EAST PARK ENERGY

East Park Energy

EN010141

Environmental Statement

Volume 4 – Non Technical Summary

Document Reference: EN010141/DR/6.4

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009: Regulation 5(2)(a)

September 2025

Version P01

EAST PARK ENERGY

Planning Act 2008

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Environmental Statement
Volume 4 – Non-Technical Summary

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FIGURES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 This document has been prepared on behalf of BSSL Cambsbed 1 Ltd[1] (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') and is a Non-Technical Summary ('NTS') of the Environmental Statement ('ES') that has been prepared for the East Park Energy project (hereafter referred to as 'the Scheme').

1.1.2 The NTS has been prepared to explain the development proposed by the Applicant and to describe the likely significant environmental effects of the construction, operation (including maintenance), and decommissioning of the Scheme. It also outlines the mitigation measures proposed to reduce the effects on the environment. The NTS has been written in non-technical language to provide a clear, accessible, and concise summary of the findings of the ES.

1.1.3 The Scheme comprises a new ground-mounted solar farm and associated on-site Battery Energy Storage System ('BESS') on land to the north-west of St Neots. The Scheme also includes the associated infrastructure for connection to the national grid at the Eaton Socon National Grid Substation.

1.1.4 The Scheme would allow for the generation and export of 400 megawatts (MW) of renewable electricity, as well as the storage of up to 100 MW of electricity in the BESS.

1.1.5 The Scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project ('NSIP') as a result of its electricity generation capacity being greater than 50 MW. As such, the Applicant is required to apply for a Development Consent Order ('DCO') to construct, operate and decommission the Scheme. A DCO is a legal document that has the effect of granting planning permission for a

[1] *A subsidiary of Brockwell Storage and Solar Ltd.*

development, along with granting other associated consents, and where required, land acquisition rights.

1.1.6 There is a clear and urgent need for new renewable energy infrastructure in the UK to help address the climate change emergency, meet Net Zero 2050 targets, and bolster national energy security. The Scheme will make a significant contribution toward these objectives by delivering a large-scale source of clean, low-carbon electricity.

1.1.7 The application for a DCO will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, with the decision whether to grant a DCO ultimately being made by the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (hereafter referred to as the 'Secretary of State') pursuant to the Planning Act 2008[2].

1.2 What is Environmental Impact Assessment?

1.2.1 The nature, size and location of our proposals means that we are undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') for the Scheme. The purpose of EIA is to identify, describe and assess the likely significant environmental effects (both adverse and beneficial) of the Scheme, which is an iterative and staged process.

1.2.2 As the Scheme is a NSIP, the following are the key EIA reporting stages through to submission of the DCO application:

- **EIA Screening** – depending on the scale of the development, EIA screening is undertaken to establish whether the development has the potential for significant environmental effects. The Applicant did not undertake EIA Screening but instead acknowledged that the Scheme has the potential for significant environmental effects and notified the Secretary of State of their intention to provide an Environmental Statement (ES) with the DCO application.

[2] *HMSO (2008). Planning Act 2008. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/introduction*

- **EIA Scoping** – the scope of the EIA is consulted on with the Planning Inspectorate and consultees including the relevant Local Planning Authorities[3]. An EIA Scoping Report was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on the 30th October 2023, and the Planning Inspectorate issued their Scoping Opinion on the 8th December 2023. The Scoping Opinion has informed the scope of the EIA.
- **Preliminary Environmental Information** – the Applicant must prepare and consult on 'Preliminary Environmental Information' as part of a statutory consultation that includes prescribed statutory consultees[4], land interests and members of the public. The Applicant held a statutory consultation, which included the publication of a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), between 7th and 19th September 2024.
- **Environmental Statement** – following consultation on the PEIR, the Applicant must submit an ES with the DCO application that reports on the likely significant effects of the Scheme, along with any proposed mitigation to reduce those effects. The ES is taken into account by the Secretary of State when deciding on whether to grant a DCO. The project is at this stage in the process.

1.3 Purpose of the Environmental Statement

1.3.1 This document is a Non-Technical Summary of the ES submitted with the DCO application for the East Park Energy project. The ES comprises four volumes as follows:

i) **ES Volume 1: Main Report [EN010141/DR/6.1]** – This is the main body of the ES, containing the written chapters. It begins with a Table of Contents, a Glossary of terms, and a list of Acronyms for reference.

[3] Cambridgeshire County Council, Bedford Borough Council and Huntingdonshire District Council
[4] A list of statutory consultees is prescribed in Schedule 1 of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms & Procedure) Regulations 2009. The applicant has a duty to consult with statutory consultees on the Scheme.

ii) **Volume 2: Technical Appendices [EN010141/DR/6.2]** – The technical appendices to the ES contain detailed technical data and reports that support the assessments in the main chapters of the ES.

iii) **Volume 3: Figures [EN010141/DR/6.3]** – This comprises the maps, drawings, and figures referenced in the ES chapters.

iv) **Volume 4: Non-Technical Summary [EN010141/DR/6.4]** – The NTS (this document) is a standalone summary of the ES written in plain language. It condenses the main findings of the ES into a shorter document, with graphics and simplified explanations, so that non-specialist readers can understand the environmental implications of the Scheme.

1.3.2 The ES (as a whole) provides a comprehensive assessment of environmental effects. Readers concerned with specific issues (for example, how the Scheme might affect local wildlife or traffic or views) can find the relevant ES chapter and see both the analysis and supporting data.

2.0 THE SITE

2.1 The Site

2.1.1 The ‘Site’ is located to the north-west of the town of St Neots, and is across two administrative areas; Bedford Borough Council and Huntingdonshire District Council. The latter is a two-tier authority with Cambridgeshire County Council. The Site location is shown on **Figure 1**.

2.1.2 The Site area extends to approximately 773 hectares (ha) and is hereafter referred to as the ‘Order Limits’.

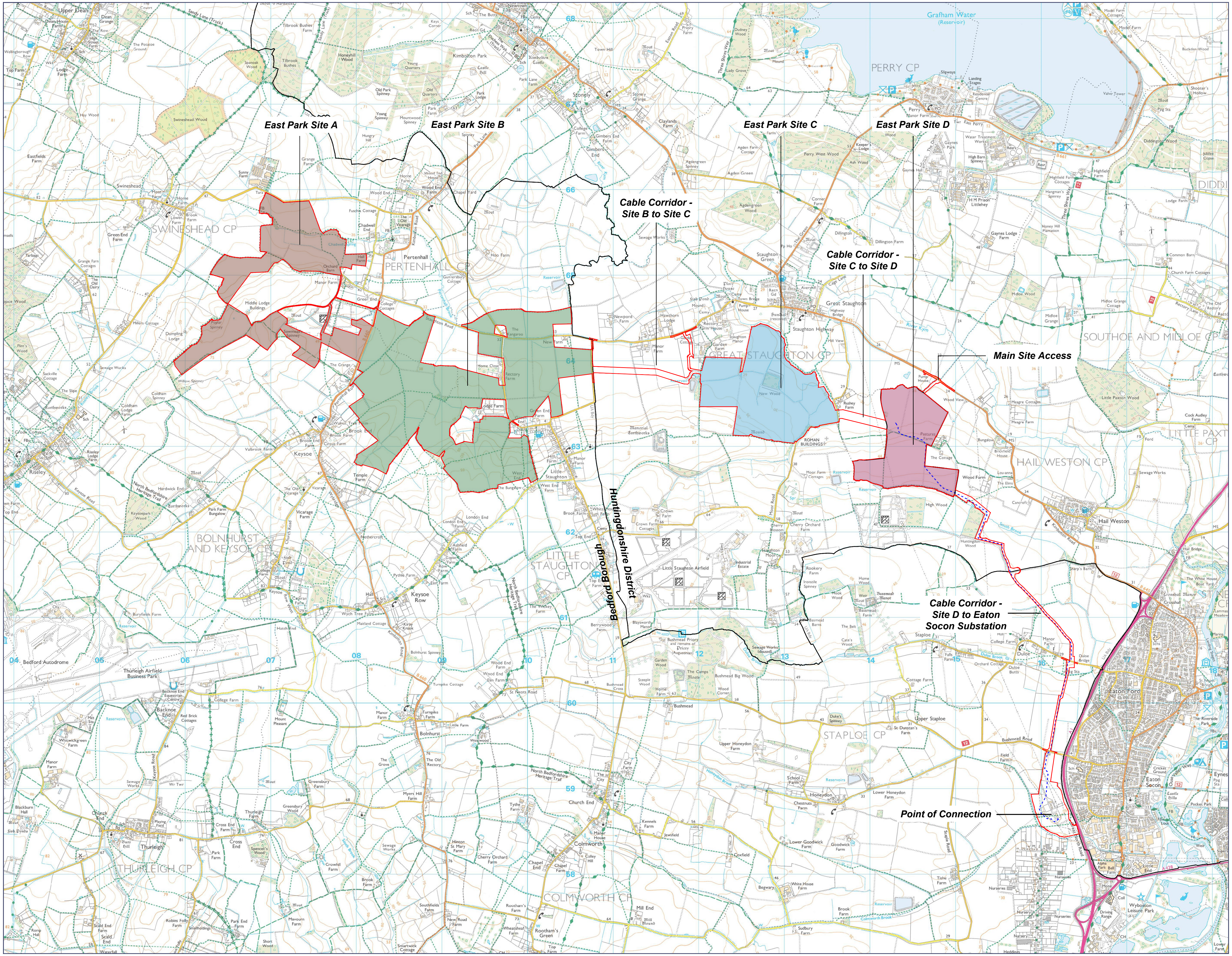
2.1.3 For ease of reference the Order Limits has been sub-divided into East Park Sites A to D, in which all of the above ground infrastructure proposed as part of the operational Scheme would be located (excluding works to the Eaton Socon Substation). The Order Limits also covers land outside of East Park Sites A to D which will be required for access, cabling, and the grid connection to the Eaton Socon Substation. East Park Sites A to D can be described as follows:

- **East Park Site A** – covering land west of the B660 between Pertenhall and Swineshead at the western end of the Site. East Park Site A comprises arable fields located on the north, west and east sides of a small hill that lies between Pertenhall and Riseley. East Park Site A lies either side of the Pertenhall Brook, with access proposed from the B660 to the east.
- **East Park Site B** – covering land between Pertenhall, Keysoe, and Little Staughton. East Park Site B comprises arable fields located north of an elevated ridgeline which runs between Keysoe and Little Staughton. East Park Site B is crossed by a number of small watercourses, with access proposed from the B660, Great Staughton Road, Little Staughton Road, and an unnamed road between Little Staughton and Great Staughton Road.

- **East Park Site C** – covering land south of Great Staughton. East Park Site C comprises arable fields located south of the River Kym, with access proposed from Moor Road to its south-eastern boundary, and from Little Staughton Road to the north-west.
- **East Park Site D** – covering land around Pastures Farm between Great Staughton and Hail Weston. East Park Site D comprises arable fields with access proposed via a new access from the B645.

2.1.4 As illustrated on **Figure 1**, there are three linear corridors proposed for underground cabling that connect the different parts of the Site and provide a grid connection to the Eaton Socon Substation. These are identified as:

- **Cable Corridor – Site B to Site C** – which connects East Park Site B to East Park Site C across an unnamed road and arable fields.
- **Cable Corridor – Site C to Site D** – which connects East Park Site C to East Park Site D across Moor Road and an arable field.
- **Grid Connection – Site D to Eaton Socon Substation** – which connects East Park Site D to the Eaton Socon Substation and crosses open arable fields, Duloe Brook, Duloe Road and Bushmead Road.


East Park Site A
East Park Site B
East Park Site C
East Park Site D
Cable Corridor - Site B to Site C
Cable Corridor - Site C to Site D
Main Site Access
Cable Corridor - Site D to Eaton Socon Substation
Point of Connection
Huntingdonshire District
Bedford Borough
Grafham Water (Reservoir)
PERRY CP
SWINESHEAD CP
PERTENHALL CP
GREAT STAUGHTON CP
SOUTHOE AND MIDLOE CP
HAIL WESTON CP
LITTLE STAUGHTON CP
BOLNHURST AND KEYSOE CP
STAPLOE CP
THURLEIGH CP
COLMWORTH CP
Eaton Ford
Eaton Socon
Hail Weston
Great Staughton
Little Staughton Airfield
Thurleigh Airfield Business Park
Bedford Autodrome

Rev	Date	Comment
P01	30/09/2025	DCO Application

🟥	Order Limits
🟫	East Park Site A
🟩	East Park Site B
🟦	East Park Site C
🟪	East Park Site D
┅	400kV Grid Connection to Eaton Socon Substation
―	Local Authority Boundary

EAST PARK ENERGY

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Client
BSSL Cambsbed 1 Ltd

Project
East Park Energy

Drawing Title
Site References

Scale: **1:40,000 @ A3**
Status: **DCO Application**

APFP Reference: **Regulation 5(2)(a)**
Submission Reference: **EN010141/DR/6.4**

Dwg no: **NTS Figure 1**
Rev: **P01**

N

0 1 2 3 4 5km

2.2 Site Context

Local Context

2.2.1 The Site is located on the south side of a broad shallow vale landform formed by a number of west-east tributaries to the River Great Ouse. The local landscape is generally more undulating than the Site which is located in a low-lying area with relatively limited topographic variation. The landform rises to the north of the Site towards Grafham Water, to the west of the Site towards a ridgeline beyond Swineshead, and to the south of the Site towards a high point around the Bedford Aerodrome.

2.2.2 The landscape pattern of the local area is broadly consistent, comprising medium- to large-scale arable farmland interspersed with blocks of woodland, particularly in the more elevated parts of the landscape to the north of the Site.

2.2.3 The local settlement pattern is dispersed and typically rural in character comprising occasional distinct village settlements. From west to east the principal settlements in closest proximity to the Site are Swineshead, Pertenhall, Keysoe, Keysoe Row, Little Staughton, Great Staughton, Hail Weston, and Duloe.

2.2.4 The following properties lie 'inset' within the Order Limits, in that they are excluded from the Order Limits but surrounded by the Site:

- Lodge Farm, a residential property with associated equestrian land uses inset within East Park Site B to the north-west of Little Staughton; and
- The Kangaroo, a former public house which is now a residential property and dog kennels inset within East Park Site B at the junction between Little Staughton Road and Staughton Road.

2.2.5 There are several existing solar farms in close proximity to the Site, which are located:

- To the south of Pertenhall (adjacent to East Park Site A);

- At Little Staughton Airfield (1.2km south-west of East Park Site C); and
- At High Wood to the west of Hail Weston (0.1km south of East Park Site D).

2.2.6 The local area is crossed by a network of public rights of way (PRoW) including footpaths, bridleways and byways open to all traffic.

2.2.7 As part of the environmental assessment, the archaeological remains of a Roman town have been identified in East Park Site C. Due to the likely national importance of the archaeological remains, the Applicant has engaged with Historic England since it was identified in January 2024. The remains have subsequently been designated as a 'Scheduled Monument' which legally recognises its national importance and allows for its protection and conservation.

3.0 THE SCHEME

3.1 Overview of the Scheme

3.1.1 The Scheme comprises a new ground-mounted solar farm and an associated on-site BESS on land to the north-west of St Neots. The Scheme also includes the associated infrastructure for connection to the national grid at the Eaton Socon National Grid Substation.

3.1.2 Once constructed the Scheme will be operational for a period of 40 years. After 40 years the Scheme would be decommissioned and the Site returned to a condition suitable for reinstatement of its original use, except for areas of planting (woodland and hedgerows) which would be retained.

3.1.3 The Scheme includes the following key components:

- **Ground Mounted Solar Arrays** – solar panels installed on fixed mounting structures (metal frames) set out in rows to face south. The solar panels are connected by cabling to on-site inverters[5], transformers[6] and switchgear[7] that collectively ensure the electricity generated by the solar panels is alternating current (AC) and at the required voltage.
- **BESS** – the BESS would store electricity at times of low demand from the National Grid, and release electricity at times of peak demand. BESS are essential for renewable electricity generating systems such as wind and solar due to their weather dependency and potential for intermittent generation. The BESS would be located in a single compound that includes battery storage containers and transformers, control equipment, and water storage tanks. Two locations are currently being considered for the BESS, one within East Park Site C and the other within East Park Site D.

[5] Inverters convert direct current (DC) electricity collected by the solar modules into alternating current (AC).
[6] Transformers control the voltage of the electricity generated.
[7] Switchgear comprises a combination of electrical switches, fuses and circuit breakers and is used to control, protect and isolate the electrical equipment.

- **East Park Substation** – an on-site substation which will be co-located with the BESS and include the equipment needed to control and operate the Scheme.
- **Grid Connection and Cabling** – an underground cable connection will be provided between the East Park Substation and the Eaton Socon Substation. Buried cabling would also connect the on-site solar arrays to the East Park Substation.
- **Operations and Maintenance Area** – an Operations and Maintenance Area will be co-located with the BESS and East Park Substation. It will include a building that can be used for storage of site management and maintenance equipment.
- **Other infrastructure** – the Scheme will include other associated infrastructure such as fencing, drainage, access tracks, and closed-circuit television (CCTV) within East Park Sites A to D.
- **Landscaping and Habitat Creation** – the Scheme will include extensive landscaping and habitat creation, as well as the provision of permissive paths to provide additional recreational opportunities.

3.1.4 During the construction and decommissioning works, temporary compounds and access tracks will be required within East Park Sites A to D.

3.1.5 The technology associated with solar development is rapidly advancing, and this technological progression is expected to continue at pace over the coming years as research and development in the manufacturing sector yields new technologies. As such, the Scheme includes flexibility to ensure the best available technology can be utilised at the time of construction. The assessments within the ES take into account the flexibility sought in the DCO.

3.2 Construction Phase

3.2.1 Subject to the Scheme securing a DCO in Winter 2026/27, it is anticipated that works would start on site in early 2028 and take 30 months to complete, concluding in mid-to-late 2030.

3.2.2 The primary construction phases are expected to be as follows:

- Site enabling works (construction months 1 to 3) – where new access points from the public highway will be established along with temporary compounds and access tracks;
- Construction of the East Park Substation (construction months 2 to 12);
- Construction of the grid connection between East Park Substation and the Eaton Socon Substation (construction months 3 to 13);
- Construction of the BESS (construction months 7 to 24); and
- Construction of East Park Sites A to D (construction months 2 to 30), including:
    - Establishment of fencing;
    - Marking out locations of solar arrays, solar transformers, and cable trenches;
    - Establishment of solar panel mounting structures;
    - Installation of solar panel modules, inverters, and transformers;
    - Installation of CCTV and monitoring systems;
    - Installation of cabling;
    - Testing and commissioning; and
    - Establishment of landscaping and habitat creation.

3.2.3 It is anticipated that the average number of workers on Site across the Construction Phase would be 496, with a peak workforce of 854 in Month 12. The workforce would be distributed across the Site with work happening in parallel across the Substation, BESS, Grid Connection, and solar panel areas in East Park Sites A - D.

3.2.4 Construction operations would be limited to 08.00 to 18.00hrs Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00hrs Saturday, with no construction work on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

3.2.5 The main construction compound will be located in East Park Site D close to the main site access from the B645 to the north-east. The Main Construction Compound would comprise offices and welfare facilities, car parking,

materials and equipment storage area, and vehicle manoeuvring and unloading area.

3.2.6 Satellite compounds would also be located across East Park Sites A, B and C to support the construction of solar panels in those areas. These compounds would be smaller in footprint than the main construction compound but would still include offices and welfare facilities, car parking, materials and equipment storage area, and a vehicle manoeuvring and unloading area.

3.2.7 The main site access will be from the B645 in East Park Site D, with all heavy goods vehicle (HGVs) entering the Site from this point, along with most of the daily staff movements.

3.2.8 The construction access strategy has been designed to avoid vehicles using the public highway as far as practicable. Once vehicles arrive in East Park Site D from the main site access at the B645, a temporary access road will connect westward to East Park Site C, avoiding the use of Moor Road. From East Park Site C, access will be taken north-west via a new access track to an existing HGV access to Great Staughton Road whereupon vehicles will follow the public highway to access East Park Site B, thus avoiding large volumes of traffic passing through Great Staughton. Vehicles would be routed through East Park Site B crossing Little Staughton Road close to Lodge Farm, before continuing west towards the B660. At the B660 vehicles would follow the public highway for a short section before accessing East Park Site A using an existing access at Manor Farm.

3.2.9 An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP)**[8] **[EN010141/DR/7.4]** has been included with the application.

[8] *The oCTMP sets out the measures aimed at mitigation the effects of traffic movements during the construction phase. If the DCO is granted, the oCEMP will be developed into a detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan (CEMP) once a contractor is appointed. The CTMP will be in substantial accordance with this oCTMP, and will be a requirement of the DCO for submission and approval by the Local Planning Authorities (LPA) prior to construction.*

3.2.10 Access to all PRoW will be maintained during the construction phase, with management in place to ensure that all routes can be used safely, including temporary diversions where necessary.

3.2.11 Lighting during construction would need to be sufficient to satisfy health and safety requirements, whilst ensuring impacts on the surrounding environment are minimised.

3.2.12 A number of utilities cross the Site and consultation with utility undertakers is ongoing. Specific safeguards to protect existing utilities would be adopted during construction works, with working methods agreed with the utility undertakers.

3.3 Operational Phase

3.3.1 The Scheme comprises temporary development with an operational phase of up to 40 years. Decommissioning activities would commence 40 years after final commissioning and so decommissioning would be expected to start in 2070.

3.3.2 During the operational phase, access to the Scheme would principally be to the BESS and the East Park Substation, and to the wider site for routine maintenance operations, replacement of faulty equipment, habitat management, and farming activities.

3.3.3 It is expected that there would be 20 full time equivalent ('FTE')[9] roles for the Scheme during the operational phase covering the various activities, this would breakdown broadly as twelve FTE roles working on site maintenance, five FTE roles working in management and administrative roles, and three FTE roles working in land management including landscape maintenance and agriculture.

[9] *Full-time equivalent, or FTE, measures the total amount of full-time employees working at any one organisation. It is a way of adding up the hours of full-time, part-time and various other types of employees into measurable 'full-time' units.*

3.3.4 During the operational phase all existing PRoW would be maintained on their existing alignment. It is not expected that any diversions or stopping-up of PRoW would be required to facilitate the Scheme.

3.4 Decommissioning Phase

3.4.1 When the operational phase ends after 40 years the Scheme will require decommissioning. All solar panels, cabling, inverters, transformers, BESS equipment, the East Park Substation, and fencing would be removed from the Site and recycled or disposed of in accordance with good practice and market conditions at that time. Any infrastructure that is more than 1m below ground level, such as cable conduits and casing, would be left in situ. The Site will be returned to a condition suitable for return to its original use, with the exception of areas of planting (woodland and hedgerows) which would be retained post decommissioning.

3.4.2 On decommissioning, the landscaping works undertaken across the Site would remain in place, and the land would be handed back to the landowner. It is very likely that tree and hedgerow planting would be retained, however, as the land would be handed back to the landowners on completion of decommissioning the longer-term retention of the landscaping improvement works cannot be guaranteed. Similarly, following decommissioning the landowner may or may not retain the permissive footpaths created across the Site.

3.4.3 It is likely that the generation bay and associated infrastructure therein at Eaton Socon substation will be left in situ following decommissioning because National Grid will own this infrastructure.

3.4.4 Decommissioning is expected to take between 12 and 24 months and would be undertaken in phases.

3.5 Environmental Management

3.5.1 A series of outline environmental management plans have been prepared and submitted with the application, which outline the principles, controls, and measures to be implemented during construction, operation and decommissioning to reduce potential significant environmental effects from occurring. Post-consent, these outline plans will be developed into full plans which must be in substantial accordance with the outline and will require approval by BBC and HDC. The Scheme must then be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans. The outline plans submitted with the application are:

- **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.3]**;
- **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) [EN010141/DR/7.4]**;
- **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.5]**;
- **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.6]**;
- **outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.7]**;
- **outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (oPROWMP) [EN010141/DR/7.8]**;
- **outline Soil Management Plan (oSMP) [EN010141/DR/7.9]**;
- **outline Battery Safety Management Plan (oBSMP) [EN010141/DR/7.10]**;
- **outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (oSSEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.11]**;
- **outline Waste Management Plan (oWMP) [EN010141/DR/7.12]**;
- **outline Surface Water Management Plan (oSWMP) [EN010141/DR/7.13]**;

- **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (oAMS) [EN010141/DR/7.15]**; and
- **outline Heritage Enhancement Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.16]**.

4.0 ALTERNATIVES AND DESIGN EVOLUTION

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 It is a requirement that the Applicant considers reasonable alternatives as part of the EIA process. Alternatives have been considered for the Scheme and are set out in **ES Volume 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1].**

4.1.2 The Applicant has considered the following alternatives:

i) Alternative Sites;

ii) Alternative Cable Route Corridors;

iii) Alternative Layouts; and

iv) Alternative Technologies;

4.1.3 These are considered under separate headings below.

4.2 Alternative Sites

4.2.1 A consideration of alternative sites was undertaken from the outset of the project through the site selection process. The site selection process followed two broad stages:

- The first stage, set out in the Site Identification Report in **ES Volume 2 Appendix 3-1 [EN010141/DR/6.2],** identified the most appropriate location for a large-scale solar development capable of utilising the available grid capacity within the Eaton Socon Substation. A 15km area of search around the Eaton Socon Substation was taken as a starting point, with the land in this area of search reviewed against known planning and environmental constraints. This first stage concluded by identifying a 'Search Zone' to the north-west of the Eaton Socon Substation that was considered the most suitable location for a large-scale solar development.
- The second stage, set out in the Land Identification Report in **ES Volume 2 Appendix 3-2 [EN010141/DR/6.2],** followed on from the first stage and comprised:

- a high-level review of the land offered to the Applicant within the Search Zone;
- subsequent assessment of the environmental and planning constraints to development of the Scheme; and
- refinement of the overall landholding to be taken forward for the project.

The second stage culminated in the identification of the Site, which has subsequently been refined through the inclusion of additional land.

4.2.2 The layout of the Scheme evolved iteratively through the EIA process taking into consideration environmental effects, the Scheme's objectives and functionality, feedback from stakeholders and public consultation.

4.3 Alternative Cable Route Corridors

4.3.1 The Scheme has a requirement for a connection with the National Grid. The point of connection provided by the National Grid Energy System Operator (ESO) was the Eaton Socon Substation. The Applicant also identified and considered a possible alternative; connecting into the overhead electricity transmission lines which crosses East Park Site D.

4.3.2 The Applicant consulted with National Grid ESO on the possibility of connecting into the overhead transmission lines. National Grid confirmed that the PoC within the connection agreement is the Eaton Socon Substation, which will be the most economic and efficient for the project and the end consumer (i.e. the public). National Grid are obliged to offer the most economical solution for the end consumer under the obligations of their transmission licence. Therefore, it was established that the Scheme must provide a direct grid connection to the Eaton Socon Substation.

4.3.3 The grid connection to the Eaton Socon Substation comprises a 400 kV single circuit cable corridor. This cable corridor could be above or below ground. However, to minimise environmental impacts it was established that this should be an underground or buried cable connection. It is therefore a

requirement that the grid connection is buried within farmland between the Site and the Eaton Socon Substation.

4.3.4 The Applicant established there were three realistic possibilities for the grid connection corridor between the Site and the Eaton Socon Substation. These three possible corridors were identified as Option 1, Option 2 and Option 3 (as shown on Figure 1 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-6: Grid Connection Corridor Appraisal [EN010141/DR/6.2]**). An appraisal was undertaken for each of the Corridors considering a wide range of factors under the headings of environmental impact, economic impact, and social impact to identify the most sustainable solution.

4.3.5 The appraisal concluded that Option 3 was the most suitable because it would have the least impact on local communities and land uses, and slight benefits over the other options with regards its potential impact on the historic environment, landscape and visual receptors, and noise receptors.

4.3.6 Option 3 was therefore taken forward as part of the Scheme for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping and has subsequently been further refined through consultation with landowners and stakeholders.

4.3.7 The selected grid connection corridor is predominantly arable land and any slight deviation of the final cable alignment within this corridor would not result in any materially different significant environmental effects. The refinement of the alignment of the grid connection corridor has therefore been undertaken primarily in consultation with landowners and their wishes for where the cable is sited across their land.

4.4 Alternative Layouts

4.4.1 The layout of the Scheme has evolved iteratively throughout the pre-application phase taking into consideration environmental effects, the Scheme's objectives and functionality, and feedback from stakeholders and public consultation.

4.4.2 The design process that has been followed and the Scheme's evolution is set out in full within the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]**.

4.4.3 The main alternative considered with regards layout related to the location of the East Park BESS and substation. At the non-statutory consultation and in the EIA scoping report it was assumed that they would be located within Site C. However, in response to further environmental surveys and consultation with stakeholders it emerged that Site D could have been a preferable location. This was considered to have the following possible advantages:

- Ease of access from the public highway during construction, operation, and in case of an emergency response;
- Separation from the newly found Roman small town Scheduled Monument discovered in Site C; and
- Reduced length of 400 kV Grid Connection between the East Park Substation and the Eaton Socon Substation.

4.4.4 A possible disadvantage of locating the East Park BESS and Substation in East Park Site D is that the land has a slightly higher agricultural land classification, being partly Grade 3a instead of wholly Grade 3b.

4.4.5 The residual significant environmental effects of either Option 1 or Option 2 were assessed in the PEIR as being broadly comparable across all topics. However, Option 1 would result in additional significant residual effects in relation to cultural heritage and archaeology.

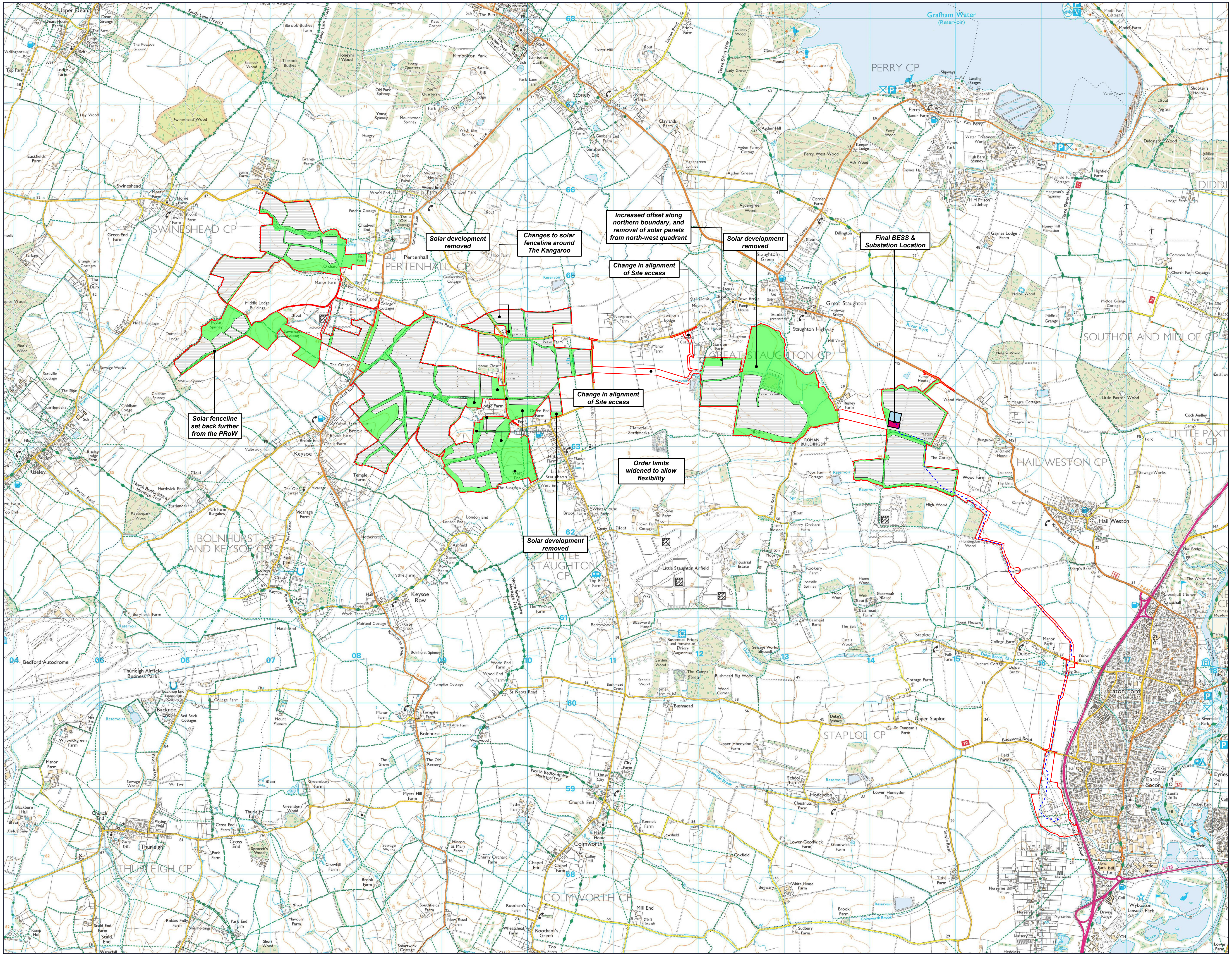
4.4.6 Furthermore, feedback as to a preference of either the Option 1 or Option 2 layouts was reviewed following the statutory consultation. In summary, a majority of the public gave a preference towards Option 2 (siting the BESS and substation within East Park Site D), and in addition, the host authorities and Historic England also gave a preference towards Option 2.

4.4.7 On the basis of the environmental assessment work undertaken in the PEIR, and the feedback received at consultation, Option 2 was selected and has

been taken forward as part of the Scheme. The East Park BESS and substation are therefore proposed within East Park Site D.

Alternative Technologies

4.4.8 A variety of alternative technologies are available when designing a solar and battery storage project. Furthermore, the solar and energy sector is undergoing rapid advancements in technology. As a result, it is anticipated that new technology options may arise before construction begins, which could impact the final design of the Scheme. This necessitates a flexible approach in what is being applied for to allow the latest technology to be utilised at the time of construction. Notwithstanding this, several technological design options have been considered and preferred options taken forward, taking into consideration environmental effects and the Scheme's objectives and need for optimal functionality. For example, a decision has been made that the solar arrays will be mounted on fixed arrays, rather than tracking arrays which could change height and orientation to follow the sun across the day.



Rev	Date	Comment
P01	22/09/2025	DCO Application

Order Limits

Solar and Associated Infrastructure

Landscaping and Habitat Creation

East Park Substation

Battery Energy Storage Facility

400kV Grid Connection to Eaton Socon Substation

N

0 1 2 3 4 5km

EAST PARK ENERGY

0344 8700 007
axis.co.uk

axis

Client
BSSL Cambsbed 1 Ltd

Project
East Park Energy

Drawing Title
Illustrative Zoning Plan - Scheme Evolution from Statutory Consultation

Scale	Status
1:40,000 @ A3	DCO Application

APFP Reference	Submission Reference
Regulation 5(2)(a)	EN010141/DR/6.4

Dwg no	Rev
NTS Figure 2	P01

5.0 EIA METHODOLOGY

5.1 Approach

5.1.1 The core purpose of an EIA is to assess the likely **significant** environmental effects (both adverse and beneficial) of a Scheme. The level of the environmental effect is, in general, identified by considering the sensitivity of a receptor (e.g. people, animals or watercourses) against the magnitude of a predicted impact.

5.1.2 Where significant adverse environmental effects are likely to occur, additional measures are proposed to reduce effects where practicable. Any effects that remain, once these measures are taken into account, are reported as 'residual effects'.

5.1.3 The purpose of identifying significant environmental effects is to ensure that decision makers are able to make an informed judgement on the environmental impacts of a proposal before granting planning consent.

5.2 Structure of the ES

5.2.1 The scope of the EIA was agreed following receipt of an EIA Scoping Opinion from the Planning Inspectorate, confirming the scope of assessment work that is required within the ES. The following environmental topics have been assessed in detail within the ES:

- **Volume 1 Chapter 1**: **Introduction [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;
- **Volume 1 Chapter 2**: **The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;
- **Volume 1 Chapter 3**: **Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;
- **Volume 1 Chapter 4**: **Environmental Impact Assessment Methodology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;
- **Volume 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;
- **Volume 1 Chapter 6**: **Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;

- **Volume 1 Chapter 7**: **Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;
- **Volume 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;
- **Volume 1 Chapter 9: Traffic and Transport [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;
- **Volume 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;
- **Volume 1 Chapter 11: Air Quality [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;
- **Volume 1 Chapter 12: Ground Conditions [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;
- **Volume 1 Chapter 13**: **Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]**;
- **Volume 1 Chapter 14**: **Socio-Economics, Land Use and Tourism [EN010141/DR/6.1]**; and
- **Volume 1 Chapter 15**: **Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]**

5.2.2 The EIA Scoping Opinion concluded that several topics did not require a full assessment chapter. These topics are described in **Volume 1 Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and include:

- Human Health;
- Waste;
- Major Accidents or Disasters; and
- Electromagnetic Fields.

5.2.3 **Volume 1 Chapter 17: Cumulative and In-Combination Effects [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an overview of the approach to identifying the likely significant effects of the Scheme in combination with other emerging, consented, or under-construction developments.

5.2.4 **Volume 1 Chapter 18: Summary of Effects [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides a tabulated summary of the likely significant effects of the Scheme, and a comparative summary of the differing effects of the Option 1 and Option 2 scenarios for the East Park BESS and Substation.

5.3 Consultation

5.3.1 The views of consultation bodies and the local community serve to focus the environmental studies and to identify specific issues that require further investigation, as well as to inform aspects of the design of the Scheme.

5.3.2 The Applicant has been actively engaging with the host local planning authorities (LPAs), statutory environmental bodies and other relevant stakeholders as part of the EIA process.

5.3.3 The Applicant has been holding regular meetings with planning officers at Bedford Borough Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council since November 2023 and has agreed a planning performance agreement (PPA) that sets out the terms of current and future engagement with the three host authorities.

5.3.4 A series of meetings have been held with other technical Officers at the LPAs covering the following topics:

- highways and public rights of way;
- cultural heritage;
- archaeology;
- environmental health and protection; and
- ecology and nature conservation.

5.3.5 The Applicant has also been engaging with Historic England, Natural England, the Environment Agency and National Highways.

5.3.6 Each chapter of the ES sets out a summary of the engagement undertaken for each topic, and how that has influenced the assessments presented in that chapter.

Community Consultation

5.3.7 The Applicant has undertaken a two-stage approach to pre-application consultation on the Scheme. Phase 1 comprised an informal, non-statutory

consultation during October and November 2023. Phase 2 consultation comprised a formal statutory consultation during September 2024 and October 2024, and as set out above, the Phase 2 consultation included publication of the PEIR.

5.3.8 During these consultation phases the Applicant engaged with the local community via in-person open public consultation events, one-to-one meetings, and published project information across a range of media types.

5.3.9 A **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]** has been prepared and submitted with the DCO application. It details all consultations held during the pre-application period, the responses received, and the Applicant's response on how feedback from consultees has been addressed.

5.3.10 Section 3 of each technical chapter within the ES (Chapters 5.0 to 17.0) describes the key feedback provided from statutory consultees and how it has been considered within the assessment.

6.0 FINDINGS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The likely significant effects of the Scheme are set out in **ES Volume 1: Main Report [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. This section of the NTS provides a brief summary of the findings of each assessment topic. A summary of all the likely significant residual environmental effects of the Scheme is provided in **ES Volume 1 Chapter 18: Summary of Significant Effects [EN010141/DR/6.1].**

6.1.2 Where significant effects have been identified they are highlighted in **bold** text within each topic summary. Reference to significant effects in this section use the term in the context of compliance with the EIA Regulations.

6.2 Landscape and Visual

Introduction

6.2.1 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 5 [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the findings of an assessment of the landscape and visual impacts of the Scheme.

6.2.2 The landscape assessment considers the potential effects of the Scheme on the landscape as an environmental resource, including both the physical fabric of the Site itself and the character of the wider landscape.

6.2.3 The visual assessment considers the potential effects of the Scheme on people's views, including local residents, users of publicly accessible routes, visitors to community facilities, road users and people working in the area.

6.2.4 Landscape and visual effects have been assessed for the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Scheme.

6.2.5 The methodology for the assessment of landscape and visual effects has been developed based on the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, 2013 (GLVIA3)[10].

Baseline

6.2.6 The Study Area for the for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) extends to 3km from the Order Limits. Within this area, the baseline conditions have been established with regard to desk-based assessment, a review of published landscape studies, and site visits.

6.2.7 None of the study area is within a designated landscape such as, for example, a National Park or a National Landscape (formerly 'Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty').

6.2.8 The Site comprises predominantly arable farmland, which is flat to gently undulating, with fields across East Park Site A, B and C generally bounded by hedgerows. Fields to the east at East Park Site D are more open in character. The Site is located within the lower-lying south side of a broad clay vale landform known as the 'Kym Valley' such that its visibility is localised and contained by the topography.

6.2.9 The Site is crossed by a number of PRoW (footpaths and bridleways) that provide recreational opportunities within the landscape. In close proximity to the Site are the villages of Swineshead, Pertenhall, Keysoe, Little Staughton, Great Staughton and Hail Weston, with a number of other individual properties in close proximity to the Order Limits.

6.2.10 As part of the visual assessment, 82 representative viewpoints have been identified from publicly accessible locations including PRoW, roads, villages, churches and positions close to residential properties. The viewpoint locations are shown on **Figure 3**.

[10] *Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition. Routledge: Abingdon*

Mitigation

6.2.11 The assessment of likely significant effects takes into account incorporated mitigation measures for the construction, operational and decommissioning phases such as those embedded within the design or implemented via committed management plans (that are secured by requirements of the DCO) to reduce environmental effects.

6.2.12 Mitigation of potentially adverse landscape and visual effects includes:

- Retention of existing woodland, hedgerows, individual trees, ditches and watercourses across the Site as far as practicable;
- Retention of all existing PRoW across the Site along their current alignment;
- Creation of 'Green Lanes' through the Site where PRoW are set within wide corridors bounded by hedgerows and woodland blocks for visual screening, landscape integration and habitat connectivity purposes;
- Sensitive design of landscape treatment alongside PRoW on more elevated ground such as west of Little Staughton to ensure footpaths are not enclosed by vegetation and intermittent views out across the Kym Valley to the north are available;
- Enhancement of waterside meadows along the Pertenhall Brook and a brook through East Park Site B by creating woodland blocks, meadows, hedgerows and intermittent tree groups to reduce visual impact on PRoW alongside watercourses;
- Provision of permissive paths west of Little Staughton to increase access to the local public right of way network and create the opportunity for new circular routes;
- Setting back of fence lines from field boundaries and PRoW in areas of high ground such as west of Little Staughton and at the southern end of East Park Site C to avoid the solar array appearing across skylines, and to allow views out looking 'over' the solar array to retain panoramic vistas where available;

- Proposed hedgerows with trees for landscape integration, visual screening and habitat connectivity. In parts of the Site these have been provided to restore historic field boundaries; and
- Creation of species-diverse grassland meadows and corridors as buffers to existing landscape elements (such as hedgerows and woodland), as buffers to residential properties, and for ecological mitigation and benefits.

6.2.13 An **outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP)**[11] **[EN010141/DR/7.7]** has been prepared which sets out the principles by which the proposed landscape and habitats across the Scheme would be implemented and managed to ensure successful establishment.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Construction Phase

6.2.14 The Scheme would involve minimal change to landscape features within the Site (such as hedgerows, topography, and watercourses) with minimal vegetation removal and no change to the underlying landform upon which the Site is located.

6.2.15 The landscape character of the Site and its immediate setting would be affected to the greatest degree during the construction phase as a result of a reduction in tranquillity locally within the Study Area due to the movement and noise created by construction activity. The effect on landscape character would be **significant** during the construction phase.

6.2.16 Adverse visual effects have been predicted for a large number of residential receptors and users of PRoW located in close proximity to the Site. These effects would also be **significant**.

[11] The oLEMP sets out the measures aimed mitigating the effects of the Scheme on the Landscape and Ecology resource and secure. If the DCO is granted, the oLEMP will be developed into a detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) once a contractor is appointed. The LEMP will be in substantial accordance with this oLEMP, and will be a requirement of the DCO for submission and approval by the Local Planning Authorities (LPA) prior to construction,

Operational Phase

6.2.17 The assessment of landscape and visual impacts at the operational phase was undertaken for the opening year of operation, immediately following completion of construction, ('Year 0') and for the tenth year of operation ('Year 10'). This allows the assessment to take account of the proposed planting that would be implemented as part of the Scheme, which by Year 10 should be established and of a sufficient height that it would be effective in providing visual screening.

6.2.18 The Scheme would largely comprise the introduction of a solar array into large-arable fields, set away from the settlement boundary of small rural villages. The array would be relatively low-level and would have a generally uniform appearance, albeit given the orientation of the panels to face south, there would be some variation in how it is perceived throughout the landscape. The Scheme would follow the contours and would not alter the underlying topography and it would not alter the pattern of fields with the Site.

6.2.19 The Substation and BESS components of the Scheme would contribute to a slight increase in landscape change within the vicinity of East Park Site D given their taller vertical scale than the solar array. However, these components would be set within the wider solar array, which would partially reduce their influence on the character area.

6.2.20 In Year 0, before any planting has established, there would be some **significant** visual effects experienced by receptors located in relative proximity to the Scheme, including residents and users of local PRoW. All residential receptors identified as experiencing significant visual effects are either individual properties, or small groups of properties, located in close proximity to the Scheme and subject to close-distance views of the Scheme. No significant visual effects have been identified on visual receptors located directly within the villages located within the Study Area as views out are generally contained by buildings within the villages and tree cover outside them.

6.2.21 Similar to the assessment of effects on residential receptors, all PRoW receptors have been identified as likely experiencing **significant** visual effects due to their close proximity to the operative parts of the Scheme. There is a relatively high number of rights of way identified as being subject to **significant** visual effects during Year 0 as there is a dense network of rights of way within the Study Area, many of which pass directly through the Site.

6.2.22 The number of **significant** visual effects on users of footpaths and residential receptors within the Study Area would reduce at Year 10, following the establishment of planting. Where significant visual effects remain, it would be on a small number of rights of way which either cross into the Site or are directly adjacent to it and a small number of individual residential properties located in close-proximity to the Order Limits.

Glint and Glare Impacts

6.2.23 A Glint and Glare Assessment has been prepared and is included as **ES Volume 2 Appendix 5-6 [EN010141/DR/6.2]**.

6.2.24 The glint and glare assessment considers effects on ground-based receptors (residential, rail, road, and bridleway) within 1km, whilst a 30km study area is considered for aviation receptors.

6.2.25 The assessment concludes that due to the existing screening and / or proposed screening in the landscape, glint and glare impacts would be acceptable. There is therefore no additional mitigation proposed to reduce glint and glare effects over and above the embedded landscape proposals.

Decommissioning Phase

6.2.26 Following the decommissioning phase there would be no residually significant landscape or visual effects and overall, the planting implemented as part of the Scheme would leave a Site that would appear similar to the baseline situation, albeit with enhanced field structure planting which would comprise a residually beneficial change to landscape character.

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Order Limits

3km radius around Scheme Boundary (LVIA Study Area)

Viewpoint Locations

Public Rights of Way

Footpath

Bridleway

Byway

Designated Trails

North Bedfordshire Heritage Trail

0 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 5,000 m

EAST PARK ENERGY

0344 8700 007
axis.co.uk

Client
BSSL Cambsbed 1 Ltd

Project
East Park Energy

Drawing Title
Visual Receptors - Representative Viewpoints & Rights of Way

Scale
1:50000@A3

Status
DCO Application

APFP Reference
Regulation 5(2)(a)

Submission Reference
EN010141/DR/6.4

Dwg no
NTS Figure 3

Rev
P01

6.3 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

Introduction

6.3.1 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the findings of an assessment of the impacts of the Scheme on heritage assets and archaeology. This includes direct effects on archaeology resulting from the construction of Scheme, and effects upon the setting of heritage assets which may arise during the construction and operation of the Scheme.

Baseline

6.3.2 The baseline conditions for the historic environment have been established through desk-based assessment and field work, which has included site walkovers, archaeological geophysical survey[12], and trial trenching[13].

6.3.3 As part of the field work to understand the presence of buried archaeology across the Site, the archaeological remains of a small Roman town have been identified in East Park Site C. Due to the likely national importance of the archaeological remains, the Applicant has been engaging with Historic England since it was identified in January 2024. The remains have since been designated as a 'Scheduled Monument' which legally recognises its national importance and allows for its protection and future conservation.

6.3.4 Trial trench evaluation has been undertaken across Sites A, B, C and D within the Site between June 2024 and September 2025 to validate the findings of the archaeological geophysical survey and to gain an understanding of the significance of any buried archaeology.

6.3.5 There are areas of the Order Limits that have not been accessible for trial trenching prior to the submission of the DCO. These principally include the

[12] A non-destructive technique to detect and map variations below the ground, providing information about buried features like archaeological remains, geological features, or utility lines without needing to excavate.
[13] A archaeological process where parts of a site are excavated in trenches to determine the presence, extent, date, and condition of any buried archaeological remains.

cable corridors between East Park Site B to C and East Park Site C to D and the grid connection as well as one field within Site B, one field within Site A, and one field within Site D. On completion of the geophysical survey of these areas it is intended that a WSI for this additional trial trenching will be developed. Therefore, following the granting of the DCO, a second phase of trial trenching will be undertaken where geophysical survey has been carried out and not intrusively sampled, or not sampled fully, during the pre-application period.

6.3.6 Aside from the above Roman town Scheduled Monument, there are no further Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments or Conservation Areas within the Site. However, there are a number of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas within close proximity to the Site, including the churches within each of the local villages which are of the highest grade of Listed Building (Grade 1). The assessment has considered each designated heritage asset within 3km of the Site, with further designated assets beyond 3km also incorporated into the assessment following liaison with the Bedford Borough Council Historic Environment Team and the Conservation Officer at Huntingdonshire District Council.

Mitigation

6.3.7 The assessment of likely significant effects takes into account mitigation measures for the construction, operational and decommissioning phases such as those embedded within the design or implemented via committed management plans (that are secured by requirements of the DCO) to reduce environmental effects.

6.3.8 The design of the Scheme has considered the setting of designated heritage assets in the local area and sought to minimise impacts through the creation of offsets and buffers from field boundaries.

6.3.9 Archaeological investigation has been undertaken across the Site to further understand the extent and significance of any archaeological remains within the Order limits.

6.3.10 It will be possible to mitigate or offset any potential direct impacts on significant archaeological remains through design (avoidance), utilising 'no dig' solutions in construction, or through programmes of archaeological monitoring, excavation and recording which would allow any remains to be *'preserved by record'*.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Construction Phase

6.3.11 The assessment has established that the Scheme would impact upon known buried archaeological remains. Variable levels of effect have been predicted, depending upon the importance of the asset concerned and works to be undertaken; but prior to mitigation, a number of significant effects have been predicted.

6.3.12 It is, however, assessed that following the completion of the ongoing trial trench evaluation and establishment of any further mitigation measures, direct and indirect impacts upon buried archaeological remains can be either completely avoided or minimised by design. The level of residual effects upon buried heritage assets would depend upon the mitigation employed but would either result in avoidance, and thus no effects, or minimisation. Where avoidance of impacts is not possible excavation and recording of the assets would ensure that impacts are offset by ensuring preservation by record. On this basis, it is concluded there would not likely be significant direct or indirect residual effects arising from the construction phase.

6.3.13 The assessment has also predicted temporary **significant effects** upon the settings of the following heritage assets during the construction phase (introduced via traffic, visual or noise impacts associated with construction works and access):

- The Manor in Great Staughton;
- Church of All Saints in Little Staughton;

- the Roman small town south of Great Staughton Scheduled Monument, within the northern part of Site C
- A non-designated possible moated site within the north-western corner of East Park Site D

6.3.14 It is assessed that the effects on these heritage assets would cause temporary *'less than substantial'* harm[14]. In addition to being temporary any *'less than substantial'* harm is considered to be at the low to mid end of the scale. The temporary moderate adverse effects and *'less than substantial harm'* would last until the completion of the construction works, at which point the assessments of the operational levels of effect and harm are applicable.

6.3.15 No construction phase significant effects have been identified upon the settings of any of the other heritage assets considered by the assessment

Operational Phase

This assessment established that the operational phase of the Scheme would also have a **significant effect** upon the setting of anon-designated possible moated site within the north-western corner of East Park Site D. It is assessed that the effects would cause *'less than substantial'* harm to the possible moated site. These assessed levels of *'less than substantial harm'* are considered to be at the low to mid end of the scale.

6.3.16 No operational phase significant effects have been identified upon the settings of any of the other heritage assets considered by the assessment.

Decommissioning Phase

6.3.1 It is considered that there is a potential for temporary effects upon the settings of heritage assets during the decommissioning phase, but it is not anticipated that these would cause a level of effect higher than those reported in this chapter for construction and operation of the Scheme. Any decommissioning

[14] A substantial harm is a severe impact on a heritage asset's significance, often leading to its serious damage or loss, whereas a less than substantial harm is a lesser, more moderate impact. In UK planning law, these categories determine how a development proposal affecting a historic site is assessed.

effects would be temporary and of a shorter duration than the assessed construction effects.

6.3.2 Upon the completion of decommissioning the long-term effects of the operational phase on the setting of assets would be removed, with the setting of those assets restored to the current baseline condition, with the exception of the elements of new green infrastructure (hedgerows and trees) which would have become permanent additions to the landscape.

6.4 Ecology and Nature Conservation

Introduction

6.4.1 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Scheme on ecological features during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases. The assessment considers effects on designated sites, habitats and protected species.

Baseline

6.4.2 The ecological baseline of the Site has been established through desk-based studies and field surveys, including:

- A review of published biodiversity records for the local area;
- Ongoing habitat surveys that have been undertaken between April 2022 and July 2025; and
- Protected species field surveys for birds, bats, badgers, newts, otter and water vole that have been ongoing since 2022.

6.4.3 All surveys have been undertaken by suitably competent and qualified ecologists in accordance with industry standard guidance.

6.4.4 The results of the above have identified that the habitats at the Site are typical of an arable landscape and support a range of birds, badgers, bats, amphibians, invertebrates and other small mammals. Whilst their presence

was not explicitly confirmed during the assessment work, otters and water vole could also be present in watercourses and ditches within the Site..

6.4.5 There are no nationally designated sites for nature conservation within the Site, with the closest being Swineshead Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is located approximately 0.9km to the north-west of East Park Site A.

6.4.6 There are no internationally designated sites for nature conservation within 10km of the Site. However, there is an internationally designated site for bats within 30km of the Scheme (Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation - SAC).

6.4.7 There are several locally designated wildlife sites in proximity to the Order Limits.

Mitigation

6.4.8 A series of mitigation and enhancement measured have been built into the design of the scheme and ecological mitigation and enhancement has been a key component of the overall design development process. The **Design Approach Document (DAD) [EN010141/DR/5.6]** includes a series of design principles which seek to achieve this.

6.4.9 The **Illustrative Environmental Masterplan (ES Volume 3 Figure 2-1 [EN010141/DR/6.3])** sets out the landscape proposals that are intended to meet the design objectives and mitigate adverse impacts of the Scheme. The landscape proposals from the Illustrative Environmental Masterplan are repeated on the Illustrative Landscape Proposals drawing at Appendix A of the **outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.7].**

6.4.10 A series of standard mitigation measures would be used to manage impacts to ecology and nature conservation during the construction phase, these would be secured by the adoption of a final CEMP. Details of the measures are provided in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan**

(oCEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.3] and summarised in **ES Volume 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1].**

6.4.11 Mitigation measures would include species and habitat protection plans, reasonable avoidance measures, the use of an ecological clerk of works, pre-construction surveys, and various pollution and lighting control measures.

6.4.12 In addition, the **outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.7]** sets out the principles by which the proposed landscape and habitats across the Scheme will be implemented and managed to ensure successful establishment.

6.4.13 During the operational phase mitigation measures would be secured through the final Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP), the **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.5]** as part of the application for development consent.

6.4.14 During the decommissioning phase mitigation would be provided by the Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP) an **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.6]** as part of the application for development consent.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Construction Phase

6.4.15 The assessment concludes that there would be no significant beneficial or adverse effects on statutory or locally designated sites for nature conservation during the construction phase.

6.4.16 There would similarly be no significant beneficial or adverse effects on habitats during the construction phase due to the protection of trees and woodland across the Site, and that hedgerow removals would be retained and protected with the exception of 54m of hedgerow that is expected to be removed.

6.4.17 For protected species, whilst there would be short term and temporary minor adverse effects on ground nesting birds, the wider breeding bird assemblage and otter as a result of construction related disturbance, due to the established mitigation measures the effects would be not significant.

Operational Phase

6.4.18 During the operational phase there would continue to be no significant beneficial or adverse effects on statutory or locally designated sites for nature conservation.

6.4.19 There are **significant beneficial effects** predicted for habitats across the Site due to the establishment of woodlands, hedgerows and grasslands across the Scheme.

6.4.20 There would also be **significant beneficial effects** for breeding birds, and foraging and commuting bats, due to the extent of habitat creation which should provide substantially increased foraging and commuting opportunities for these species. There would be no significant adverse effects on protected species during the operational phase.

6.4.21 In addition to the above, the Scheme would also result in a series of non-significant beneficial effects for the following receptors for the duration of the Scheme's operational lifespan.

- On-site habitats;
- Roosting bats;
- Amphibians
- Reptiles; and
- Other notable species (including flora, invertebrates, mammals and fish).

Decommissioning Phase

6.4.22 The impacts of the Scheme at the decommissioning phase are assessed to be comparable to those at the construction phase, with the Site reverting back to its existing condition post-decommissioning, apart from the retention of the planting implemented as part of the Scheme.

6.5 Hydrology and Flood Risk

Introduction

6.5.1 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the findings of an assessment of the hydrological and flood risk effects resulting from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Scheme.

Baseline

6.5.2 The baseline hydrology, hydrogeology and geology relating to the Scheme have been assessed through a combination of desk-based studies, site walkovers, surveys and consultation.

6.5.3 Topographically the Site is relatively flat, gently sloping in a north-easterly direction (shown in **ES Vol 3 Figure 8-7: Topography [EN010141/DR/6.3]**). It is drained by a large number of field ditches and other watercourses, towards the Pertenhall Brook and the River Kym. The Pertenhall Brook crosses the Site at East Park Site A, whilst the River Kym forms the northern boundary of East Park Site C.

6.5.4 Environment Agency flood risk mapping indicates there are several watercourses within the Site at risk of localised flooding, and that there is also a risk of surface water flooding in parts of the Site.

Mitigation

6.5.5 The Scheme has adopted a number of design measures to avoid or reduce impacts, including:

- A a minimum 10m buffer between the fenceline of the solar farm and watercourses;
- Siting of all critical infrastructure (with the exception of some watercourse crossings) outside of areas at risk of flooding from watercourses;
- The design of solar panels to be set above surface water flood levels;
- Retention of ditches and watercourses across the Site; and
- The inclusion of sustainable urban drainage (SuDS) features in the drainage design to control surface water runoff.

6.5.6 Standard mitigation measures would be used to manage impacts during the construction phase. The mitigation measures would be secured by the CEMP. Details of the measures are provided in **the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.3]**.

6.5.7 An **outline Surface Water Management Plan (oSWMP)**[15] **[EN010141/DR/7.13]** has been prepared which details the principles of runoff control for the Scheme.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Construction Phase

6.5.8 The assessment concludes that during the construction phase there would be no significant effects on watercourses or flood risk as a result of the Scheme, due to the mitigation measures embedded in the design of the Scheme and the associated management plans.

Operational Phase

6.5.9 During the operational phase the Scheme would result in no significant effects on watercourses or flood risk.

[15] *The oSWMP sets out the preliminary measures aimed mitigating the effects of the Scheme as a result of surface water run-off. If the DCO is granted, the oSWMP will be developed into a detailed Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) once a contractor is appointed. The SWMP will be in substantial accordance with this oSWMP, and will be a requirement of the DCO for submission and approval by the Local Planning Authorities (LPA) prior to construction.*

6.5.10 The Scheme includes embedded drainage measures that would manage any surface water run-off from the Scheme, ensuring the Scheme does not increase the risk of flooding.

Decommissioning Phase

6.5.11 The effects at the decommissioning phase would be as per the Construction Phase, with embedded mitigation measures ensuring there are no significant effects.

6.6 Traffic and Transport

Introduction

6.6.1 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 9: Traffic and Transport [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Scheme on traffic and transport.

Baseline

6.6.2 The Site is located in a predominantly rural area with access from the strategic highway network at a junction with the A1 to the north-west of St Neots. The Applicant has undertaken traffic count surveys across the local road network in proximity to road junctions to establish the volume and type of vehicles using existing roads. They have also carried out an assessment of the road safety record of the local highway network. There are several bus services that use the local highway network. However, there are no bus stops located along sections of public highway proposed to be used by the Scheme.

6.6.3 There is a generally limited footway provision along the key highway links in the local area, but a large number of PRoW cross the Site and connect with other routes in the wider area. National Cycle Network Route 12 follows the B645 Kimbolton Road between the A1 and Hail Weston. It also follows part of Bushmead Road which is crossed by the Grid Connection.

Mitigation

6.6.4 In order to minimise the environmental impact of construction traffic, the construction access strategy has been designed to avoid vehicles using the public highway as much as practicable, with particular focus on avoiding the need to pass through villages. Temporary access roads would therefore be constructed across fields to connect the various areas of the Site. The principal exception to this is the connection between Site C and Site B, which requires the use of a short section of Great Staughton Road and Spring Hill Road.

6.6.5 Management of vehicle routeing to, from and around the Site, both in terms of staff vehicles and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs),will be managed through a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) as secured by the DCO. An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) [EN010141/DR/7.4]** has been prepared.

6.6.6 There are expected to be a limited number of temporary public right of way diversions during the construction phase, primarily in relation to the trenching of cables across footpaths. Any diversion will be highly localised and for a limited period of time. There would be no permanent diversion or stopping up of any PRoW as part of the Scheme.

6.6.7 An **outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.8]** has been prepared as part of the application for development consent. This document sets out the principles by which PRoW will be managed during the construction and operation phases. Should the Scheme be consented, the DCO will require that a final Public Rights of Way Management Plan (PROWMP) is prepared prior to construction, in substantial accordance with this outline document. .

6.6.8 An **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.5]** has been prepared as part of the application for development consent. This includes measures related to the movement and storage of maintenance vehicles within the Site during the operational phase.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Construction Phase

6.6.9 The nature of the Scheme is such that the greatest impact is likely to occur during the construction phase. During construction there will be temporary increases in traffic flows on the local highway network as a result of materials and contractors travelling to and from the Site. A key change from the baseline position will be the number and percentage of HGVs using local roads. The construction period is expected to last for up to 30 months, and as such, all construction effects will be short-term and temporary.

6.6.10 In order to understand the scale of potential effects, an estimate of the potential level of construction traffic the Scheme could generate has been calculated based on experience of other solar farm facilities within the UK.

6.6.11 The assessment concludes that the Scheme would result in no significant effects on traffic and transport, considering the impact of traffic on the A1, the impact on journey times, the impact on safety, and the impact on the PRoW network.

Operational Phase

6.6.12 During the operational phase, access to the Site will primarily be for maintenance tasks. Staff and maintenance vehicles will primarily be four-wheel drive vehicles or vans. The requirement for HGV access to the Site during the operational phase will be rare, for example for exceptional maintenance activities.

6.6.13 Due to the low level or trips likely to be generated within the local highway network peak hours, as agreed with the Planning Inspectorate at the Scoping stage, the operational phase transport effects have been scoped out of detailed assessment within the ES.

Decommissioning Phase

6.6.14 At this stage the number of vehicle movements required during the decommissioning phase is not known, and as such the level of potential significant effects cannot be identified at this time. However, it is predicted to be similar to or less than the construction phase and result in no significant effects.

6.7 Noise and Vibration

Introduction

6.7.1 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant impacts and effects of the Scheme on noise and vibration. The assessment considers the direct and indirect effects arising from its construction, operation and decommissioning.

Baseline

6.7.2 Baseline noise modelling has been carried out in various locations around the Site. This has comprised:

- An initial baseline sound survey at 16 positions in the western part of the Site in July and October 2022.
- Further monitoring in August 2023 at 5 additional positions, all within the eastern part of the Site.
- Further monitoring in March, May and June 2024 at a total of 22 fixed monitoring locations around the Site. The monitoring was carried out at the request of the Planning Inspectorate, to ensure that monitoring was robust and that it was undertaken outside school holiday periods.

6.7.3 The noise monitoring positions were agreed with the Environmental Protection Officer's (EPO's) in Bedford Borough Council (BBC), Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC).

6.7.4 The noise monitoring revealed that the local sound environment is formed by a mixture of noise from transport links, occasional farming activities, local residential amenity activities, occasional aircraft noise, and birdsong.

Mitigation

6.7.5 The noise assessment has made conservative assumptions on the levels of noise that would be generated by various components of the scheme, including the BESS, inverters, transformers and switchgear. It has also taken into account the measures outlined in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.3]**, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP)**[16] **[EN010141/DR/7.5]**, and **oDEMP**[17] **[EN010141/DR/7.6]**.

6.7.6 The mitigation measures set out in the aforementioned document would adequately address the need to avoid, reduce and compensate for any significant effects of the Scheme. As the results of the assessment show compliance with relevant guidance and standards for noise and vibration and therefore no additional measures are required.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Construction Phase

6.7.7 In accordance with appropriate standards, best practical means[18] would be employed to control the noise generation during the construction period. The mitigation measures and would be defined within the CEMP secured through the DCO. The measures would include (but are not restricted to) notifying residents of neighbouring properties when and what activities will be carried out near their property, restrictions to operating hours, the choice of plant and

[16] The oOEMP and oDEMP set out the preliminary measures aimed mitigating the environmental effects of the Scheme during its operation and decommissioning. If the DCO is granted, the oOEMP and oDEMP will be developed into a detailed Management Plans.
[17] Ibid
[18] means the Applicant has used all suitable measures to abate the nuisance.

machinery (including the type and use of revering alarms) and ensuring plant and machinery is switched off when not in use.

6.7.8 The construction phase noise and vibration assessment has considered effects from plant noise, construction road traffic on the local road network, vibration from construction plant and heavy good vehicle movements, and noise / vibration associated with the construction of the grid connection. The assessment concludes that based upon the adoption of the proposed mitigation measures the effects of noise and vibration during the construction phase would be not significant.

Operational Phase

6.7.9 Once operational the Scheme will include components that would generate varying levels of noise, most of which would operate on a continuous basis. These include the BESS, inverters, transformers and switchgear. The exact products that will ultimately be used in the Scheme have not been selected and a degree of flexibility has been planned for carrying out the assessment. In recognition of this, the assumptions that have been used in the assessment of operational phase noise are deliberately conservative and where necessary consider different design options and scenarios (including two options for the location of the East Park BESS and Substation).

6.7.10 The operational phase assessment has considered the effect of plant operation, vehicle movements and any vibration at the nearest noise sensitive receptors during daytime and nighttime periods. Whilst the assessment confirms that some residential properties would experience a degree of noise (based upon the conservative assumptions adopted in the assessment), they would be at levels that have been assessed as not significant.

6.7.11 There is no vibration expected from this type of plant / equipment and the effect of the Scheme on vibration would not be significant.

6.7.12 The Scheme would attract negligible operational traffic demand and the effects of this have also been assessed as not significant.

Decommissioning Phase

6.7.13 It has been agreed with the Planning Inspectorate (in their EIA Scoping Opinion) that it is reasonable to assume that the outcome of the construction phase assessment remains a reasonable proxy for the assessment of decommissioning phase effects of noise and vibration. The construction phase noise and vibration effects are assessed as not significant, and it is assumed that the same would apply to the decommission phase effects. Air Quality

Introduction

6.7.14 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 11: Air Quality [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant impacts and effects of the Scheme on local air quality.

6.7.15 The air quality assessment considers the potential for the Scheme to generate:

- dust and particulate matter during the construction and decommissioning;
- vehicle exhaust emissions during the construction and decommissioning phases; and
- exhaust emissions arising from plant and machinery during the construction and decommissioning phases.

6.7.16 The EIA Scoping process undertaken with the Planning Inspectorate confirmed that there is very low potential for significant environmental effect on air quality to occur in the operational phase of the Scheme. The assessment of operational phase aerial emissions is therefore not included in the ES.

Baseline

6.7.17 There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) near to the Order limits. Historically an AQMA had been declared by Huntingdon District Council, the St Neots AQMA (AQMA 2 St Neots), within St Neots town centre

about 1.93km to the east of the Scheme. As access to the Site will be via the B645 off the A1 to the north-west of St Neots, this former AQMA is distant from the potentially impacted local highway and Order Limits. HDC revoked the St Neots AQMA due to continued compliance with the long-term air quality standards[19].

6.7.18 All other AQMAs declared by HDC and BBC are distant from the Site and the local road network that would be used in the Scheme's construction / decommissioning.

6.7.19 HDC and BBC also undertake an air quality monitoring across their areas, including locations close to the Order Limits, including two locations in Eaton Socon and several locations in the vicinity of the A1 to the north and south of its junction with the B645. The monitoring shows that existing air quality is generally good in all monitored locations and well below the values required by national air quality objectives.

6.7.20 There is also a small number of nature conservation sites within the vicinity of the Order Limits, that could also be susceptible to aerial emissions.

Mitigation

6.7.21 Standard mitigation measures would be used to manage the risk of dust during the construction phase. The mitigation measures would be secured by the CEMP. Details of the measures are provided in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.3]**.

6.7.22 The application for a DCO is also to be supported by a CTMP. This will set out the proposed access strategy and site management plan. The CTMP will be a requirement of the DCO for submission and approval by the LPAs prior to construction.

6.7.23 Mitigation during the decommissioning phase will be though the measures set out in the **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan**

[19] *Huntingdonshire District Council, 2024 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR), June 2024*

(oDEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.6]. If the DCO is granted this oDEMP will be developed into a final DEMP and it will be a requirement of the DCO for submission and approval by the LPAs prior to demolition.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Construction Phase

6.7.24 The construction process and particularly the construction of trenches for cables and the movement of vehicles do have the potential to give rise to airborne dust. These will be mitigated by the incorporation of standard dust mitigation measures in the CEMP. Assuming these standard mitigation measures are in place the Scheme would not have the potential to give rise to significant adverse impacts.

6.7.25 The Scheme would result in the generation of additional HGV and Light Delivery Vehicles (LDV) movements on the local road network. However, based on the available local air quality information and review of the expected construction phase traffic numbers and their routing, the significance of residual effects associated with vehicle exhaust emissions are also assessed as not significant.

Operational Phase

6.7.26 As noted above, there has been no assessment of operational phase effects. This was agreed with the Planning Inspectorate during the EIA Scoping process. The operational phase effects of the Scheme have been 'scoped out' on the basis that Scheme will not emit aerial emissions during its operation and that operational phase traffic movements will be very low and below levels where it would be necessary to assess emissions.

Decommissioning Phase

6.7.27 The effects of dust generation and vehicle movements in the decommissioning phase are expected to be reduced from those expected during the construction phase. It would be shorter in duration and less

intensive. Assuming the mitigation measures within the oDEMP are followed the effects on air quality during the decommissioning phase would not be significant.

6.8 Ground Conditions

Introduction

6.8.1 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 12: Ground Conditions [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant impacts and effects of the Scheme on ground conditions. The assessment comprises a qualitative risk assessment[20] in relation to contamination and, where appropriate, makes recommendations for further investigation and the mitigation measures required to prevent, reduce, or offset the impacts of the Scheme and the significance of residual effects.

Baseline

6.8.2 Information has been collected to understand the existing ground conditions on the Site. This has been based upon a review of published information on the environmental setting of the Site, its previous and current uses and a walkover site survey. The information that has informed the assessment includes, details on geology and hydrogeology (ground stability, drainage, historical excavation / mining activity, unexploded ordinance (UXO) risk, and nature conservation constraints), historic developments on the Site and potential sources of contamination.

Mitigation

6.8.3 Standard mitigation measures would be adopted during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Scheme to prevent significant impacts on ground conditions. Those measures are outlined in the

[20] *the process of assessing the likelihood of a risk occurring and the impact it would have on a project if it happened*

- **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.3]**
- **outline Operational Environment Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.5]**
- **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.6]**
- **outline Surface Water Management Plan (oSWMP) [EN010141/DR/7.13]**
- **outline Soil Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.9];** and **outline Battery Safety Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.10]**

6.8.4 Additional mitigation measures include below ground investigations aimed at identifying the current ground conditions and contamination status of the Site prior to the commencement of construction activities. The investigations are not required across the entire Site and would be limited to locations where construction is to take place on infilled ponds and pits or where foundations and / or demolition rubble has been identified from the presence of former buildings.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Construction Phase

6.8.5 The assessment provides no evidence to indicate that the Site cannot be re-developed for the intended use but provides recommendations for additional investigations to be undertaken prior to construction. These investigations would inform the detailed design of the Scheme. The scope of the additional investigations would be the subject of a DCO Requirement and would need to be agreed with the Local Planning Authorities and other consultees as necessary.

6.8.6 Assuming the required mitigation measures, including the ground investigations, are strictly employed and any effects taken into account, there would be no significant residual effects on human health, controlled waters, ecological receptors or buildings/ground stability during the construction phase.

Operational Phase

6.8.7 The operational phase assessment has considered the impact of the Scheme on property, human health, water, ecology and ecosystems. It concludes that that the overall significance of effect in relation to the operational phase for all potential receptors would not be significant.

Decommissioning Phase

6.8.8 There is potential for effects on Ground conditions during the decommissioning phase through the construction of temporary compounds to service decommissioning and the storage of fuels / chemicals to aid those operations. It would also involve the removal of some below ground infrastructure (e.g. cables).

6.8.9 The DEMP will detail proposals to prevent the generation and runoff of silty or otherwise contaminated water to nearby watercourses during the decommissioning phase. This will include monitoring of the adjacent surface waters for a series of related contaminants at a specified location downstream of the Site. It would also adopt dust management and good housekeeping practices to ensure the generation, and migration of dust, litter and debris is kept to a minimum.

6.8.10 Assuming the adoption of the correct mitigation measures the overall impacts during the decommissioning phase would not be significant.

6.9 Land and Soils

Introduction

6.9.1 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the preliminary findings of the likely significant impacts and effects arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Scheme on land and soil receptors. This includes an assessment of agricultural land, soils as a resource, and mineral reserves.

Baseline

6.9.2 The sensitivity of agricultural land and soil is based on data obtained from a site survey undertaken between Summer 2023 and Summer 2025 , with the survey methodology informed by well-established guidelines and criteria for classifying the quality of agricultural land. The ALC survey report is presented as **ES Vol 2 Appendix 13-1: Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources [EN010141/DR/6.2]**.

6.9.3 The agricultural land survey classifies the quality of land on a scale of Grade 1 to Grade 5. Land that is Grade 1 and 2 is considered 'Best and Most Versatile land'. Land that is Grades 4 and 5, non-agricultural, or urban is not considered Best and Most Versatile. Land that falls within Grade 3 has the potential to be either Grade 3a which is classed as Best and Most Versatile, or Grade 3b which is not.

6.9.4 The survey of the Site has found the Site to have the following Agricultural Land Classification ('ALC') grades as shown on **Figure 4**:

ALC Grade	Description	Total Area (ha)	Percentage of Site
Grade 2	Very good quality	164	21.2 %
Subgrade 3a	Good quality	349.5	45.2 %
Subgrade 3b	Moderate quality	182.4	23.6 %

ALC Grade	Description	Total Area (ha)	Percentage of Site
Ungraded	*[Assumed very good quality]*	41.6	5.4 %
Non-agricultural	Woodland, roads, tracks or other non-agricultural land uses	35.4	4.6 %
Total		**772.9**	**100 %**

6.9.5 The majority of the Site is therefore considered to be 'Best and Most Versatile land'. Where areas of the Site have not yet been surveyed or can't be surveyed (ungraded) it has been assumed they are of the highest agricultural land quality found at the Site for the purpose of the assessment work.

6.9.6 There are several mineral safeguarding areas identified by local authorities that cover the Order Limits. These are areas where future mineral extraction could occur, although there are no plans at this time to extract minerals from any locations within the Site.

Mitigation

6.9.7 Mitigation of effects on land and soils has been considered from the outset of the project through the site selection process. This was carried out in two main stages

6.9.8 The first stage, set out in the Site Identification Report in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** identified a 'Search Zone' for the most appropriate location for a large-scale solar project capable of utilising the available grid capacity within the Eaton Socon Substation. This first stage considered the agricultural land classification within 15km of the Eaton Socon Substation, with agricultural land classification being an important criterion in identifying a Search Zone, and a criterion that was part of the decision-making process in selecting the Search Zone to be taken forward.

6.9.9 The second stage, set out in the Land Identification Report (LIR) in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2: Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** comprised a high-level review of the land offered to the Applicant to establish constraints to development of the Scheme and to refine the overall landholding to be taken forward. This second stage considered the project's design principles to determine the Site location.

6.9.10 Standard mitigation measures would be used to manage impacts to soil / land during the construction phase. The mitigation measures would be secured by the CEMP. Details of the measures are provided in the **outline Construction Environment Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.3]**.

6.9.11 An **outline Soil Management Plan (oSMP) [EN010141/DR/7.9]** has been prepared as part of the embedded mitigation for the Scheme, which sets out the standard measures to avoid and reduce impacts on soils during the construction phase. These would include (but not necessarily be limited to)the mapping of soil resources, designating areas for soil storage, restricting vehicle movements on exposed soils, prescribed measure for soil handling, stockpile management excavation and trenching and subsequent restoration and aftercare. The oSMP will be developed into a detailed Soil Management Plan (SMP) once a contractor is appointed. The SMP will be in substantial accordance with the oSMP and will be a requirement of the DCO for submission and approval by the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) prior to construction.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Construction Phase

6.9.12 The assessment has concluded that there would be **significant** adverse effects in relation to temporary and permanent impacts to Grade 2 agricultural land, resulting primarily from the removal of land from arable agricultural production for the duration of the Scheme and the creation of access tracks across the Site.

6.9.13 There would also be temporary and permanent adverse impacts to Grade 3a land which is best and most versatile. However, the effect to Grade 3a land is not assessed as significant in EIA terms

6.9.14 There would be no significant adverse effects to soils during the construction phase due to the embedded mitigation measures to protect soils during construction.

Operational Phase

6.9.15 During operation, there would be **significant** beneficial effects in relation to soils on the Site as the land would be rested from arable rotation. There would be an improvement in soil functions as a result of increased soil organic carbon, and reduced water run-off and siltation compared to periods where soils would be bare during arable rotation.

6.9.16 The Scheme would not prevent the extraction of any mineral reserves in the future and would therefore result in no significant effects on mineral reserves.

Decommissioning Phase

6.9.17 At decommissioning the Scheme would be removed and the land restored to its existing uses and returned to the landowners, albeit the proposed planting would be retained.

Rev	Date	Comment
P01	30/09/2025	DCO Submission

- Order Limits
- Grade 2
- Grade 3a
- Grade 3b
- Ungraded (Assumed Grade 2)
- Non-Agricultural

0 0.5 1 2 3 3.5km

0344 8700 007
axis.co.uk

Client
BSSL Cambsbed 1 Ltd

Project
East Park Energy

Drawing Title
Agricultural Land Classification

Scale
1:35,000 @A3

Status
DCO Application

APFP Reference
Regulation 5(2)(a)

Submission Reference
EN010141/DR/6.4

Dwg no
NTS Figure 4

Rev
P01

6.10 Socio Economics, Land Use and Tourism

Introduction

6.10.1 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 14: Socio Economics [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the preliminary findings of an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Scheme on Socio Economics, Land Use and Tourism. The Chapter gives due consideration to the effects of the scheme in the context of the following matters:

- Employment generation (temporary and longer-term);
- Gross Value Added (GVA) and Fiscal Effects from business rates
- Impacts on tourism and the visitor economy;
- PRoW insofar as diversions or stopping up would affect the visitor economy;
- Changes of land use within the Site Boundary and any changes to accessibility and amenity for receptors beyond the Site Boundary; and
- Other local services and assets, including residential properties, business premises, public health and education services, and community facilities.

Baseline

6.10.2 The existing socio-economic conditions at the site and the surrounding are, including those within Bedford Borough and Huntingdonshire District have been established. This has involved desk-based assessment of nationally recognised statistics and other data including (but not limited to), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (2019) English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (2019), Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2011 and 2021 Census Data, ONS (2023) UK Business Register and Employment Survey: Open Access 2023, ONS (2024) Population estimates for the UK, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: 2023 Mid-Year Population estimates (2023); ONS (2025) Annual Population Survey 2024; Experian (2025) Economic Forecasts 2025 (2025); University of Exeter (n.d.) Outdoor Recreation Valuation Tool (ORVal); Visit Britain (2025) Research and

Insights. UK short-term rentals; and CoStar (2025) Hotel and Guest Accommodation Occupancy Rates for 2024.

6.10.3 37 PRoW cross or pass within the vicinity of the Site (referenced within **ES Volume 1 Chapter 9: Traffic and Transport [EN010141/DR/6.1*]**). None of the rights of way that cross East Park Sites A to D are part of national long-distance trails and none connect sites that are used by visitors. However, the National Cycle Network Route No.12 (Enfield Lock in north London to Spalding) crosses the Cable Corridor - East Park Site D to Eaton Socon Substation at Bushmead Road.

6.10.4 In terms of land use considerations, the assessment has confirmed that:

- The Site comprises predominantly agricultural land;
- There are no residential properties within the Order Limits;
- There are a number of individual properties that lie within close proximity; to the Order Limits.; The closest instances of residential properties can be found less than 100 metres away from the Order Limits;
- the more densely populated areas of Eaton Ford and Eaton Socon are located on the opposite (eastern) side of the A1, within 2 kilometres of the Order Limits;
- there are no business premises located directly within the Order Limits;
- there is a more extensive array of business premises within 500 metres of the site;
- there are two schools located within 500 metres of the scheme boundary;
- there are 33 community facilities within 2 kilometres of the Order Limits;
- there are no visitor attractions within 500 metres of the Order Limits;
- there are 4 tourist attractions within 2km of the Order Limits;
- there are no planned developments within the Order Limits and a limited number of planned developments within 500m of the Order Limits;
- Analysis of the hotel, bed and breakfast, and inns accommodation sector indicates there are currently between 1,836 and 3,282 surplus rooms available, depending on the time of year; and

- rooms in private homes and rentals of entire private properties are available through platforms including Airbnb and VRBO.

Mitigation

6.10.5 The Scheme has been designed to reduce other construction, decommissioning and operational effects (relating to noise, air quality, transport and landscape), which in turn will mitigate the effects on the local community and existing facilities from a socio-economic and land use perspective. This includes the measures set out in the **oCEMP [EN010141/DR/7.3], oOEMP [EN010141/DR/7.5]** and **oDEMP [EN010141/DR/7.6]** , the **outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.8]**; the **outline Soil Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.9]**; and the **outline Skills, Supply Chain, and Employment Plan (oSSCEP) [EN010141/DR/7.11]**.

6.10.6 No additional mitigation measures are deemed necessary to prevent significant adverse effects from the Scheme.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Construction Phase

6.10.7 It is anticipated that construction works, including works on the main site and the grid connection would take estimated 30 months to complete and that the average number of workers on Site across the construction phase would be 496, with a peak workforce of 854 in Month 12 and a low of 30 in Month 1. 47.7% of construction workers are likely to reside within the Study Area (as defined by the 90-minute travel to work area) and will represent local employment. It is estimated that the construction phase employment would will contribute approximately £130.1 million to total economic output, of which £54.3 million would be likely to be within the study area.

6.10.8 The effect of the employment generation and other economic benefits would be **Significant** at the local level but only beneficial not significant at the regional and national levels.

6.10.9 Analysis of available accommodation in the study area has confirmed that there would be no adverse effect on the overall hotel, bed and breakfast, and inns accommodation sector arising from the Scheme. It is anticipated that accommodation providers would be able to accommodate employees working at the Scheme. The effect would not be significant.

6.10.10 There would be no permanent diversions to PRoW during construction of the Scheme. All would remain accessible, and all would be retained within development free corridors. There would be a very short-term temporary effect on the NCN Route 12 at Bushmead Road when the cable connection passes under the road. However, the overall effect on users of the PRoW network would be limited and not significant.

6.10.11 There are no residential properties, business premises, community facilities or planned development sites within the Order Limits which would need to be demolished, or which would be displaced by the Scheme. There is potential for noise, air quality, visual and traffic effects arising from construction of the Scheme to impact on the amenity of residents, businesses, users of open spaces within 500m of the Site. The effects of which are assessed in other chapters of the ES. However, based on the conclusions of those assessments, whilst there would be some adverse effects they would not be significant.

Operational Phase

6.10.12 It is estimated that 9 existing jobs in the agricultural sector would be lost as result of the Scheme. However, the Scheme itself will generate an estimated 20 full time equivalent employee roles over its 40-year lifespan. Although the overall balance of new jobs would have a beneficial impact, they would not be significant. The additional employment is expected to contribute approximately £24.1 million (at present values) to the national economy over

the Scheme lifetime, of which £16.0 million would likely be within the study area.

6.10.13 The Scheme would also result in the generation of business rates[21]. Due to the complicated nature of calculating business rates for solar and BESS developments, it has not been possible to provide an accurate estimate of business rates for the Scheme at this stage. However, the resulting business rates liability could be substantial and are recognised as a potentially material benefit of the project.

6.10.14 The operational phase economic effects are assessed as being beneficial but not significant.

6.10.15 The operational phase effects on tourism, private and community assets and development land have all been assessed as negligible and not significant.

Decommissioning Phase

6.10.16 It is estimated that the decommissioning period would take between 12 and 24 months to complete and that it would be undertaken in phases. It would involve fewer workers and over a shorter period of time than the initial construction phase and it is estimated that decommissioning phase employment would represent 75% of that identified during the construction phase. On that basis, the average number of workers on Site across the decommissioning phase would be approximately 375, with a peak workforce of approximately 640 around Month 8.

6.10.17 It can be expected when the Scheme is decommissioned, the employment required to operate the solar farm (20 direct equivalent full time jobs) will no longer be generated. However, if the land returns to farming, it is likely that agricultural employment will be supported (7 direct equivalent full time jobs at

[21] *Business rates contribute to Council's overall budget, along with council tax, other fees, rents and licences. It helps fund the services Councils provide and other local services such as the local fire authority.*

present). Therefore, the net change in employment can be assumed to be a loss of 13 direct FTE jobs.

6.10.18 It is estimated that its decommissioning will contribute approximately £97.6 million at present values to the national economy, of which £39.8 million would likely be within the study area. There would cease to be beneficial effects from the generation of business rates at the decommissioning stage and the effect of that has been assessed in the ES.

6.10.19 The overall economic position in the decommissioning phase has been assessed as beneficial but overall effect would not be significant.

6.10.20 The impacts on local communities, tourism and PRoW during the decommissioning phase are expected to be aligned with the impacts assessed during the construction phase. These are therefore considered to not be significant.

6.11 Climate Change

Introduction

6.11.1 The Scheme has the potential to be affected by the projected changes in climate, as well as contribute to the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which are advancing those changes.

6.11.2 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 15: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the findings of an assessment of the resilience of the Scheme to the effects of climate change, and the likely significant effects of the Scheme on climate change, specifically the impact of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Baseline

Climate Resilience Assessment

6.11.3 The baseline for the climate resilience assessment is based upon an assessment of the existing climatic conditions at the site and how they are predicted to change over its 40-year lifetime. There is obviously a degree of

uncertainty and variability in making long term projections of changes in climatic conditions. However, the predictions in the assessment have concluded that climate change is projected to lead to hotter summers and warmer winters, and generally wetter winters and drier summers. Projections indicate there will be an increase in near surface wind speeds over the UK and more significant impacts of wind will be experienced in the winter months, including an increase in frequency of winter storms.

GHG Assessment

6.11.4 The goal of establishing a baseline for GHG assessment is the ability to assess and report the net GHG emissions associated with the Scheme.

6.11.5 The approach that has been adopted for the assessment of the Scheme is often referred to as a 'business as usual' assessment where assumptions are made on current and future GHG emissions without the scheme in place. This then allows the establishment a baseline that can be compared against the activities of the Scheme that have the potential to generate GHG emissions (e.g. manufacture of Scheme components, transport of construction materials and emissions from construction phase activities).

Mitigation

6.11.6 Various measures are identified in the oCEMP, oOEMP and the oDEMP that are specifically aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change and the release of GHG emissions, which include, but are not limited to, the sourcing and transport of materials, sustainable transport measures for construction staff, operational measures in the construction period. A full list of the measures is set out in Section 15.7 of **ES Volume 1 Chapter 15: Climate Change[EN010141/DR/6.1].**

6.11.7 The Scheme would also have a range of climate change adaptation measures designed into it. The most prominent of those measures is to ensure that surface water is managed appropriately and that the Scheme would not result in an increase in flood risk (**ES Volume 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood**

Risk [EN010141/DR.6.1] and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2])** .

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Climate Resilience Assessment

6.11.8 The resilience to climate change assessment has considered vulnerable receptors during the operational phase of the Scheme. This includes operational equipment (solar PV modules, BESS, transformers, inverters, substation, and cabling), vehicular access to the Site, and on-site workers.

6.11.9 Potential changes to climate that could affect the Scheme's resilience include increased winter precipitation, decreased summer precipitation, increase in temperatures, increased frequency and magnitude of storms, and changes in cloud cover. All have been factors in the assessment.

6.11.10 The Climate Resilience Assessment concludes that the effect of the Scheme is not significant and that the Scheme is considered resilient to the effects of climate change.

GHG Assessment

6.11.11 The GHG emissions from the Scheme have been calculated within the GHG Assessment. It concludes that, when compared with the baseline scenario, the Scheme would have a net carbon benefit over its lifetime and is fully consistent with existing and emerging policy requirements and fully in line with measures necessary to achieve the UK's trajectory towards net zero by 2050. It concludes that the Scheme would have a **significant** beneficial effect on climate change.

6.12 Other Environmental Topics

6.12.1 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the findings of an assessment of the effects of the Scheme on:

- **Human Health** – the Scheme would result in no significant effects on human health;
- **Waste** – the Scheme would result in no significant effects as a result of the use of materials and generation of waste;
- **Major Accidents and Disasters** – the Scheme is at a low risk from major accidents and disasters, meaning that no significant effects would be likely to occur; and
- **Electromagnetic Fields** – the Scheme would result in no significant effects on people or other receptors as a result of electromagnetic fields, and that no further mitigation is required.

6.13 Cumulative and In-Combination Effects

6.13.1 **ES Volume 1 Chapter 17: Cumulative and In-Combination Effects [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the likely cumulative and in-combination significant effects which could result from the East Park Energy project (the 'Scheme').

6.13.2 Cumulative effects typically fall to be considered within two distinct categories, comprising:

Cumulative inter project effects – effects arising to a receptor or group of receptors from the residual (post-mitigation) environmental effects of the Scheme combining and interacting with the residual environmental effects of one or more other developments within the zone of influence for the various technical topics assessed in the ES.

In combination intra project effects – arising from the interaction and combination of different residual environmental effects of the Scheme affecting a receptor or group of receptors. Individually the effects may not be significant, but the accumulation of effects may, collectively, give rise to a significant overall effect.

6.13.3 The assessment of inter project effects has been carried out in accordance with the four stages of Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA), set out within

the Planning Inspectorate's 'Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment'**. ES Vol 1 Chapter 4: EIA Methodology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** sets out the approach taken to identifying the 'other development' or 'cumulative schemes' for the purpose of assessment.

6.13.4 For the assessment of in-combination intra project effects the 'Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment' sets out that the ES should set out a table demonstrating where multiple impacts from the Scheme would combine to affect sensitive receptors.

Cumulative Inter Project Effects

6.13.5 There is the potential for the effects of the Scheme to interact with the effects of other development in the surrounding area. These are 'inter-project' cumulative effects.

6.13.6 A short list of other development which the Scheme could have likely significant cumulative environmental effects with has been prepared, see **ES Vol 2 Appendix 4-5 Short List of Other Developments [EN010141/DR/6.2]**, this includes the following sites / developments:

- Scheme 4: High Wood Solar Farm;
- Scheme 23: Cobholden Solar Farm;
- Scheme 24: A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet;
- Scheme 26: East-West Rail; and
- Scheme 28: Cobholden Farm BESS.

6.13.7 In most instances the distance of any other developments from the Scheme coupled in many cases with the mitigation secured by virtue of environmental management plans (either conditioned or Requirements) on the various projects, avoids the likelihood of significant cumulative effects occurring.

6.13.8 The location of the other developments is shown on **ES Vol 3 Figure 4-2: Short List of Other Development [EN010141/DR/6.3].**

6.13.9 The assessment of likely significant inter-project cumulative effects has been undertaken for each topic chapter of the ES:

- Landscape and Visual;
- Cultural Heritage and Archaeology;
- Ecology and Nature Conservation;
- Hydrology and Flood Risk;
- Traffic and Transport;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Air Quality;
- Ground Conditions;
- Land and Soils;
- Socio Economics, Land Use and Tourism;
- Climate Change.

6.13.10 The assessment of cumulative inter-project effects for each topic has concluded that there would be no significant adverse cumulative effects as a result of the Scheme in combination with any cumulative scheme. The residual effects of the Scheme would not be changed as a result of any of the cumulative schemes.

In Combination Intra Project Effects

6.13.11 As set out in previous sections, the combination of two or more environmental effects resulting from the Scheme may collectively cause a greater (or lesser)

effect than each effect in isolation. The potential for effect interactions is presented within this section.

6.13.12 Having reviewed the technical assessments presented in Chapter 5 to 16, the following receptor groups have been identified as having the potential to experience more than one residual environmental effect:

- Residential properties, business premises, community facilities
- Users of PRoW;
- Construction operatives or maintenance workers;
- Ecological receptors; and
- Heritage Assets.

6.13.13 The assessment of cumulative in-combination effects for each topic has concluded that there would be no significant adverse cumulative effects on a receptor from more than one residual environmental effect.

7.0 SUMMARY

7.1.1 The ES presents the findings of the environmental assessments undertaken to date as part of the EIA for the Scheme.

7.1.2 Likely significant environmental effects (both adverse and beneficial) have been identified for a number of receptors and environmental resources at the Site and around the Order Limits.

7.1.3 Mitigation measures have been identified to mitigate and control environmental effects during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Scheme. It is proposed that these will be secured through the DCO, should this be granted.