



EAST PARK ENERGY

East Park Energy

EN010141

Applicant Response to Deadline 4 Representations

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CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction 4

1.1 Overview 4

1.2 Purpose of this Document 4

1.3 Note about National Policy Statements 5

2.0 Themed Responses 6

2.1 Introduction..... 6

2.2 Themed Responses 7

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AC	Alternating current
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability
BBC	Bedford Borough Council
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
CCC	Cambridgeshire County Council
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
DAD	Design Approach Document
DC	Direct current
DCO	Development Consent Order
DESNZ	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
ES	Environmental Statement
ExA	Examining Authority
gCO ₂ e/kWh	Grams of carbon dioxide equivalent per kilowatt-hour
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIS	Geographic Information System
GWh	Gigawatt-hour
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
ISEP	Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals
ISH	Issue Specific Hearing
LHA	Local Highway Authority

MW	Megawatt
MWp	Megawatt-peak, generally used to describe the installed direct-current nameplate capacity of solar photovoltaic modules
NESO	National Energy System Operator
NFCC	National Fire Chiefs Council
NPS	National Policy Statement
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
oBSMP	Outline Battery Safety Management Plan
oCEMP	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan
oCTMP	Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan
oCWTP	Outline Construction Workers Travel Plan
oDEMP	Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan
oLEMP	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
oOEMP	Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan
oSWMP	Outline Surface Water Management Plan
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
PPV	Peak Particle Velocity
PV	Photovoltaic
SEPE	Stop East Park Energy
SoS	Secretary of State
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
TCPA	Town and Country Planning Act 1990
tCO₂e	Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This document sets out the responses of BSSL Cambsbed 1 Limited ('the Applicant') to representations submitted at Examination Deadline 4 in relation to the Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the East Park Energy project ('the Scheme').
- 1.1.2 The application for the Scheme was received by the Planning Inspectorate on 3rd October 2025 and was then accepted for examination on 30th October 2025. The Examination Deadline 4 representations were published on the Planning Inspectorate's website on 16th July 2026.
- 1.1.3 The documents submitted with the DCO Application are referenced using the reference number assigned by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) i.e. **[REP5-XXX]**. Where application documents have been updated as a result of the representations the response sets out that the document is "**[as updated alongside this submission]**".

1.2 Purpose of this Document

- 1.2.1 This document responds to selected matters raised by interested parties at Examination Deadline 4. The responses provided in this document are necessarily selective and are not intended to constitute a \wqresponse to every Deadline 4 submission or every individual point raised within them. No inference should therefore be drawn from the absence of a response to any particular submission or matter, and that absence should not be treated as indicating agreement with or acceptance of the position advanced. The Applicant will continue to review the Deadline 4 submissions and, where further new or material matters are identified on which a response would assist the Examining Authority (ExA), will seek to address those matters at Deadline 6 or as otherwise directed by the ExA.

- 1.2.2 A number of the matters raised at Deadline 4 concern recurring themes that have already been considered in the Applicant's earlier examination submissions, although the relevant responses have been provided at different stages of the Examination and in varying levels of detail. To assist the ExA and Interested Parties, Section 2.0 draws together the Applicant's current position under a series of thematic responses, consolidating the relevant reasoning, evidence and signposting in a single place and reducing unnecessary repetition. The thematic responses should be read alongside and do not supersede the Applicant's earlier submissions.
- 1.2.3 As set out in the **Applicant's Deadline 5 Cover Letter [EN010141/DR/8.62]**, the Applicant is continuing to review the comments submitted by the Host Authorities, together with the six Deadline 4 submissions made by Stop East Park Energy, the joint submission made by the Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum and British Horse Society, and submissions by other interested parties. The Applicant intends to provide responses at Deadline 6, together with any consequential document updates considered necessary or appropriate.

1.3 Note about National Policy Statements

- 1.3.1 Section 1.6 of the 2026 NPS EN-1 confirms that for schemes accepted for examination before the final publication of the approved 2025 amendments, the 2024 suite of NPSs should have effect. East Park Energy was accepted for examination in October 2025 prior to the final publication of the 2025 amendments. The 2024 NPSs, therefore, have effect for decision making.
- 1.3.2 All references to the NPSs in this document made by the Applicant are to the 2024 NPSs unless stated otherwise.
- 1.3.3 The Applicant has prepared a separate **Note on updated National Policy Statements EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5 [PDA-01]**

2.0 Themed Responses

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section sets out responses under the following headings:

- The Scheme's forecast electricity generation, capacity factor and overplanting;
- Robustness of the greenhouse gas assessment and the Scheme's lifetime carbon savings;
- Outline design, the Rochdale Envelope and the use of outline management plans;
- Effect of the BESS Gate 1 import offer on Scheme viability and deliverability;
- Water supply arrangements for BESS firefighting and solar panel cleaning;
- Monitoring and enforcement of construction vehicle movements;
- Assessment of vibration effects on buildings from construction and HGV traffic;
- Responsibility for highway condition surveys and Scheme-related road repairs;
- Site selection, consideration of alternatives and design refinement;
- Consideration of all wind directions in the BESS fire plume assessment;
- Responsibility for implementing and managing the landscape and habitat proposals;
- Assessment and management of on-site and off-site flood risk;
- Scheme security and resilience, including cybersecurity and wider hostile activity;
- Assessment and management of construction traffic, local congestion and highway capacity;
- Decommissioning obligations, funding and the absence of a bond requirement;
- BESS charging sources and operational dispatch arrangements;

- Relevance of commercial revenue, profitability and cash-flow forecasts to the DCO application; and
- Construction traffic and school-hour embargoes.

2.2 Themed Responses

The Scheme's forecast electricity generation, capacity factor and overplanting

- 2.2.1 The capacity factor and distribution of solar energy generation in the UK is well understood and the need for the Scheme in the national energy and policy context is outlined in the **Planning Statement [APP-031]**. The Government has specifically considered the lower capacity factors achieved by solar generation in preparing its Clean Power 2030 Action Plan.
- 2.2.2 The Applicant's calculated capacity factor is considered suitable and allows for factors such as solar irradiance, current and emerging panel technology, and overplanting to maximise generation (as set out in paragraph 5.6.6 of the **Design Approach Document - DAD [APP-034]**).
- 2.2.3 Solar technology has developed rapidly over the course of the past decade, and therefore analysing capacity factors based on installed panel technology that predominantly relates to solar farms installed prior to 2020 does not necessarily reflect the capacity factors of more efficient panels now available and, indeed, those expected for this Scheme. In July 2025, the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero published 'Renewable Energy Generation Cost and Technical Assumptions – Onshore Wind and Solar PV', which identifies (in Tables 4 and 39) that in 2023-2024 a range of 11.5% to 14.5% was the typical capacity factor (or 'net load factor') for solar development.
- 2.2.4 Dividing the Scheme's forecast first-year generation of approximately 433.2 GWh by 400 MW produces a capacity factor figure of approximately 12.4%. However, 400 MW is the Scheme's maximum AC export capacity at the grid connection and is not the indicative installed DC nameplate capacity of the solar array. As set out above, the **DAD [APP-034]** identifies an indicative

installed capacity of approximately 485 MWp, representing approximately 21.3% overplanting. Calculated against that installed DC capacity, the same 433.2 GWh first-year generation estimate equates to an approximate 10.2% capacity factor. Overplanting is specifically intended to increase generation relative to the 400 MW export limit, including during periods of lower irradiance and as panels degrade, without increasing the maximum permitted export capacity. Overplanting is supported by national policy at paragraph 2.10.55 of NPS EN-3.

- 2.2.5 Whilst it is accepted that solar output varies by season, the Applicant has not undertaken any specific sensitivity testing using lower irradiance or alternative long-term meteorological assumptions on the basis that the capacity factor used in its technical modelling is realistic and appropriately reflects the Scheme's characteristics, including overplanting. This also reflects the fact that, in identifying a national need for solar generation, the government does not set any specific policy requirement to guarantee a particular annual output, demonstrate a specified generation yield per hectare, or prove the individual Scheme's contribution to national need.
- 2.2.6 The Applicant is confident in the capacity factor that has been used for their technical modelling presents a realistic calculation, based on the specific parameters of this Scheme, including an allowance for overplanting.

Robustness of the greenhouse gas assessment and the Scheme's lifetime carbon savings

- 2.2.7 The GHG emissions associated with the lifetime of the Scheme were quantified within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 15 Climate Change [REP4-014]** as part of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 15-1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Assessment [REP4-021]**. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 15-1** which followed the framework outlined by Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Practitioners (ISEP) in their guidance entitled: '*Assessing GHG emissions and evaluating their significance*'. ISEP acknowledge that there are many different ways of

quantifying GHG emissions and does not prescribe a specific method, instead providing a framework to follow.

- 2.2.8 Within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 15-1 [REP4-014]**, all assumptions were transparent and, as such, it has been possible for those with an interest in the scheme to question the calculations. As noted in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 15 [REP4-014]**, there are limitations within the calculation of GHG emissions and assumptions need to be made. Where assumptions were made within the Applicant's assessment these were conservative estimates to align with a reasonable worst-case assessment scenario.
- 2.2.9 The applicant acknowledges that errors have been identified in some of the assumptions made within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 15-1 [REP4-014]**. However, as demonstrated in the Applicant's previous responses to the Examination, although this changed the calculated GHG emissions, it did not change the overall conclusions of the assessment, which continued to identify significant beneficial effects in the context of GHG emissions.
- 2.2.10 In the Deadline 4 submissions it is stated that the Applicant has materially understated the Scheme's lifecycle carbon emissions and materially overstated its claimed carbon savings. This conclusion appears to be due to a misunderstanding of the approach used to determine GHG intensity and the lifetime GHG savings. Both are discussed further below.

GHG intensity

- 2.2.11 The operational GHG intensity was calculated to provide a comparison with the GHG intensity of various different forms of energy generations set out in Table 15.17 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 15 [REP4-014]**. As explained in ES Vol 1 Chapter 15, these values relate only to generator emissions in the operational phase and do not include emissions related to the fuel supply chain or maintenance activities. The GHG intensity was calculated as 0.246 gCO₂e/kWh.

2.2.12 Stop East Park Energy has calculated the operational GHG intensity using the total operational emissions presented in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 15-1 [REP4-021]**. The calculated GHG intensity (18.6 gCO₂e/kWh) includes the GHG emissions associated with maintenance and replacement parts and, as such, is not comparable to the GHG intensity of the various different forms of energy generation as set out in Table 15.17 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 15 [REP4-014]**. Despite this the value calculated by SEPE is still well within the range specified in Table 15.17 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 15 REP4-014]** for solar PV (20 to 86 gCO₂e/kWh).

Lifetime GHG Savings

2.2.13 The lifetime GHG savings include the GHG emissions associated with the construction and operation of the Scheme and the GHG emission avoided through the offset of electricity which would need to be generated via other means.

2.2.14 Stop East Park Energy has calculated GHG emissions avoided using the DESNZ Green Book long-run marginal generation-based electricity GHG emission factors.

2.2.15 As explained in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 15 [REP4-014]**, the DESNZ Green Book long-run marginal generation-based electricity GHG emission factors reduce significantly throughout the operational phase of the Scheme due to the projected implementation of renewables. This means that there becomes a point at which the GHG emissions offset by the electricity generated by the Scheme are lower than those associated with building and operating the Scheme. However, developments similar to the Scheme are required to achieve the projected reductions in generation-based GHG emissions factors. This results in a 'Catch-22' situation for the purpose of assessing GHG emissions from the Scheme. This position is reinforced in the Secretary of State's (SoS's) decision on the 'Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Generation Assets' where they dismiss the approach of assuming renewable developments displace the future UK grid mix stating the assumption would

undermine the GHG reduction benefits of renewable projects by assuming they are in competition with, rather than complementary to, decarbonisation initiatives.

- 2.2.16 Once operational, the Scheme provides low carbon electricity to the national grid and supports the UK government's goal for all electricity to come from low carbon sources by 2035. Without low-carbon energy generation projects such as the Scheme, the GHG intensity of the grid will not be able to decrease in line with the projections. Therefore, the Scheme is fully consistent with existing and emerging policy requirement and fully in line with measures necessary to achieve the UK's trajectory towards net zero.

Sensitivity of the assessment conclusions to additional minor greenhouse gas emission sources

- 2.2.17 It has been the view of multiple respondents to the Examination that the assessment of GNG emissions has missed various minor elements or functions within the scheme, which is entirely normal for such an assessment for the reasons set out above. However, the Applicant does not agree that the addition of those vehicle movement or other minor elements referred to would make a difference to the conclusions of the assessment.
- 2.2.18 As presented in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 15**, Table 15.16 [REP4-014], the offset GHG emissions as a result of the electricity exported from the Scheme over its lifetime is estimated as:
- 6,104,646 tCO₂e – using the current long-run marginal generator
 - 2,461,035 tCO₂e – using the grid average 2024-2025
- 2.2.19 The total emissions over the lifetime of the Scheme are estimated to be approximately 735,000 tCO₂e. This equates to only 12% of the offset using the current long-run marginal generator, and 30% of the offset using the grid average 2024-2025.

2.2.20 As such, the other sources of GHG emissions referred to within the representations (such as minor vehicle movements, or other one-off activities) would need to result in triple the amount of GHG emissions over the lifetime of the Scheme to be greater than the quantity offset. Such an outcome is clearly not realistic, and the Applicant's assessment is considered to present a reasonable worst-case assessment of the likely significant effects arising from the Scheme.

Outline design, the Rochdale Envelope and the use of outline management plans

2.2.21 The Applicant has applied the established Rochdale Envelope approach in bringing forward the Scheme. This allows a proportionate degree of design flexibility where the final specification or arrangement of infrastructure cannot reasonably be fixed at the application stage.

2.2.22 The approach is set out in detail within Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note Nine, which recognises that an applicant can identify a range of possible designs or parameters, provided that:

- the range of permissible development is clearly defined;
- the Environmental Statement assesses the reasonable worst case; and
- the DCO ensures that the final development remains within the assessed envelope.

2.2.23 This is the approach that has been adopted by the Applicant, the environmental effects of which have been assessed by reference to a series of defined limits, including,

- maximum development areas;
- maximum heights;
- minimum offsets and buffers;

- maximum traffic movements;
- noise limits; and
- environmental mitigation requirements.

2.2.24 The relevant parameters are set out in the **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2 [REP3-023]**, the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement [REP4-023]** and the **draft DCO [REP3-009]**.

2.2.25 The Applicant has adopted a parameter-based design approach because it is neither necessary (in the context of the DCO consenting regime), nor proportionate to complete the full construction-level design of a complex nationally significant infrastructure project before development consent is granted. The final design will depend upon a series of matters that cannot sensibly be resolved before the grant of consent including:

- detailed ground investigations;
- contractor construction methodology;
- final grid-connection requirements; and
- technological advancement.

2.2.26 Requiring an Applicant to complete all construction-level design before the DCO is granted would involve substantial expenditure before the principle of the Scheme has been authorised. It could also result in the consent being tied to equipment that is unavailable or technologically outdated by the time construction begins. This is particularly true with solar and BESS development which are continually the subject of advancement.

2.2.27 The parameter-based approach allows the Applicant to undertake competitive procurement and incorporate appropriate technological developments while ensuring that the final Scheme does not exceed the environmental effects assessed in the application.

- 2.2.28 The need for flexibility is particularly relevant to the BESS and the solar panels. BESS and solar technology continue to develop, and the dimensions, configuration and technical requirements of battery equipment vary between manufacturers. It would therefore be premature and unnecessarily restrictive to select a particular battery manufacturer before development consent is granted.
- 2.2.29 It must be clarified that the use of the Rochdale Envelope does not provide the Applicant with unfettered flexibility and nor do they think that to be the case. The detailed design of the Scheme must remain within the maximum parameters set out and assessed in the Environmental Statement and secured through the DCO and that is precisely the approach the Applicant is adopting in the context of their Scheme.

Purpose and enforceability of the outline management plans

- 2.2.30 One of the recurring matters that has been raised by respondents throughout the examination is how outline management plans, that are not based upon a detailed design solution, can be suitable for Examination and approval by the Secretary of State.
- 2.2.31 Whilst the Applicant understands why this may be a concern, it is nevertheless a widely accepted approach to the preparation of DCO applications, particularly those adopting the Rochdale Envelope (discussed above).
- 2.2.32 The Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 9 (which explains the use of the 'Rochdale Envelope' approach under the Planning Act 2008), allows and indeed encourages the use of outline management plans for DCO applications on the basis that the detailed design, construction methods and contractor arrangements are unlikely to be finalised when the application is submitted.
- 2.2.33 The outline management plans establish the minimum mitigation measures, environmental standards, responsibilities and monitoring arrangements that must be followed. Provided the DCO contains enforceable requirements

securing the subsequent detailed plans, requiring them to accord with the approved outline management plans in addition to providing for approval by the relevant authority, the effects of the development can be properly assessed and controlled while retaining reasonable flexibility for detailed design and delivery.

- 2.2.34 The Applicant has prepared a series of outline management plans in relation to the Scheme which set out the mitigation measures requires as a result of the worst-case assessment in the ES. Delivery of those measures in a final management plan is secured legally through the requirements contained within the DCO.

Matters appropriately reserved for detailed design and post-consent approval

- 2.2.35 The DCO application clearly distinguishes between:

1. matters that must be established and assessed before development consent can be granted; and
2. matters of detailed design and implementation that can properly be resolved after consent.

- 2.2.36 The DCO examination is required to determine whether:

- the Scheme is acceptable in principle;
- the likely significant environmental effects have been adequately assessed;
- the necessary mitigation has been identified and secured;
- the proposed development complies with the relevant National Policy Statement; and
- the draft DCO provides adequate and enforceable controls.

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- 2.2.37 It is not necessary for the examination to approve specific equipment, construction detail or technical specification where those matters would not materially alter the assessed effects and are controlled through the DCO and associated DCO Requirements.
- 2.2.38 Section 120 of the Planning Act 2008 expressly permits Requirements to be included in a DCO. Those Requirements perform a function broadly equivalent to conditions attached to a planning permission under the TCPA.
- 2.2.39 The **draft DCO [REP3-009]** provides that specified details must be submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority before the relevant works commence. Depending upon the particular Requirement, the approval process may also require consultation with bodies including the Environment Agency, Natural England, Highways England, Historic England the local highway authority, the lead local flood authority, the fire and rescue service, and archaeological advisers (amongst others).
- 2.2.40 The post-consent process is therefore not informal or uncontrolled. The relevant works cannot commence until the applicable Requirements have been discharged in agreement with the relevant regulatory authorities and in line with the approved details.
- 2.2.41 Where the Applicant states that a matter will be resolved at detailed design stage, that does not mean that its environmental implications have been left unassessed. The ES has assessed the reasonable worst-case effects of the development permitted within the proposed parameters.
- 2.2.42 The detailed design process will refine the authorised Scheme. It will not permit development outside the assessed Rochdale Envelope or allow materially different or greater environmental effects than those considered during the DCO examination.

Summary of the outline design and control framework

- 2.2.43 In short, the Applicant's case is that the Scheme is outline in terms of detail but not uncertain in either its scope or environmental outcome. Consent would

be granted for a defined and assessed envelope, with maximum parameters, design principles and minimum mitigation commitments secured through the DCO. Detailed design would then refine the Scheme within that envelope and would require approval before construction.

2.2.44 This is a conventional, well-precedented and enforceable approach to DCO development, which is advocated for applicants wishing to bring forward their scheme using the Rochdale Envelope approach.

Effect of the BESS Gate 1 import offer on Scheme viability and deliverability

2.2.45 Under NESO's reformed connections process:

- Gate 1 applies where the full Gate 2 criteria are not yet met. It does not provide a confirmed grid connection date or queue position, although the project may seek to progress through a later connection window once readiness is demonstrated.
- Gate 2 is for projects considered sufficiently ready to progress. It provides a confirmed grid connection date, connection point and queue position.

2.2.46 As set out in previous submissions and during Issue Specific Hearing 4 (ISH4), the Applicant has received a Gate 2 offer for the 400 MW solar generation export connection to the grid, and a Gate 1 offer for the 100 MW BESS import connection.

2.2.47 The Gate 1 offer in relation to the BESS relates to its separate ability to import electricity from the grid for wider grid-balancing services. It does not determine whether the BESS can be consented, constructed, charged from the Scheme's solar generation, or used to export stored solar electricity under the Scheme's solar generation connection offer. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2 [REP3-023]** is clear that the Scheme allows the generation and export of 400 MW of electricity from the solar generating station, with the BESS designed to be capable of exporting and importing up to 100 MW.

- 2.2.48 The primary function of the BESS is as an integral element of the Scheme, storing electricity generated by the solar PV modules at times of low demand and releasing that electricity at times of peak demand. Any additional role in importing excess electricity from the grid and providing grid-balancing services would be supplementary to that core co-located storage function.
- 2.2.49 Accordingly, the absence of a Gate 2 import offer for the BESS at this point in time does not make the BESS or solar development undeliverable. At most, it relates to the timing and extent of the BESS's ability to provide grid import and balancing services. The BESS remains viable as temporary storage for the Scheme's solar generation, with stored solar electricity capable of being exported through the Gate 2 solar generation connection offer.
- 2.2.50 The Applicant's statement of need for the Scheme (including the BESS) in Section 2 of the **Planning Statement [APP-031]** is not dependent on the BESS having an 'import' connection. The statement of need makes it clear that the BESS would be of benefit by capturing solar energy when it is abundant and dispatching it during peak demand or lower renewable periods, thereby improving system resilience and energy security. The public benefits identified at Section 5 of the **Planning Statement [APP-031]** are not dependent on the BESS providing grid balancing services through an import connection, and therefore not affected by the BESS receiving a 'Gate 1' offer. The planning balance set out by the Applicant in Section 8 of the **Planning Statement [APP-031]** is also not dependent on the BESS providing grid balancing services through an import connection. The Applicant's position is therefore that the overall planning balance is not materially affected by the BESS remaining at 'Gate 1'.
- 2.2.51 NPS EN-1 and EN-3 are supportive of solar development that is co-located with other functions including a BESS, recognising that storage is needed to reduce the costs of the electricity system and increase reliability by storing surplus electricity in times of low demand to provide electricity when demand is higher.

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- 2.2.52 The Applicant remains hopeful that the BESS component will be able to provide additional grid balancing services through an import connection in the future but reiterates that the viability of the Scheme is not dependent on this.

Water supply arrangements for BESS firefighting and solar panel cleaning

- 2.2.53 The illustrative BESS design includes provision for two dedicated firefighting water-storage tanks, each with a capacity of approximately 228,000 litres. Together, the tanks would hold approximately 456,000 litres, sufficient to provide approximately 1,900 litres per minute for four hours. The attenuation basin serving the BESS would be designed to contain the full volume of firefighting water discharged in accordance with the **outline Surface Water Management Plan [REP3-064]**.
- 2.2.54 The firewater tanks would be filled using a tanker from an appropriate licenced and controlled source, and not filled from a mains water connection.
- 2.2.55 As set out in their written response to **Issue Specific Hearing 4 [REP4-111]**, the Applicant has an in principle agreement for the installation of a piped connection to Anglian Water's public water-supply network. However, the purpose of the connection would only be for the Scheme's limited operational water requirements, including welfare facilities within the substation buildings. The public water main would not be relied upon to provide the required firefighting flow directly, because it cannot deliver the flow rate required by the relevant National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) guidance.
- 2.2.56 The precise arrangements for initially filling and subsequently replenishing the tanks will be confirmed through the detailed design and the final Battery Safety Management Plan.
- 2.2.57 Any, contaminated firefighting run-off arising from a BESS fire would be directed to the BESS attenuation basin. An automated sluice gate would close following activation of the fire-detection system so that the water could be

retained, tested and, depending upon its quality, released, reused or removed for treatment off-site.

- 2.2.58 Solar panel cleaning is expected to be required infrequently and is anticipated to be no more than approximately once every two years, depending upon the accumulation of dirt and the operational performance of the panels.
- 2.2.59 The precise water-supply arrangements for panel cleaning will be confirmed as part of the detailed operational arrangements and the final Operational Environmental Management Plan.
- 2.2.60 Cleaning would be undertaken using a soft rotating brush. No chemical cleaning agents would be used, and cleaning would ordinarily take place when the panels are cool to reduce the potential for thermal shock or damage to panel coatings.

Monitoring and enforcement of construction vehicle movements

- 2.2.1 The proposed monitoring regime, communication strategy and enforcement measures are described in detail in Section 9.0 of the **oCTMP [REP4-025]**. The Principal Contractor would be responsible for monitoring construction traffic movements to ensure vehicles are following the prescribed access route. Regular meetings would be held with sub-contractors to discuss any issues identified, and in the event of any breach of the CTMP corrective measures would be discussed and agreed with the Local Highway Authorities (LHAs).
- 2.2.2 Requirement 8 of the **draft DCO [REP3-009]** sets out how the full, final CTMP must be implemented, as approved. Details of the proposed enforcement and corrective measures are set out in Section 9.3 of the **oCTMP [REP4-025]**.
- 2.2.3 Construction staff would be required to adhere to the measures set out within the outline **oCTMP [REP4-025]** and the embedded outline Construction Workers Travel Plan (oCWTP).

Assessment of vibration effects on buildings from construction and HGV traffic

- 2.2.4 The Applicant has undertaken a noise and vibration assessment as set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 10 Noise and Vibration [APP-046]**. The assessment concludes that there would be no significant adverse effects from noise or vibration at any phase of the Scheme on any receptor, assuming the embedded mitigation measures are implemented. The mitigation measures themselves are set out in the **oCEMP [REP4-025]**, with specific reference to Table 5.6.
- 2.2.5 In addition to the assessment provided within ES Vol 1 Chapter 10, further clarification was sought in the EXA's first questions, specifically in relation to vibration on buildings from construction or other heavy goods vehicles on the local highway network. It was confirmed that the test data used to inform the assessment provides evidence that the movement of HGVs on local road networks does not produce any significant vibration levels and is only just perceptible at distances of 2m to 3m typically from the kerbside.
- 2.2.6 It also confirms that even with HGVs travelling over 'pot-holes', loose manhole covers or 'speed humps' the level of vibration, although sometimes perceivable, is still low and experience has shown that (according to BS6472) there is still likely to be a 'low probability of adverse comment'. Moreover, any impacts associated with surface defects can be considered to be temporary and transient and should be remedied by the relevant Highway Authority. The national sample used to inform the vibration assessment is reflective of typical 'B' road or site access roads which reflect the type of roads local to the Scheme.
- 2.2.7 To put this into perspective, the highest level of vibration measured under road defect conditions (at 5m or closer) was shown to be 1mm/sec, which is still well within acceptable standards for nuisance and cosmetic damage (around 10mm/sec PPV from a transient source may result in some 'cosmetic damage' for older plastered properties such as plaster cracks).

- 2.2.8 Based upon the outcome of the original assessment and the further clarification provided on the effects of vibration from large vehicle movements on residential properties, it can properly and clearly be concluded that the vibration from HGVs would not give rise to significant effects.

Responsibility for highway condition surveys and Scheme-related road repairs

- 2.2.9 The Applicant will be responsible for ensuring that any damage to the highway network attributable to construction of the Scheme is repaired, rather than the cost falling to the relevant highway authority.
- 2.2.10 Requirement 8 of the **draft DCO [REP3-009]** requires a final Construction Traffic Management Plan to be approved by the local planning authority, following consultation with the relevant highway authority. The CTMP must be substantially in accordance with the **oCTMP [REP4-025]**.
- 2.2.11 The **oCTMP [REP4-025]** sets out how traffic will be managed and monitored during the construction phase, it requires:
- pre-construction and post-construction condition surveys of the affected highways;
 - identification in the final CTMP of the roads and public rights of way to be surveyed;
 - agreement of the survey methodology and timing;
 - regular inspections of the local highway network during construction; and
 - correction of defects shown to have resulted from construction activities, to the satisfaction of the relevant highway authority
- 2.2.12 Accordingly, while the highway authority would approve and oversee the process, the Applicant or the undertaker carrying out the Scheme would bear the cost and responsibility for arranging and funding repairs to damage that is demonstrated to have been caused by Scheme traffic. The obligation is

limited to defects attributable to the Scheme and it would not make the Applicant responsible for any pre-existing damage or ordinary deterioration from unrelated activities.

Site selection, consideration of alternatives and design refinement

- 2.2.13 On site selection, **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3 Alternatives and Design Evolution [APP-039]**, **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [APP-058]** and the other supporting appendices to ES Vol 1 Chapter 3 explain that the Applicant has taken a methodical approach to site selection, based on technical, environmental and commercial viability factors consistent with national policy.
- 2.2.14 The Applicant's site-selection process commenced with the secured 400 MW grid connection at Eaton Socon Substation. As that connection is specific to Eaton Socon and is not transferable to another connection point, it established the geographical basis for the search for land capable of accommodating the Scheme.
- 2.2.15 The Applicant subsequently adopted a search area of approximately 15 km around the substation, which it considers reasonable and proportionate having regard to the scale of the Scheme, the cost and environmental implications of a longer cable connection and the approach taken on comparable solar NSIPs. The Applicant's justification for selecting a 15km area of search is set out in Section 3.3 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [APP-058]**.
- 2.2.16 There is no statutory or policy requirement to set an area of search based on a specific radius, it is a matter of judgement for the Applicant to decide in relation to the commercial feasibility of the development. The Applicant considers that the area of search is reasonable and proportionate to the scale and nature of this Scheme.

- 2.2.17 In accordance with NPS EN-3's preference for non-agricultural and previously developed land, the Applicant subsequently reviewed brownfield land registers and potential previously developed land within the defined search area. It was concluded that no brownfield or previously developed land parcels met the minimum land requirement for a 400 MW solar scheme, either alone or in practical / readily connectable clusters. Rooftop solar was also not considered a practicable alternative to a single, nationally significant generating station connected at Eaton Socon. It was therefore necessary to consider the availability of agricultural land to deliver the Scheme.
- 2.2.18 Having established that agricultural land was necessary, the Applicant then applied the next step in the mitigation hierarchy by targeting areas more likely to be of lower-quality agricultural land and areas where Best and Most Versatile land was less likely to occur. In doing so it was also necessary to balance agricultural land quality against the other environmental considerations relevant to a project of this scale. These included landscape and visual sensitivity, cultural heritage, ecology, hydrology and flood risk, topography, public rights of way, existing utilities, construction and operational access, proximity to the grid connection, opportunities for mitigation and the overall deliverability of the Scheme. GIS mapping was used to identify spatial constraints and suitable search zones, followed by more detailed assessment of individual land parcels.
- 2.2.19 Three broad search zones were identified, targeted primarily towards areas likely to be of lower agricultural quality once other spatial planning constraints were excluded. Figure 6 of the **Site Identification Report [APP-058]** clearly demonstrates the extent of provisional Grade 2 / 3 agricultural land within the 15km Area of Search.
- 2.2.20 The Applicant then balanced agricultural considerations against other NPS EN-3 site selection factors, including the grid connection, topography, proximity to dwellings, and accessibility, and recommended taking forward Search Zone B, primarily because it offered the most straightforward grid connection and therefore was likely to avoid and reduce environmental

impacts overall. This balancing exercise is set out in detail in Sections 6 and 7 of the **Site Identification Report [APP-058]**.

- 2.2.21 Following identification of a broad search zone, a second stage of site selection was undertaken, which is reported in **ES Appendix 3-2 Land Identification Report [APP-059]**. This comprised a review of the land within the Search Zone where landowners expressed an interest in the Scheme, in order to establish constraints to development and refine the overall landholding to be taken forward.
- 2.2.22 Following identification of the landholding to be taken forward, the scheme design has been the subject of further refinement to account for the outcome of the environmental assessment work and consultation exercises. This included (but is not limited to) the relocation of the BESS and on-site substation from Site C to Site D to reflect archaeological constraints.
- 2.2.23 The culmination of this work was the identification of the Site. The Applicant is satisfied that the Site has been selected through a transparent, proportionate and policy-compliant process and represents a suitable and deliverable location for the Scheme.
- 2.2.24 In policy terms, NPS EN-1 contains “*no general requirement to consider alternatives*”. Where alternatives are engaged, EN-1 makes clear that the scope and extent of assessment is context and policy specific, and that the existence of a less harmful alternative is not a standalone basis for refusal.

Consideration of all wind directions in the BESS fire plume assessment

- 2.2.25 The BESS fire plume assessment considers all wind directions not only the prevailing south-westerly wind direction.
- 2.2.26 Appendix A to the **oBSMP [APP-162]**, sets out the results of the BESS Fire Emissions Plume Modelling. The assessment uses five complete years of hourly meteorological data from Bedford meteorological station, covering

2020 to 2024 inclusive, in accordance with current Environment Agency guidance. That dataset incorporates the full range of wind speeds and wind directions recorded during those five years.

- 2.2.27 Paragraph 2.3.11 and Figures 3 to 7 of the BESS Fire Emissions Plume Modelling present the annual wind roses that were used in the assessment. Whilst it demonstrates that the prevailing wind is from the south-west the wind roses also show winds occurring from other directions and the assessment considers plume dispersion under winds from each of the directions represented in the five-year dataset.
- 2.2.28 The assessment concludes that no significant off-site impacts were identified at the assessed sensitive receptors and negligible effects on road visibility arising from the reasonable worst-case BESS unit fire.

Responsibility for implementing and managing the landscape and habitat proposals

- 2.2.29 The Applicant is committed to providing the required implementation and management of new landscaping and habitats as set out in the **oLEMP [REP4-101]**. The oLEMP secures the implementation, establishment and ongoing management of planting, ensuring that mitigation is delivered and maintained in the long term.
- 2.2.30 As set out at paragraph 4.1.6 of the **oLEMP [REP4-101]**, the Applicant currently intends that three land management roles will be permanent positions directly employed by the Scheme, with the option for a multi-year maintenance contract.

Assessment and management of on-site and off-site flood risk

- 2.2.31 The potential for increased flood risk and surface water runoff from the development are assessed within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1 Flood Risk**

Assessment [REP4-017], including assessment of future climate change scenarios.

2.2.32 To manage the risk of surface water flooding across the Site and to ensure that runoff rates are not increased, which could affect both on and off-site flooding the Applicant has prepared an **outline Surface Water Management Plan (oSWMP) [REP3-064]**. The assessment concludes that with implementation of the measures set out within the **oSWMP [REP3-064]** the Scheme would give rise to either neutral or minor beneficial effects to on-site and off site surface water flood risks.

2.2.33 Whilst parts of the Site are within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 a number of measures have been included in both the scheme design and various control documents (**oSWMP [REP3-064]**, **oCEMP [REP4-025]**, **oOEMP [REP4-097]** and **oDEMP [REP4-099]**) to prevent the risk of flooding at all stages of the Scheme. This includes:

- Sequential siting of infrastructure: all “critical infrastructure” (watercourse crossings aside) is proposed to be located outside Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- Stand-off from watercourses: a minimum 10 m buffer between the solar farm fence line and watercourses is embedded into the design.
- Panel clearance above surface water flood levels: the underside of panels is to be set at least 200 mm above the maximum surface water level for the 1% AEP plus climate change design event.
- SuDS to control runoff (greenfield control): SuDS are proposed to manage runoff and replicate natural drainage, implemented through the Surface Water Management Plan.
- Watercourse crossing design controls: crossings are to be sized at detailed design stage, with measures to maintain low-flow connectivity and avoid changes to bed profiles, to reduce flood risk and geomorphological change.

- Construction-phase temporary drainage and sediment controls: during phased construction, runoff would be managed using temporary SuDS and sediment treatment, with temporary drainage pathways to direct flows away from at-risk areas.
- Cable trench measures to avoid preferential flow and gullyng: clay plugs in cable trenches are proposed to prevent gullyng and preferential flow paths.
- Materials and machinery stockpiling during construction will not be carried out within the fluvial floodplain (Flood Zones 2 and 3), other than short-term needs when constructing crossings.
- Monitoring before and during construction to provide assurance on the absence of water quality impacts (supporting the wider flood risk/drainage strategy).
- The BESS/substation compound is proposed to drain from an impermeable surface to a detention lagoon, with an actuated sluice gate that can automatically isolate the lagoon during an emergency to prevent contaminated runoff leaving the site.
- The lagoon is designed to provide storm storage (1% AEP + 25% climate change allowance) and to have capacity to store the full 456,000 litres of firewater.

2.2.34 The Applicants overall conclusion on flood risk is that the embedded design measures outlined above, in combination with the drainage strategy secured through the **oSWMP [REP3-064]**, would ensure the Scheme would not be at risk of flooding and would not have the potential to increase flood risk elsewhere. No significant residual effects on hydrology and flood risk are predicted in connection with the Scheme.

Scheme security and resilience, including cybersecurity and wider hostile activity

- 2.2.35 The Applicant recognises the importance of ensuring that energy infrastructure is appropriately secured against unauthorised access, vandalism, theft and wider security risks, including the concerns raised regarding external influence and potential hostile activity. These concerns are not unique to this site, and the national security of UK energy infrastructure is a matter addressed by Government and NESO.
- 2.2.36 The Applicant has designed the Scheme to include appropriate security measures such as perimeter fencing, controlled access arrangements, CCTV and other appropriate monitoring and alarm systems. These are normal features of a commercial solar development and are not unusual or exceptional in nature. The impacts of such infrastructure have been assessed within the ES.
- 2.2.37 Cybersecurity will be incorporated into the final operational technology and communications design. The detailed arrangements cannot reasonably be fixed before the final equipment suppliers and control systems have been selected, because the protections must be tailored to the hardware, software, communications systems and interfaces ultimately installed.
- 2.2.38 In a wider sense the Applicant notes that the resilience and security of UK energy infrastructure is a national and sector-wide matter involving Government, regulators, network operators, security agencies, police forces and site operators. It would not be reasonable or proportionate to require an individual proposed solar development to address strategic national security risks beyond its control. The Applicant's responsibility is to ensure that the Scheme itself is designed, constructed and operated with appropriate security measures and in accordance with applicable legal, regulatory and industry requirements.

Assessment and management of construction traffic, local congestion and highway capacity

- 2.2.39 The construction of the Scheme will generate additional traffic and may result in some temporary increases in journey times on parts of the local highway network. However, the Transport Assessment, Environmental Statement, subsequent junction modelling and sensitivity testing do not identify any major or unacceptable levels of congestion in the local area. The effects would be temporary, during the construction phase, and controlled through the final Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).
- 2.2.40 The final CTMP will provide for monitoring of construction traffic, delivery bookings, route compliance and worker vehicle occupancy. Where monitoring identifies that traffic levels, vehicle occupancy or routing are not in accordance with the approved arrangements, corrective measures can be introduced. These may include changes to delivery slots, increased use of car sharing or minibuses, revised workforce travel arrangements and action against contractors or drivers who fail to comply.
- 2.2.41 The Applicant accepts that construction will result in a temporary increase in traffic and that some localised delays may occur. That is not equivalent to major traffic congestion. The assessment has considered the peak HGV month, the peak workforce month, highway peak periods, cumulative development and a lower worker-vehicle occupancy sensitivity scenario. Additional junction modelling undertaken after submission demonstrates that the A1/B645 junction would continue to operate without an unacceptable capacity or queuing impact.
- 2.2.42 The host highway authorities have accepted the assessment methodology as robust. Both BBC and CCC have confirmed that they have no significant concern regarding the construction traffic volumes, and National Highways has not objected to the junction-modelling methodology or identified a requirement for capacity mitigation. The Applicant therefore maintains that,

with the secured CTMP and travel-plan measures in place, the Scheme would not result in major or unacceptable traffic congestion in the local area.

Decommissioning obligations, funding and the absence of a bond requirement

2.2.43 The Applicant's position is that the **draft DCO [REP3-009]** and **oDEMP [REP4-099]** secure decommissioning and restoration in a clear and enforceable manner which is consistent with established practice on solar DCOs. The approach taken by the Applicant is also consistent with and well supported by policy, in particular NPS EN-3:

- Paragraph 2.10.146 of EN-3, requires an Applicant to put forward outline plans for decommissioning;
- Paragraph 2.10.147 of EN-3 provides that where the consent for a solar farm is to be time-limited, there should be a requirement in the DCO setting that time-limit from the date the solar farm starts to generate electricity; and
- Paragraph 2.10.149 of EN-3 provides that the DCO requirements should secure the actual decommissioning itself.

2.2.44 It is also well-established that there is no policy requirement for a decommissioning bond or any similar form of financial security for solar development as a matter of principle. This position was notably upheld by the Secretary of State when determining The Oaklands Farm Solar Park Order application in 2025, where the Secretary of State omitted the recommendation to include a decommissioning fund requirement. In doing so, the Secretary of State held that "*there is no policy requirement for a decommissioning fund to be imposed*", that "*the Secretary of State does not consider that imposing a decommissioning fund requirement is necessary*" and further that this approach "*is consistent with paragraph 4.1.16 of NPS EN-1 which stipulates that the Secretary of State should only impose requirements that are,*

amongst other things, necessary, and the requirement in paragraph 4.1.16 of NPS EN 1 that only relevant requirements should be imposed."

- 2.2.45 The Applicant's position, as set out Hearing Action Point 2 in the Written Summary of Applicant's Oral Submissions at **Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) and Action Points [REP1-058]** is that there is no precedent for the Secretary of State including decommissioning funding security in any solar DCO decisions and made Orders and further that the Secretary of State has consistently upheld that NPS EN-3 does not require a decommissioning bond. Further examples of this, beyond the Oaklands Farm Solar Park Order 2025, include: Mallard Pass Solar Farm Order, Sunnica Energy Farm Order, and the Cleve Hill Solar Park Order.
- 2.2.46 The Applicant also notes that the position of the Secretary of State on this issue has also been consistently upheld by Examining Authorities on solar DCOs where this point has been raised and considered during examination. This includes the Examining Authority for Stonestreet Green Solar, which expressly cited the Secretary of State's decision on the Oaklands Farm Solar Park Order 2025, noting that there is "*no policy requirement for a decommissioning fund to be imposed*" having regard to paragraphs 2.10.146 to 2.10.151 of NPS EN-3, observed (by reference to paragraph 2.10.68 of NPS EN 1) that "*solar panels can be decommissioned relatively easily and cheaply*", and applied the policy test in paragraph 4.1.16 of NPS EN-1 that requirements should only be imposed that are, inter alia, necessary and reasonable, before concluding that "*an additional Requirement is not necessary*". This was also recently reaffirmed by the Secretary of State in their decision to grant development consent for Springwell Solar DCO. The Secretary of State agreed with the position preceded in Oaklands Solar DCO and declined to include a requirement for a bond for a decommissioning fund within the DCO.
- 2.2.47 The recent approach to decision making on this matter confirms that sufficient reliance and weight should be given to the controls available within the planning regime (notably the existence of offences for breach) which are

sufficient protection to prevent abandonment of works. Ultimately the Applicant and Scheme would be subject to the requirements of the DCO irrespective of circumstance and this places a legal obligation on whoever is operating the Scheme to carry out decommissioning in accordance with the approved details.

BESS charging sources and operational dispatch arrangements

- 2.2.48 The BESS has no confirmed import connection, and it would only operate as part of the co-located solar generation. The intended operational model, dispatch logic and cycling regime is not a matter that needs to be considered as part of the planning merits of the approach taken, nor is it something that the Applicant could accurately quantify or define in any meaningful way at this stage.

Relevance of commercial revenue, profitability and cash-flow forecasts to the DCO application

- 2.2.49 Financial forecasts and the anticipated profitability of a scheme are not a planning consideration. The planning system determines whether a proposed use and development of land is acceptable in the public interest, rather than whether it represents a commercially attractive investment for a particular applicant.
- 2.2.50 An applicant's expected revenues, rate of return or profit margin are private commercial matters and may vary significantly with financing arrangements, market conditions and business decisions without changing the planning effects of the development.

Construction traffic and school-hour embargoes

- 2.2.51 The Applicant recognises the concerns raised regarding the potential for construction traffic to affect school buses, pupils, parents and other road users during school arrival and departure periods and the need for children to

travel to schools in the wider area. However, the Applicant does not consider that a fixed embargo on all construction traffic during the 'school run' hours is either necessary or proportionate.

- 2.2.52 The Scheme's construction traffic strategy has been specifically designed to minimise interaction with local settlements and school transport routes. HGVs would be directed to the Site from the A1 via the B645 and would then use the prescribed construction accesses and internal haul-road network. The internal haul roads would allow construction traffic to move between the different parts of the Scheme without travelling through Great Staughton, Little Staughton, Keysoe, Pertenhall or along unsuitable sections of the B645, B660 and B661 in the vicinity of Kimbolton.
- 2.2.53 The Applicant is proposing that construction deliveries would be coordinated to avoid the conventional highway peak periods of 08:00–09:00 and 17:00–18:00. Construction staff movements are expected principally to occur before and after those periods. Consequently, the highest levels of construction traffic would not coincide directly with the busiest school and commuter periods.
- 2.2.54 The Applicant's **Transport Assessment [REP4-019]** concludes that the effects on public transport during the construction phase would be neutral and that effects on driver delay, accidents and safety, pedestrian delay, severance and fear and intimidation would be negligible or minor. The robustness of the highway assessment and its conclusions have been accepted by both Cambridgeshire County Council and Bedford Borough Council in their capacity as local highway authorities.
- 2.2.55 The Applicant considers that a blanket school-hour embargo would be unnecessarily inflexible. School transport times vary between routes, schools and days, and a fixed prohibition could materially constrain construction deliveries even where there would be no interaction with a school route. The Applicant's preferred approach is therefore to manage the actual risk through

routing, delivery booking, timing, monitoring and corrective action, rather than imposing an indiscriminate restriction across the whole Scheme.

- 2.2.56 These controls are set out in the **oCTMP [REP4-085]**. The final CTMP will be approved under Requirement 8 of the **draft DCO [REP3-009]** and must be implemented as approved. It will include the final vehicle routing arrangements, delivery-management system, monitoring regime, communication procedures and enforcement measures. Should any conflict occur with school transport it would be identified and addressed. Accordingly, a specific school-hour embargo is not considered necessary.