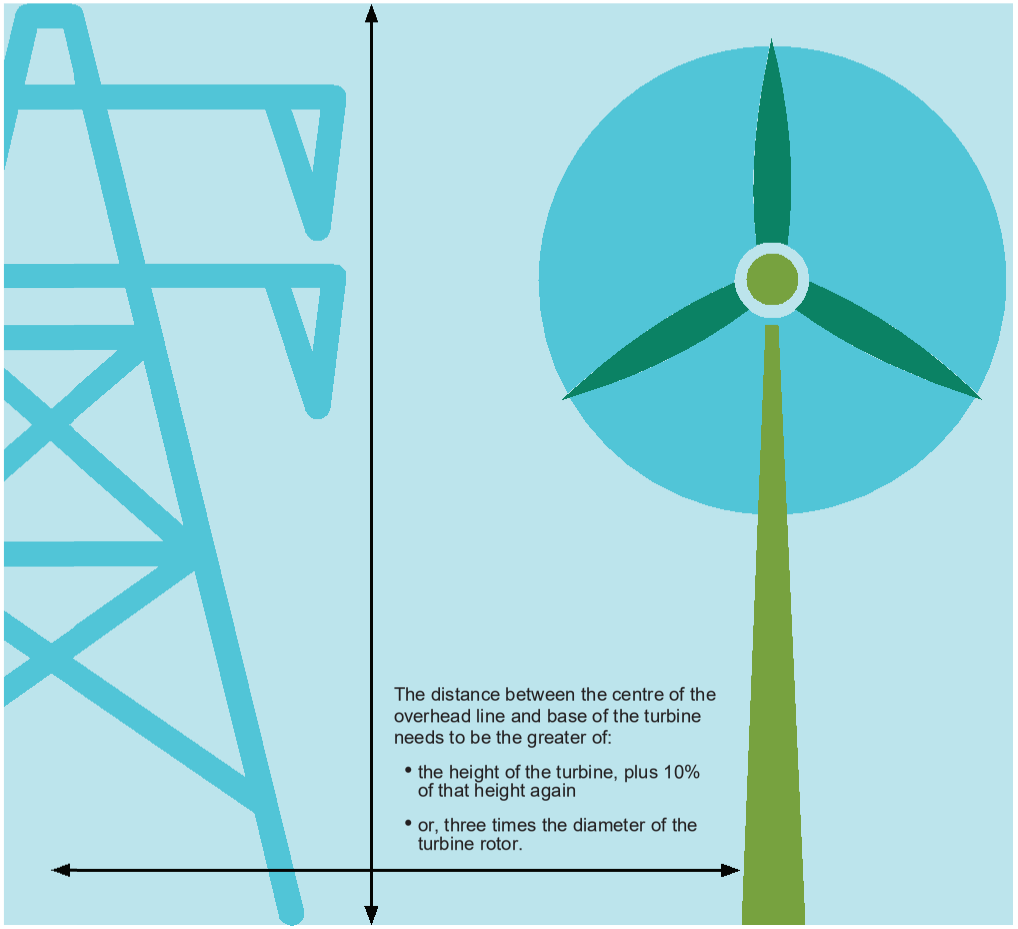
Commercial and housing developments

National Grid has developed a document called *Design guidelines for development near pylons and HVO power lines*, which gives advice to anyone involved in planning or designing large-scale developments that are crossed by, or close to, overhead lines.

The document focuses on existing 275kV and 400kV overhead lines on steel lattice towers, but can equally apply to 132kV and below. The document explains how to design large-scale developments close to high-voltage lines, while respecting clearances and the development's visual and environmental impact.

Section continues on next page »

Diagram not to scale



Turbines should be far enough away to avoid the possibility of toppling onto the overhead line

« Section continued from previous page

The advice is intended for developers, designers, landowners, local authorities and communities, but is not limited to those organisations.

Overall, developers should be aware of all the hazards and issues relating to the electrical equipment that we have discussed when designing new housing.

As we explored earlier, National Grid's assets have the potential to create noise. This can be low frequency and tonal, which makes it quite noticeable. It is the responsibility of developers to take this into account during the design stage and find an appropriate solution.

Solar farms

While there is limited research and recommendations available, there are several key factors to consider when designing Solar Farms in the vicinity of Overhead Power Lines.

Developers may be looking to build on arable land close to National Grid's assets. In keeping with the safety clearance limits that we outlined earlier for solar panels directly underneath overhead line conductors, the highest point on the solar panels must be no more than 5.3m from the lowest conductors.

This means that the maximum height of any structure will need to be determined to make sure safety clearance limits aren't breached. This could be as low as 2m. National Grid will supply profile drawings to aid the planning of solar farms and determine the maximum height of panels and equipment.

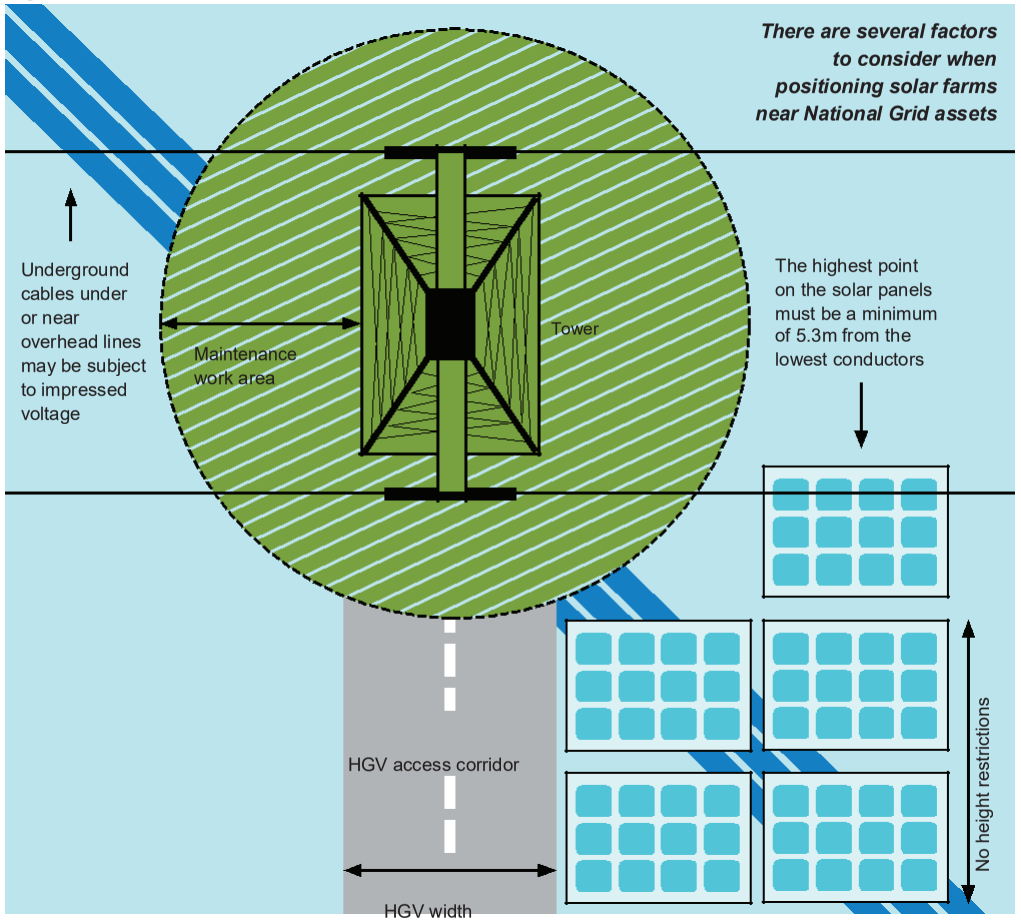
Solar panels that are directly underneath power lines risk being damaged on the rare occasion that a conductor or fitting falls to the ground. A more likely risk is ice falling from conductors or towers in winter and damaging solar panels.

There is also a risk of damage during adverse weather conditions, such as lightning storms, and system faults. As all our towers are earthed, a weather event such as lightning can cause a rise in the earth potential around the base of a tower. Solar panel support structures and supply cables should be adequately earthed and bonded together to minimise the effects of this temporary rise in earth potential.

Any metallic fencing that is located under an overhead line will pick up an electrical charge. For this reason, it will need to be adequately earthed to minimise microshocks to the public.

For normal, routine maintenance and in an emergency National Grid requires unrestricted access to its assets. So if a tower is enclosed in a solar farm compound, we will need full access for our vehicles,

Diagram not to scale



Including access through any compound gates. During maintenance – and especially re-conductoring – National Grid would need enough space near our towers for winches and cable drums. If enough space is not available, we would require solar panels to be temporarily removed.

Asset protection agreements

In some cases, where there is a risk that development will impact on National Grid's assets, we will insist on an asset protection agreement being put in place. The cost of this will be the responsibility of the developer or third party.

Contact details

Emergency situations

If you spot a potential hazard on or near an overhead electricity line, do not approach it, even at ground level. Keep as far away as possible and follow the six steps below:

- Warn anyone close by to evacuate the area
- Call our 24-hour electricity emergency number: 0800 404 090 (Option 1)[1]
- Give your name and contact phone number
- Explain the nature of the issue or hazard
- Give as much information as possible so we can identify the location – i.e. the name of the town or village, numbers of nearby roads, postcode and (ONLY if it can be observed without putting you or others in danger) the tower number of an adjacent pylon
- Await further contact from a National Grid engineer

[1] It is critically important that you don't use this phone number for any other purpose. If you need to contact National Grid for another reason please use our Contact Centre at www2.nationalgrid.com/contact-us to find the appropriate information or call 0800 0014282.

Routine enquiries

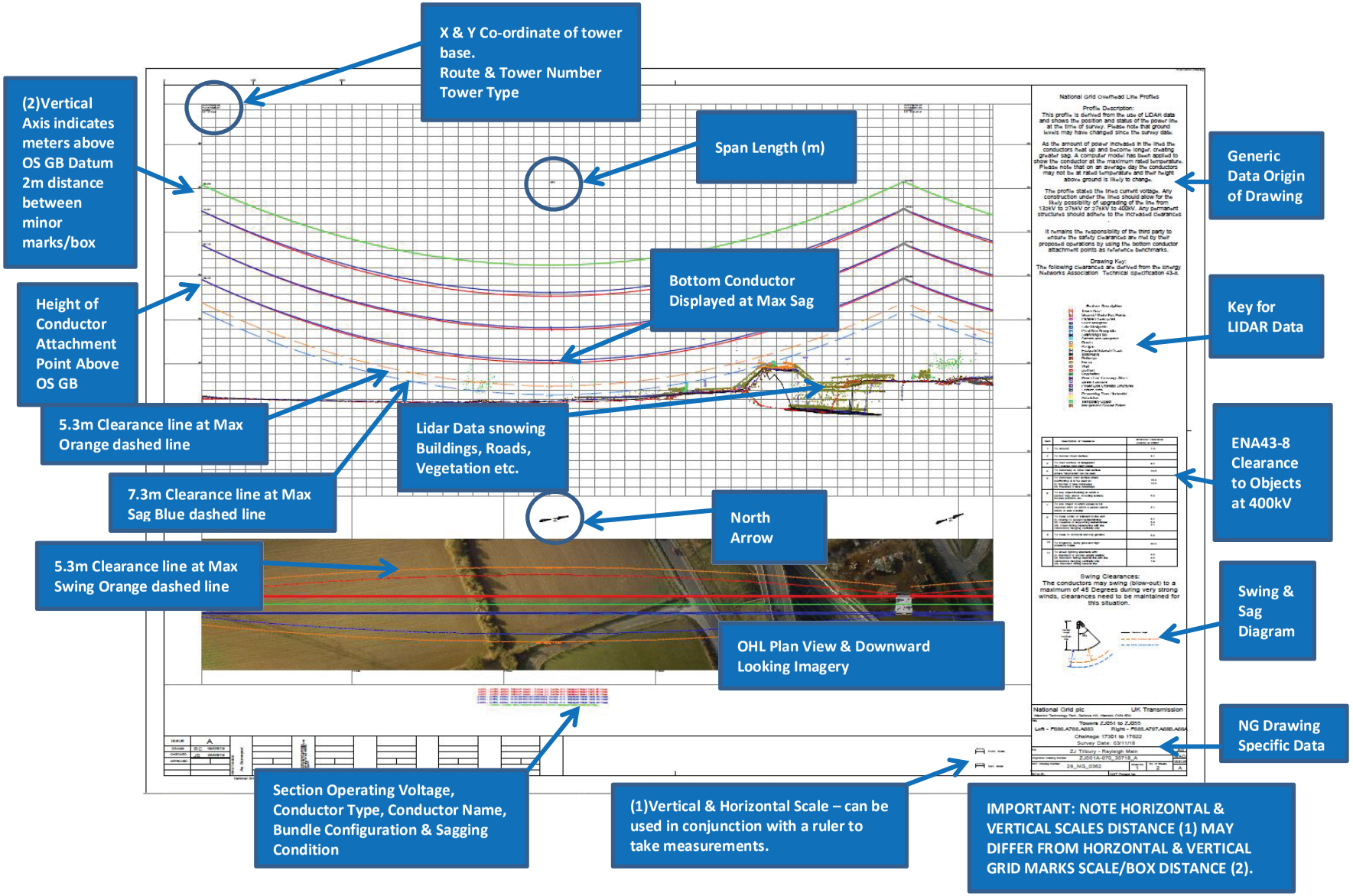
Email:
assetprotection@nationalgrid.com

Call Asset Protection on:
0800 0014282

Opening hours:
Monday to Friday 08:00-16:00

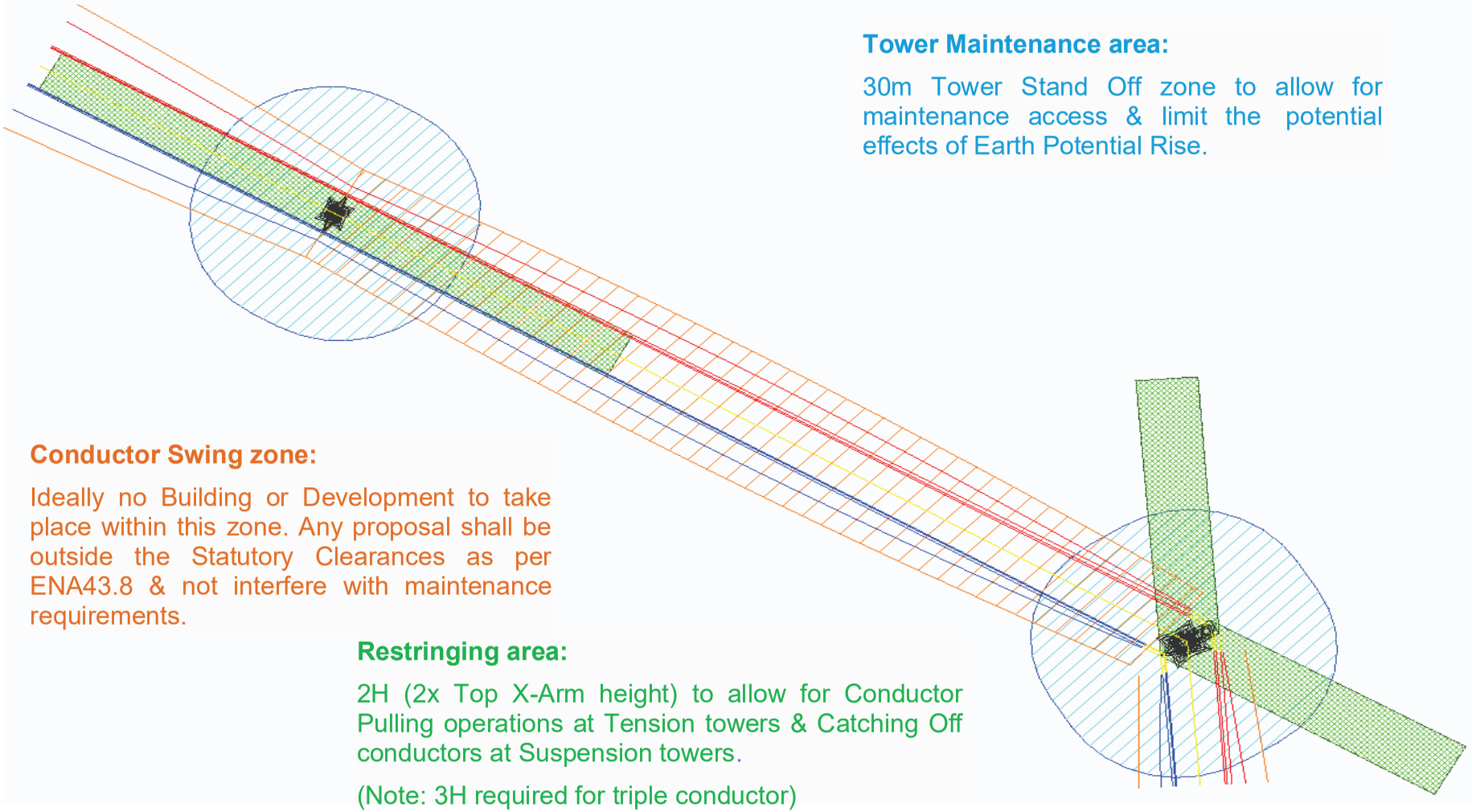
14 APPENDIX A

OHL Profile Drawing Guide



15 APPENDIX B

OHL Tower Stand Off & Reconductoring Area



Tower Maintenance area:

30m Tower Stand Off zone to allow for maintenance access & limit the potential effects of Earth Potential Rise.

Conductor Swing zone:

Ideally no Building or Development to take place within this zone. Any proposal shall be outside the Statutory Clearances as per ENA43.8 & not interfere with maintenance requirements.

Restringing area:

2H (2x Top X-Arm height) to allow for Conductor Pulling operations at Tension towers & Catching Off conductors at Suspension towers.

(Note: 3H required for triple conductor)

RNA Energy Ltd
East Park Energy
C/o Lexington
Third Floor, Queens House
Queen Street
Manchester
M2 5HT
Via Email:
eastparkenergyproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Operations (East)
National Highways
Woodlands
Manton Lane
Bedford MK41 7LW

14 November 2023
NH/23/03580

Dear Sir/Madam,

EN010141 - 23/02405/LPA RNA Energy Ltd (the Applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for East Park Energy (the Proposed Development)

National Highways welcomes the opportunity to comment on the scoping of the ES for this future application.

The Site is located across approximately 768 ha of land to the west of St Neots, with the point of connection to the National Grid to be at the Eaton Socon Substation. The Site will be accessed from the SRN via the B645 Kimbolton Road. To the west of its junction with the A1, the B645 Kimbolton Road.

National Highways has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). It is our role to maintain the safe and efficient operation of the SRN whilst acting as a delivery partner to national economic growth.

In relation to this application, National highways would like to see the following within the Scoping Report:

The assessment methodology should comply with IEMA July 2023 Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement. We would also recommended that reference is made to the newly updated DfT Circular 01/2022, which provides guidance regarding how the impact of the proposed development on the SRN should be assessed together

with ‘The strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development (National Highways and the strategic road network)’.

The scoping note states there is so few trips relating to the A1 that it is not considered to be a particular traffic impact issue. Given the nature of the proposed scheme this is understandable but National Highways request the number of trips is shown on routes on the SRN going to and from site for staff and site workers and while as operational traffic.

It is clear construction traffic will be the most impact, National Highways need to understand the methodology the construction traffic has been derived and which routes they will use. We will want to see the Peak flows (not averages) on the key routes. We will also want to see the abnormal load routing and number of trip information. A CTMP will be required to be reviewed by National Highways.

We trust the above is useful and would like to be kept informed of the peer consultation.

Yours sincerely,

Jen Searle
Spatial Planner, Beds, Bucks and Herts

Patten, Jack

From: NATS Safeguarding <NATSSafeguarding@nats.co.uk>
Sent: 31 October 2023 14:36
To: East Park Energy
Subject: RE: EN010141 - East Park Energy - EIA Scoping Notification and Consultation [SG36389]

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Our Ref: SG36389

Dear Sir/Madam

The proposed development has been examined from a technical safeguarding aspect and does not conflict with our safeguarding criteria. Accordingly, NATS (En Route) Public Limited Company ("NERL") has no safeguarding objection to the proposal.

However, please be aware that this response applies specifically to the above consultation and only reflects the position of NATS (that is responsible for the management of en route air traffic) based on the information supplied at the time of this application. This letter does not provide any indication of the position of any other party, whether they be an airport, airspace user or otherwise. It remains your responsibility to ensure that all the appropriate consultees are properly consulted.

If any changes are proposed to the information supplied to NATS in regard to this application which become the basis of a revised, amended or further application for approval, then as a statutory consultee NERL requires that it be further consulted on any such changes prior to any planning permission or any consent being granted.

Yours faithfully

NATS Safeguarding

E: natssafeguarding@nats.co.uk

4000 Parkway, Whiteley,
Fareham, Hants PO15 7FL
www.nats.co.uk

Patten, Jack

From: BCW Planning <Planning.BCW@northnorthants.gov.uk>
Sent: 07 November 2023 10:32
To: East Park Energy
Subject: FW: EN010141 - East Park Energy - EIA Scoping Notification and Consultation
Attachments: EN010141 - East Park Energy - Statutory Consultation Letter.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good morning

Thank you for the below consultation.

North Northamptonshire Council (Wellingborough Team) have no comments or objections.

Kind regards

Planning Validations Officer
Development Management
North Northamptonshire Council, Swanspool House, Doddington Road, Wellingborough NN8 1BP
T: 0300 126 3000 | DD: 01933 231906

Patten, Jack

From: Before You Dig <BeforeYouDig@northerngas.co.uk>
Sent: 31 October 2023 11:29
To: East Park Energy
Subject: RE: EXT:EN010141 - East Park Energy - EIA Scoping Notification and Consultation

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good Morning,

Northern Gas Networks do not cover this area.

Please forward your enquiry to plantprotection@cadentgas.com

You can use the link below to check which gas network operator covers each area before submission to ensure you have the correct network;
https://www.energynetworks.org/operating-the-networks/whos-my-network-operator

Kind regards,

Lucy McMahon

Administration Assistant
Before You Dig
Northern Gas Networks
1st Floor, 1 Emperor Way
Doxford Park
Sunderland
SR3 3XR

My working days are Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday 08:00am – 16:30pm

Before You Dig: 0800 040 7766 (option 5)
www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk
facebook.com/northerngasnetworks
twitter.com/ngngas
Alternative contact:
beforeyoudig@northerngas.co.uk

Get involved! Have your say in the future of your gas network and win great prizes, by taking part in our BIG customer survey at together.northerngasnetworks.co.uk Keep posted to take part in a range of activities from workshops to roadshows. Together, we are the network.

Patten, Jack

From: clerk@pertenhallandswineshead-pc.gov.uk
Sent: 20 November 2023 08:27
To: East Park Energy
Cc: 'FULLER, Richard'; 'Tom Wootton'; Julie Cox; Martin Towler
Subject: East Park Energy Project Scoping Consultation - Response from Pertenhall & Swineshead Parish Council

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Sir or Madam

Pertenhall & Swineshead Parish Council has no issues with what East Park Energy has put in the scoping document although it does have significant issues with the scheme in itself. It is difficult to comment without seeing the full proposal. Until we have seen the environment statement we will reserve our position. There are going to be major issues regarding landscape and heritage. We will be taking professional advice on the final report and our objections will be professionally supported. We reserve our position on other issues until we have seen the detail.

Kind regards,

Mrs Diane Robins, CiLCA
Clerk to Pertenhall & Swineshead Parish Council

Tel: [redacted] Mob: [redacted] www.pertenhallandswineshead-pc.gov.uk

Patten, Jack

From: clerk@staploe-pc.gov.uk
Sent: 27 November 2023 23:27
To: East Park Energy
Cc: 'Emilio Meola (PC)'; 'Ged Meola (PC)'; 'Jane Thomson'; 'Jo Ibbett (PC)'; 'Phillip Yockney'; 'Veronica Zwetsloot (PC)'
Subject: Staploe Parish Council Response

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Staploe Parish Council have examined the yellow table in the scoping document (p310 to 333)
http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/document/EN010141-000010
and it is our opinion that the following should be scoped in:

1. Glint and glare during operation
2. night time effects throughout the project as lighting may be used during construction and decommissioning
3. residential visual amenity throughout the project not just during operation
4. non statutory designated sites for nature conservation throughout (the fences have a significant impact on nature – High Wood, Hail Weson is an ancient woodland and would be very close to site D and already has a well advanced proposal to build a solar farm on its three other boundaries.)
5. irreplaceable habitats (eg High Wood, Hail Weston ancient woodland will be almost surrounded if this project and High Wood solar farm go ahead),
6. priority habitats throughout (they may be retained but what effect will the fencing, noise, lighting have?)
7. non-breeding birds during operation (they can dive into the panels thinking it is water)
8. roosting bats during construction and operation (can dive into panels thinking it is water, may be affected by the lighting during construction / decommissioning and fencing)
9. reptiles should be scoped in as there are a lot of grass snakes in the area
10. badgers should be scoped in as there are many in the area and they can be dramatically affected by the fencing
11. otters have been returning to the area (seen in Duloe Brook last year) and should be scoped in
12. water voles are present in the area
13. invertebrates should be scoped in (we have some rare moths in our area eg. Small Eggar Moth which may be affected during construction / by lighting
14. water quality from increased siltation should be scoped in during operation as the change in runoff patterns can affect water quality and siltation
15. human health should be scoped in because losing green spaces and views to industrial views of panels can affect people's mental health
16. setting impacts to designated heritage assets should be scoped in during construction
17. non-designated heritage assets should be scoped in because they are of importance locally
18. noise impacts should be scoped in during decommissioning
19. noise impacts of traffic should be scoped in during decommissioning
20. traffic and transport – all aspects should be scoped in during decommissioning as well as construction
21. increases in winter precipitation due to climate change should be scoped in during construction and decommissioning due to mud
22. changes in water availability should be scoped in during operation as they will need to wash the panels
23. travel of construction workers should be scoped in – they may need to stay in caravans on site
24. energy consumption from providing clean water and treatment of waste water – include because they may need caravans on site and toilets etc. and they may need to wash panels during operation
25. vehicle emissions should be included during decommissioning as well as construction
26. effects on agricultural land use should be included during construction and decommissioning.

We also want to know about:

1. archaeology – when will that be done – is it included in the environmental scoping document?

2. Working hours – will they be limited to 8-5 Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays during construction and decommissioning?

Best wishes,

Lucy Crawford
Clerk to Staploe Parish Council
33, Staploe,
St. Neots,
Cambs. PE19 5JA
[redacted]
clerk@staploe-pc.gov.uk
Our privacy policy is available on our website: https://staploe-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Policies/Data-Protection-and-CCTV/General-Privacy-Notice.pdf

UK Health Security Agency

Environmental Hazards and Emergencies Department
Seaton House, City Link
London Road
Nottingham, NG2 4LA

nsipconsultations@ukhsa.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/ukhsa

Your Ref: EN010141
Our Ref: 64721

Mr Jack Patten
EIA Advisor
Environmental Services
Operational Group 3
Temple Quay House,
2 The Square
Bristol BS1 6PN

28th November 2023

Dear Mr Patten

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
East Park Energy [PINS Reference: EN010141]
Scoping Consultation Stage

Thank you for including the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) in the scoping consultation phase of the above application. ***Please note that we request views from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and the response provided below is sent on behalf of both UKHSA and OHID.*** The response is impartial and independent.

The health of an individual or a population is the result of a complex interaction of a wide range of different determinants of health, from an individual's genetic make-up to lifestyles and behaviours, and the communities, local economy, built and natural environments to global ecosystem trends. All developments will have some effect on the determinants of health, which in turn will influence the health and wellbeing of the general population, vulnerable groups, and individual people. Although assessing impacts on health beyond direct effects from for example emissions to air or road traffic incidents is complex, there is a need to ensure a proportionate assessment focused on an application's significant effects.

Having considered the submitted scoping report we wish to make the following specific comments and recommendations:

Environmental Public Health

We understand that the promoter will wish to avoid unnecessary duplication and that many issues including air quality, emissions to water, waste, contaminated land etc. will be covered elsewhere in the Environmental Statement (ES). We believe the summation of relevant issues into a specific section of the report provides a focus which ensures that public health is given adequate consideration. The section should summarise key information, risk assessments, proposed mitigation measures, conclusions and residual impacts, relating to human health. Compliance with the requirements of National Policy Statements and relevant guidance and standards should also be highlighted.

In terms of the level of detail to be included in an ES, we recognise that the differing nature of projects is such that their impacts will vary. UKHSA and OHID's predecessor organisation Public Health England produced an advice document *Advice on the content of Environmental Statements accompanying an application under the NSIP Regime*', setting out aspects to be addressed within the Environmental Statement[1]. This advice document and its recommendations are still valid and should be considered when preparing an ES. Please note that where impacts relating to health and/or further assessments are scoped out, promoters should fully explain and justify this within the submitted documentation.

Recommendation

Our position is that pollutants associated with road traffic or combustion, particularly particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen are non-threshold; i.e, an exposed population is likely to be subject to potential harm at any level and that reducing public exposure to non-threshold pollutants (such as particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide) below air quality standards will have potential public health benefits. We support approaches which minimise or mitigate public exposure to non-threshold air pollutants, address inequalities (in exposure) and maximise co-benefits (such as physical exercise). We encourage their consideration during development design, environmental and health impact assessment, and development consent.

We note that the Applicant has scoped out the further assessment of Major Accidents and Incidents. Considering that more detail will be forthcoming and is required to adequately assess residential receptor impacts arising from the proposed development, we consider that Major Accidents (including and especially fire risks) have not yet been fully assessed and that it is too early to scope out a detailed assessment of Major Accidents at this stage. We recommend that the Promoter considers scoping in Major Accidents and Disasters, until the route for the underground cable route has been finalised and the potential for accidents that might affect public health is fully understood. This is not withstanding the fact that safe methods of working would be used.

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[1] https://khub.net/documents/135939561/390856715/Advice+on+the+content+of+environmental+statements+accompanying+an+application+under+the+Nationally+Significant+Infrastructure+Planning+Regime.pdf/a86b5521-46cc-98e4-4cad-f81a6c58f2e2?t=1615998516658

Electromagnetic Fields (EMFs)

Recommendation

The Applicant should assess the potential public health impact of EMFs arising from any electrical equipment associated with the development. Alternatively, a statement should be provide explaining why EMFs can be scoped out. For more information on how to carry out the assessment, please see the accompanying linked UKHSA NSIP advice document[1].

Human Health and Wellbeing - OHID

This section of OHID's response, identifies the wider determinants of health and wellbeing we expect the ES to address, to demonstrate whether they are likely to give rise to significant effects. OHID has focused its approach on scoping determinants of health and wellbeing under four themes, which have been derived from an analysis of the wider determinants of health mentioned in the National Policy Statements. The four themes are:

- Access
- Traffic and Transport
- Socioeconomic
- Land Use

Having considered the submitted scoping report OHID wish to make the following specific comments and recommendations:

Methodology

We note the proposal to not have a separate human health chapter within the ES and do not object provided that sufficient detail and consideration is provided within the other individual chapters on matters of population and human health.

We reserve the right to require separate considering of population and human health should any other chapters within the ES identify significant effects.

Yours sincerely

On behalf of UK Health Security Agency

Please mark any correspondence for the attention of National Infrastructure Planning Administration.