



Frodsham Solar

Environmental Statement: Volume 1

Chapter 12: Tourism and Recreation

May 2025



PINS Ref: EN010153

Document Ref: EN010153/DR/6.1

**Planning Act 2008; and Infrastructure Planning (Applications:
Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations Regulation 5(2)(a)**

Revision P01

Document Control

Revision	Date	Prepared By	Reviewed / Approved By
P01	May 2025	G Hunt	C Melia A Russell

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Prepared For:
Frodsham Solar Ltd

Prepared By:



Well House Barns, Chester Road, Bretton, Chester, CH4 0DH
1st Floor, Barfield House, Alderley Road, Wilmslow, SK9 1PL
Maling Exchange, Studio 307, Hoults Yard, Walker Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE6 2HL

T: 0344 8700 007
enquiries@axis.co.uk
www.axis.co.uk

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12.0 TOURISM AND RECREATION

12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant effects on tourism and recreation as a result of the Proposed Development.

12.1.2 This chapter describes key aspects relating to existing tourism and recreation receptors within the study area, followed by an assessment of the magnitude and significance of the effects upon the baseline conditions resulting from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development as well as those effects resulting from cumulative interactions with other existing or planned projects. As set out in the Scoping Report it is considered that impacts during decommissioning would be comparable, most likely less impactful, than during the construction phase. As such a specific assessment relating to decommissioning has not been provided.

12.1.3 This chapter should be read in conjunction with

- i) **ES Volume 1 Chapter 6.0: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010153/DR/6.1]**
- ii) **ES Volume 2 Chapter 11.0: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010153/DR/6.1]**
- iii) **Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (oPROWMP) [EN010153/DR/7.9]**
- iv) **Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.5]**
- v) **Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.6]**

12.1.4 The following sections of this chapter include:

- i) a description of relevant legislation, planning policy and guidance which has informed the assessment;

- ii) a summary of consultation with stakeholders;
- iii) a description of the methodology for the assessment, including details of the Study Area and the approach to the assessment of likely significant effects;
- iv) a review of baseline conditions;
- v) details of the measures proposed to avoid or reduce likely significant environmental effects, including mitigation and design measures that form part of the Proposed Development;
- vi) an assessment of the likely significant effects relating to tourism and recreation during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development, taking into account the measures proposed to avoid or reduce environmental effects;
- vii) identification of any further mitigation measures or monitoring required in relation to likely significant effects;
- viii) a summary of the residual effects of the Proposed Development on tourism and recreational receptors; and
- ix) assessment of any cumulative effects with other proposed developments.

Summary of Competency

12.1.5 This chapter has been prepared by AMION Consulting, an economics consultancy specialising in tourism, leisure and recreation. The lead author of this chapter was Christine Melia, a director at AMION Consulting with 17 years' consultancy experience exclusively in leisure, tourism and recreation. Prior to becoming a consultant in 2007, Christine was the Commercial Director of Tourism South East (the tourist board for the South East of England) and before that was the Managing Director of Magna (a major visitor attraction in South Yorkshire), the Marketing Director of Our Dynamic Earth (a major visitor attraction in Edinburgh), the Marketing Director of Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth and the Marketing Manager of Mersey Ferries.

12.2 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

12.2.1 The relevant legislation, planning policy context and guidelines which underpin the consideration of likely significant effects are outlined in this section.

12.2.2 There is no legislation specific to the assessment of tourism and recreational effects. Furthermore, it is generally understood, and consultation with Visit Britain confirmed, that there is no industry standard accepted definition of 'significance' with regard to tourism. Since there is no accepted definition of 'significance' with regard to tourism or recreation, the sensitivity and magnitude of effect as well as the importance of receptors have been assessed using expert judgement and described with a standard semantic scale (Table 12-5, Table 12-6, and Table 12-8) which is in line with other projects that have approached tourism effects in a similar way.

National Planning Policy

12.2.3 Planning policy for NSIPs is set out in a series of National Policy Statements (NPSs) and these set out the Government's energy infrastructure policy for the delivery of major energy infrastructure, along with the need for new infrastructure and guidance for the determination of applications for DCOs. The NPSs provide specific guidance and criteria that applicants should cover when assessing the effects of their projects. The following National Policy Statements set out national planning policies in relation to nationally significant solar photovoltaic generation developments:

- i) Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (2024);
- ii) National Policy Statement (NPS) for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (2024): and
- iii) NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5) (2024).

12.2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), and the accompanying online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to

be applied. Paragraph 5 sets out how, while the NPPF does not contain specific policies for NSIPs, the NPPF may still be relevant when considering the determination of DCOs. Therefore, the NPPF and PPG are important and relevant material considerations for the application and the EIA for the Proposed Development has taken them into account. However, in the event of a conflict with the NPSs, the NPS will prevail.

12.2.5 Relevant sections of these policies in relation to recreation and tourism are summarised below.

Table 12-1 - Summary of National Planning Policy

Document	Policy / Paragraph Reference	Summary of Policy / Paragraph	Where addressed in the ES
NPS EN-1	Para. 5.11.8	The Environmental Statement (ES) should identify current and proposed land uses near the project, any effects of replacing an existing development or use of the site with the proposed project or preventing a development or use on a neighbouring site from /continuing.	Section 12.6 of ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] describes the baseline conditions on and close to the Site relevant to tourism and recreation. This is summarised in the following tables: Table 12-10 - Summary of baseline activity Table 12-11 – Summary of future baseline activity
	Para. 5.11.23	Although direct mitigation of an energy project's impact on the existing use of the site may be limited, applicants should seek to minimise effects on existing or planned uses near the site through good design principles, including the layout of the project and through soil protection during construction.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] Paragraph 12.7: Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures describes how the impacts on tourism and recreational receptors will be minimised.
	Para. 5.11.30	Public rights of way, National Trails, and other rights of access to land are key recreational facilities. Applicants should mitigate adverse effects on these and consider opportunities to improve or create new access routes. In	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures describes the improvements to existing rights of way and also the proposed additional permissive rights of way across the Site. This is further described in the

Document	Policy / Paragraph Reference	Summary of Policy / Paragraph	Where addressed in the ES
		considering revisions to an existing right of way, consideration should be given to the use, character, attractiveness, and convenience of the right of way.	Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (oPROWMP) [EN010153/DR/7.9] and Design Approach Document (DAD) [EN010153/DR/5.8].
	Para. 5.13.3	Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with local authorities early in the project development to understand local or regional issues and opportunities.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] Table 12-2 – Scoping Responses Table 12-4 – Other Engagement Activities describe the engagement that has been undertaken with relevant stakeholders including local authorities on this topic.
	Para. 5.13.4	The applicant's assessment should consider effects (positive and negative) on tourism and other users of the area.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.8 Assessment of Likely Impacts and Effects describes the likely positive and negative effects on tourism and other recreational users.
NPS EN-3	Para 2.10.40	Proposed developments may affect the provision of public rights of way networks.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.8 Assessment of Likely Impacts and Effects describes the likely effects on users of the public rights of way. The Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (oPROWMP) [EN010153/DR/7.9] and Design Approach Document (DAD) [EN010153/DR/5.8] sets out the measures that will be implemented to minimise any likely negative impacts.
	Para 2.10.41	Public rights of way may need to be temporarily closed or diverted to enable construction, however, applicants should keep, as far as is practicable and safe, all public rights of way that cross the proposed development site open during construction and protect	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the mitigation and enhancement measures that will be implemented to keep public rights of way open during construction as far as practicable. Further details on these measures can be found in the

Document	Policy / Paragraph Reference	Summary of Policy / Paragraph	Where addressed in the ES
		users where a public right of way borders or crosses the site.	Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (oPROWMP) [EN010153/DR/7.9]
	Para 2.10.42	Applicants are encouraged to design the layout and appearance of the site to ensure continued recreational use of public rights of way, where possible during construction, and in particular, during operation of the site.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the measures that will be taken to ensure continued recreational use of public rights of way. Further details can be found in the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.13] , the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.5] and the Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.6] . In addition, the Design Approach Document (DAD) [EN010153/DR/5.8] sets out the design principles. Principle 4 targets the retention, enhancement and encouragement of public access throughout the life of the proposals. Principle 7 aims to ensure that no elements of the proposals adversely affect the amenity or safety of local residents and users of the public rights of way.
	Para 2.10.43	Applicants are encouraged where possible to minimise the visual outlook from existing public rights of way, considering the impacts this may have on any other visual amenities in the surrounding landscape.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the measures that will be taken to minimise the visual impacts and is assessed further in ES Vol 1 Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010153/DR/6.1] . Furthermore, the visual impact of the Proposed Development

Document	Policy / Paragraph Reference	Summary of Policy / Paragraph	Where addressed in the ES
			on the significance of heritage assets is assessed in ES Vol 1 Chapter 11 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010153/DR/6.1] .
	Para 2.10.44	Applicants should consider and maximise opportunities to facilitate enhancements to the public rights of way and the inclusion, through site layout and design of access, of new opportunities for the public to access and cross proposed solar development sites (whether via the adoption of new public rights of way or the creation of permissive paths), taking into account, where appropriate, the views of landowners.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the measures to be taken to enhance the public rights of way. Further detail can be found in the Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (oPROWMP) [EN010153/DR/7.9] and Design Approach Document (DAD) [EN010153/DR/5.8] .
	Para 2.10.45	Applicants should set out detail on how public rights of way would be managed to ensure they are safe to use is set out in an outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan.	The Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (oPROWMP) [EN010153/DR/7.9] details how the public rights of way will be managed to ensure safe use.
NPS EN-5	There are no relevant policies to consider for EN-5.		
NPPF	Para. 88 (c)	Planning should enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.8 Assessment of Likely Impacts and Effects concludes that the Proposed Development would not result in any likely significant negative effects on tourism and recreational activities. In addition, enhancements to the public rights of way and recreational facilities are likely to have a positive effect on local tourism and recreation.
	Para 103	Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.8 Assessment of Likely Impacts and Effects concludes

Document	Policy / Paragraph Reference	Summary of Policy / Paragraph	Where addressed in the ES
		activity is important for the health and well-being of communities...	that the Proposed Development would not result in any likely significant negative effects on tourism and recreational activities. In addition, enhancements to the public rights of way and recreational facilities are likely to have a positive effect on local tourism and recreation.
	Para. 105	Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks like National Trails.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the measures to be taken to enhance the public rights of way. Further detail can be found in the Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (oPROWMP) [EN010153/DR/7.9] , Design Approach Document (DAD) [EN010153/DR/5.8] and the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.13]
	Para 109 (e)	Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. This should involve identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the measures to be taken to enhance walking and cycling opportunities. Further detail can be found in the Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (oPROWMP) [EN010153/DR/7.9] and the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.13]

Local Planning Policy

12.2.6 Local planning policies concerning tourism and recreation relevant to the Proposed Development as well as how and where these have been

addressed in the Environmental Statement have been outlined in the table below.

Table 12-2 - Summary of Local Planning Policy

Document	Policy / Paragraph Reference	Summary of Policy / Paragraph	Where addressed in the ES
CWaCC Local Plan (Part One)	SOC6 (Open space, sport and recreation)	The council will seek to protect, manage and enhance existing open spaces, sport and recreation facilities. Proposals that improve the quality, quantity and accessibility open spaces will be supported.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the measures that will be taken to protect, manage and enhance access to existing recreational facilities. Further details can be found in the Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.6] and the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.13]
CWaCC Local Plan (Part Two)	DM3	Development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design that respects the character and protects the visual amenity of the local area.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the measures that will be taken to minimise the visual impacts and is assessed further in ES Vol 1 Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010153/DR/6.1] . Furthermore, the visual impact of the Proposed Development on heritage assets is assessed in ES Vol 1 Chapter 11 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010153/DR/6.1] .
	DM37	Development incorporating or adjacent to the following must	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1]

Document	Policy / Paragraph Reference	Summary of Policy / Paragraph	Where addressed in the ES
		<p>protect and, wherever possible, enhance and extend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Rights of Way • footpaths/bridleways • cycle routes • canals and waterways <p>Re-routeing should be avoided, but may be supported if the alternative route is acceptable and / or the re-routeing is for a temporary period. Where appropriate, creation of new routeways will be supported. Development proposals that protect and enhance the public access and recreation value of strategic recreational routeways, as identified on the policies map, will be supported.</p>	<p>12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the measures that will protect, enhance and extend the public rights of way, footpaths, bridleways, cycle routes, canals and waterways. Further detail can be found in the Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (oPROWMP) [EN010153/DR/7.9], the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.5], the Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.6] and the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.13]. There would be no permanent diversion of any public rights of way.</p>
Ince Neighbourhood Plan	NAT2	Respect the open, expansive and visually sensitive landscape of the estuary	<p>ES Vol 1 Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010153/DR/6.1] assesses the impact on landscape and visual amenity. The Design Approach Document (DAD) [EN010153/DR/5.8] sets out how the landscape design has been developed to respect the areas of the Site where open, expansive and visually sensitive landscape features are experienced.</p>
	FBC1	To improve access to our countryside through enhancement of footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways which	<p>ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1]</p>

Document	Policy / Paragraph Reference	Summary of Policy / Paragraph	Where addressed in the ES
		support the health and wellbeing of our community	12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the enhancements that will be made to footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways. Further details can be found in the Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (oPROWMP) [EN010153/DR/7.9] and the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.13]. and Design Approach Document (DAD) [EN010153/DR/5.8]
Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan	EDVE2	This policy intends to promote Frodsham as a visitor and green tourist destination. Proposals that enhance and improve existing tourist attractions and facilities will be supported. With particular reference to the marshes as an ornithological asset that could bring increased visitor numbers. Developments will be supported where they will not result in adverse impacts on the ecological value and function of the marshes.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the measures to be taken to enhance the recreational appeal of the marshes. Further detail can be found in the Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.6] and the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.13]. ES Vol 1 Chapter 7 Terrestrial Ecology [EN010153/DR/6.1] and ES Vol 1 Chapter 8 Ornithology [EN010153/DR/6.1] assess the impacts on the ecological value and function of the marshes and how these will be protected and enhanced. New viewing

Document	Policy / Paragraph Reference	Summary of Policy / Paragraph	Where addressed in the ES
			points of the Non Breeding Bird Area will be provided to enhance the opportunity for viewing wildlife.
	GSRL2	This policy intends to protect and enhance Frodsham's green and open spaces. Developments will be supported where they retain, preserve, maintain, protect and provide additional or new green or open space for communal and social use.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the measures to be taken to enhance the recreational appeal of the marshes. Further detail can be found in the Design Approach Document (DAD) [EN010153/DR/5.8] and the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.13].
	GSRL5	This policy intends to encourage developments that maximise opportunities for enhancing recreation, sport, leisure, health and wellbeing.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the measures to be taken to enhance the recreational appeal of the marshes. Further detail can be found in the Design Approach Document (DAD) [EN010153/DR/5.8] and the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.13].
	CA1	This policy intends to ensure that development provides infrastructure, footpaths and cycle paths fit for the future.	ES Vol 1 Chapter 12 Tourism [EN010153/DR/6.1] 12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures summarises the measures to be taken to enhance walking and cycling

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12.3 Assumptions and Limitations

- 12.3.1 To understand the existing baseline conditions, an initial desk-based mapping exercise was undertaken.
- 12.3.2 Separately, an assessment of footfall using mobile phone data was commissioned from Huq Industries. This data source uses real-time, anonymised location data from users' smart phones and can help to understand the volume of footfall in a destination. Unfortunately, there is insufficient data to provide meaningful analysis of people currently using the Site of the Proposed Development for leisure, tourism and recreation (the volume of people is simply too low).
- 12.3.3 In light of the limitations of the mobile phone data, detailed discussions were held with Officers from Cheshire West and Chester Council's (CWaCC) economic development team responsible for tourism and the visitor economy; members of Frodsham Town Council; and the Director of Marketing Cheshire to understand relevant tourism and recreation receptors.
- 12.3.4 In addition, informal discussions were held with a range of organisations, companies and individuals in relation to tourism and recreation. These discussions were focused on understanding current usage and potential future usage in light of the Proposed Development.
- 12.3.5 Where direct discussion has not been possible, assumptions have been made based on the best available information and from informal on-site observations.
- 12.3.6 The baseline information (including assumptions) is set out in Table 12-10.

12.4 Consultation and Engagement

- 12.4.1 A Scoping Report (**ES Vol - 2 Appendix 1-1: Frodsham Solar Scoping Report [EN010153/DR/6.2]**) was submitted to PINS on the 26 May 2023. The report sets out the findings of the scoping exercise and details the technical guidance, standards, best practice and criteria to be applied in the assessment to identify and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on tourism and recreation.
- 12.4.2 A Scoping Opinion was received on 10 July 2023 (**ES Vol 2 - Appendix 1-2: Planning Inspectorate Scoping Opinion [EN010153/DR/6.2]**). The points relating to tourism and recreation are summarised in Table 12-2 below.
- 12.4.3 Formal consultation responses to the PEIR that are relevant to tourism and recreation are summarised in Table 12-3.
- 12.4.4 As part of the assessment methodology, the Applicant has undertaken specific engagement with a range of organisations, companies and individuals in relation to tourism and recreation. The key points established from this engagement is summarised in Table 12-4 below.

Table 12-2 – Scoping Responses

Consultee	Applicant's matter proposed to be scoped out	Inspectorate's comments	Response
The Planning Inspectorate: scoping opinion 10 th July 2023	Economic effects on volume and value of local tourism during all phases of the Proposed Development.	The Inspectorate notes the geographical location and separation from the nearest settlements and commitment not to route construction traffic through these settlements. However, tourism is not limited to these settlements. As such, the Inspectorate would expect the assessment to consider wider tourism impacts such as users of the Weaver Navigation canal, other watercourses and Public Rights of Way in and around the site. As such, without such information, the Inspectorate is not content to scope this matter out.	The comments from the Planning Inspectorate have informed the scope of this assessment in consultation with CWaCC.
	Effects on recreational use of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and National Cycle Network (NCN) during all phases of the Proposed Development.	The Inspectorate understands the view of the Applicant and in principle agrees that this matter is unlikely to result in significant effects however in the absence of information, the Inspectorate is not able to agree to this matter being scoped out at this stage. The Inspectorate agrees however that providing no permanent changes are made to routes and buffers are secured through the dDCO, this matter can be scoped out.	The comments from the Planning Inspectorate have informed the scope of this assessment in consultation with CWaCC. The effects on recreational use of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and National Cycle Network (NCN) have been assessed in this chapter. Buffers to PRoW are secured via Outline Landscape and Ecology

			Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.13].
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Table 12-3 – PEIR Consultation Response

Consultee / Respondent	Comment	Response
Natural England	Natural England welcomes the proposals to enhance the public rights of way network within the development site to help people to better access the countryside for quiet enjoyment and create opportunities to connect with nature. The proposed screening and viewing areas together with interpretation boards will allow people to visit the site without detrimental effects on wildlife and Natural England are supportive of these measures.	Noted.
Canal and River Trust	As owner and manager, the Canal and River Trust welcomed that users of the Weaver Navigation have been included in this assessment as it is a recognised corridor for recreational pursuits, contributing to local economy, tourism and health/well-being as an opportunity for outdoor activities and sustainable active travel. The Canal and River Trust also noted that users of the Weaver Navigation will be able to use the water unhindered during construction and operation and that no mitigation is required. Respondent added that the proposed development as presented does not appear to impact navigational safety or the operation of the Weaver Navigation. The Canal and River Trust stated that there is a commercial mooring agreement with The Danny Steamship at Sutton Swing Bridge and the need to understand any potential impact.	Noted. The Proposed Development will have no impact on the commercial mooring of the Danny Steamship given that the mooring is located approximately 1.8 kilometres from the extremity of the Site. Road access to the mooring is from the A56 to the north east of Frodsham.
Cheshire West and Chester Council – Senior Officer for Economic Development	The respondent recognises that the main tourism offer of the town relates to the town centre, its retail offer and its heritage. However, the walks and trails in and around the town with views of the site are important and considered part of the visitor offer.	The landscape and visual impacts from elevated walking routes are considered in ES Vol 1 – Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010153/DR/6.1] , ES Vol 1 – Chapter 11 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010153/DR/6.1] and considered within this chapter.

Table 12-4 – Other Engagement Activities

Consultee	Comment	Response
Owner and director of Hover Force Limited	Hover Force Limited owns land to the south-west of the Site of the Proposed Development from which it operates a leisure business involving outdoor activities such as buggy racing, land hovercraft, archery, axe-throwing, shooting, team building activities and other games. The business attracts groups such as stag parties, corporate away days and birthday parties and has in the region of 10,000 visitors per annum. The owner of Hover Force Limited stated that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any impact of the trade of Hover Force during the operational phase. However, the construction phase could cause disruption to the trade of Hover Force Limited if road access is prevented or diverted to inappropriate routes. There is also a concern that construction traffic may damage the road surfaces on the approach to Hover Force.	The Proposed Development is unlikely to have any negative impact on the trade of Hover Force during the operational phase. Concerns around construction traffic are dealt with in mitigation measures in Section 12.7.
Commodore of Weaver Sailing and Ski Club	The Weaver Sailing and Ski Club has a club house and facilities on the River Weaver in Frodsham and its members use the water for dinghy sailing and canoeing along two and a half miles of water and water skiing on one mile of water. The ski section membership is currently full to new ski boat owning members. The Commodore stated that local tourism has no impact on the Members' Club which is comprised of people living locally and he does not believe that the Proposed Development will have any negative impact on the Club who fully support Solar energy, having installed 52 panels on the roof and being 100% self-sufficient, with a backup battery & EV charging.	Noted that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any negative impact during the operational phase. There would however be a temporary impact whereby daytime access to the River Weaver would be prohibited for approximately two weeks during construction. This would be to facilitate the stringing of cables across the River Weaver to the SPEN Substation. Mitigation measures are set out in Section 12.7. This would not affect users of the Weaver Navigation.

Consultee	Comment	Response
Owner of Frodsham Water Sports	Frodsham Water Sports is a small business offering access to the River Weaver for jet skis and motor boats as well as hire of jet skis. The business uses the slipways located at Frodsham Watersports Centre (Bridge Lane). From the slipways, users of jet skis must turn right heading away from the Sutton Causeway Bridge and towards the Sutton Sluice Gates. For clarity, the customers of Frodsham Water Sports do not use the section of the River Weaver that passes the Site of the Proposed Development and the owner confirmed that these activities would therefore be unaffected. However, there is a separate business called Frodsham Kayaking that also operates from the slipway at the Frodsham Watersports Centre. This business offers access to the river for kayaks, paddleboards and pedal boats as well as the hire of such equipment. These non-motorised activities do use the section of the River Weaver that passes the Site of the Proposed Development, At present, Frodsham Kayaking only operates at weekends.	The activities of Frodsham Watersports would be unaffected. However, the activities of Frodsham Kayaking would experience a temporary impact during construction whereby daytime access to the River Weaver would be prohibited for approximately two weeks (at present, Frodsham Kayaking only operates at weekends).
Councillor Lucy Sumner Cheshire West and Chester Council and also Frodsham Town Council. Councillor Michael Garvey, Cheshire West and Chester Council.	The local councillors indicated that tourism is very important to the town of Frodsham, but the marshes are not part of the tourism offer. Tourism is much more focused on the town itself and the Sandstone trail. The main concern is the visual impact from Frodsham Hill. The councillors reported that people were initially concerned about the impact of the windfarms but now they are used to it. The solar panels however may have a greater visual impact. In terms of a local amenity, cyclists, walkers and birdwatchers are the key amenity users. With regard to recreational uses of the marshes, mitigation measures should be considered to improve the area for cyclists, walkers, horse riders and river users.	Visual impact from Frodsham Hill is dealt with in ES Vol 1 Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010153/DR/6.1] . The mitigation measures in Section 12.7 include interventions to enhance the experience for users of the public rights of way including landscaping, screening and surface improvements.
Senior Localities Manager, Cheshire West and Chester Council	The Senior Localities Manager is responsible for promoting local towns as retail centres and visitor destinations including events. Frodsham's tourism/visitor offer is very much centred around the town centre, the market and its retail core. It was acknowledged that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any impact on tourism or visitors to Frodsham.	Noted that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any negative impact on tourism to Frodsham Town Centre.

Consultee	Comment	Response
Runcorn Rowing Club	Runcorn Rowing Club (RRC) owns the boat house and access land and has rights to use the Weaver Navigation canal. The boat house facilities include boat storage, gym, a social area and meeting room. The facilities are used for water and land-based activities by the RRC plus other organisations including the Canoe Club, Liverpool University, the Cadets and Sea Cadets, All About Rowing (a scheme to give access to deprived pupils) and Merchant Taylors School. In total, there are estimated to be 25,000 uses of the water per annum via the Runcorn Rowing Club and its partners. Consultation with the Runcorn Rowing Club suggests that the Proposed Development will have no direct impact on the club's activities unless access off the Rocksavage roundabout is disrupted during the construction phase.	Noted that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any negative impact during the operational phase nor the construction phase. There should be no disruption at the Rocksavage roundabout - see ES Transport Assessment [EN010153/DR/7.3] .
Managing Director, Marketing Cheshire	Marketing Cheshire is responsible for building an effective tourism and place marketing strategy for the county of Cheshire, promoting the sub-region nationally and internationally to business and leisure visitors, and investors. Consultation with the managing director suggested that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any negative impact on tourism to Cheshire.	Noted that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any negative impact on tourism to Cheshire.
Public Rights of Way Officer, Cheshire West and Chester Council	Cheshire West and Chester Council has three officers responsible for over 1,200 kilometres of PRoW. They aim to inspect 5% each year. The PRoW connecting the marshes to the adjacent communities are very overgrown which probably reduces the number of users, but nevertheless, the PRoW are reasonably well used. The Council does not have any mechanism for capturing data about user numbers but the Proposed Development is unlikely to reduce the number of users of the PRoW. Positive mitigation (to increase usage of the PRoW) could encourage other off-road users such as horse riders, carriage riders and cyclists. On a separate note, the Public Rights of Way Officer mentioned the changed visual impact from Frodsham Hill, the Sandstone Trail and from other viewpoints including the motorway might be a concern for some and should be considered.	Noted that the Proposed Development is unlikely to reduce the number of users of the PRoW. Positive mitigation measures to improve the PRoW as well as appropriate landscaping and screening are referenced at Section 12.7. The visual impact to users of the PRoW at elevated viewpoints such as the Sandstone Trail has been considered in this assessment in terms of recreational use. In addition, it is also dealt with in ES Vol 1

Consultee	Comment	Response
		Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010153/DR/6.1].
Cycle North Cheshire	Cycle North Cheshire (previously the Weaver and Sandstone Cycle Forum) was established in 2013 by local bike users and Cheshire West and Chester Councillors. Its mission is to encourage cycling in the North Cheshire area which includes Frodsham. To date the collaboration has resulted in four 'Discover Frodsham' routes around the town with links to routes on the Komoot App; two of which cross the marshes. Part of the National Cycle Network (NCN5) crosses through the marshes. The Proposed Development is unlikely to have any negative impacts on the number of cyclists or other users of the PRoW. However, positive mitigation measures such as improved and better maintained surfacing (which is currently considered a problem), would encourage more usage of the marshes as a local recreation amenity and could encourage more active travel use.	Noted that the Proposed Development is unlikely to reduce the number of users of the NCN or PRoW. Positive mitigation measures to improve the PRoW as well as appropriate landscaping and screening are included at Section 12.7.
WeBS Survey for Mersey Estuary for British Trust for Ornithology	Out of hundreds of estuaries in the UK, the Mersey Estuary is consistently ranked 10th to 12 th based on wintering bird numbers with an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 birds. Whilst the estuary is a designated habitat, the marshes do not have a designation but are recognised as being functionally linked and do attract bird watchers. However, the area is not currently accessible in many places for bird watching. In the past, there were more bird watchers visiting the marshes. The Proposed Development is unlikely to have a negative impact on the numbers of people of birdwatching unless the birds are displaced. However, the current number of birdwatchers is quite small due to relative inaccessibility. Improving footpaths and creating viewing areas could improve the experience for bird watchers and attract more bird watchers.	Noted that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have a negative impact on the numbers of people of birdwatching. The impact on birds is dealt with in ES Vol 1 Chapter 8 Ornithology [EN010153/DR/6.1] . Positive mitigation measures to improve bird viewing opportunities are included at Section 12.7.
Frodsham Walking Festival and walks organiser	The marshes were included in three of the 44 walks that took place during the Frodsham Festival of Walks in 2024 (which attracted 1,300 visitors including 126 to the marshes). The marshes are also used for walks by other groups such as the Probus Club and more generally for informal/recreational walks and exercising dogs. People	Noted that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have a negative impact on the

Consultee	Comment	Response
	do not generally use the marshes for 'commutable walks' between population centres as this would take longer than walking along roads. The organised walks on the marshes take in views of the wind turbines and often include links to bird viewing. There is no designated parking to provide access to the trails. The marshes could be more widely used as an accessible walking environment, but the quality of the paths and the access prevents more regular use. Some of the byways are in a very poor state of repair. The Proposed Development is unlikely to have a negative impact on the number of people using the marshes for recreational walking. There are some concerns about the visual impacts of the array for walkers and recreational users but good planting which attracts wildlife could provide mitigation. In addition, viewing points and information boards could provide interest to walkers and improvements to footpaths and byways would attract more users.	numbers of people using the PRoW. Positive mitigation measures to improve the PRoW as well as appropriate landscaping and screening are included at Section 12.7.

12.4.5 In addition to the organisations listed above, the authors of this chapter have tried to contact other relevant groups but have not been successful in making contact to obtain comments. This includes Weaver Navigation Society, Runcorn Model Flying Club, Frodsham and District Wildfowlers, Sandstone Ridge Trust and The Danny Steamship.

12.5 Assessment Methodology

Study area and scope of assessment

- 12.5.1 The Scoping Report (**ES Vol 2 - Appendix 1-1: Frodsham Solar Scoping Report [EN010153/DR/6.2]**) requested that the economic effects on the volume and value of tourism were scoped out with the following broad justification, *“The industrial characteristics of the site area and characteristics of the visitor offer nearby and evidence of potential impacts on tourism from infrastructure development imply that the site would have a negligible impact on the volume and value of tourism.”*
- 12.5.2 In response and as part of the Scoping Opinion issued on 10th July 2023 (**ES Volume 2 - Appendix 1-2: Planning Inspectorate Scoping Opinion [EN010153/DR/6.2]**), the Planning Inspectorate noted the geographical location and separation from the nearest settlements and the commitment to not route construction traffic through these settlements. However, the Scoping Opinion noted that tourism is not limited to these settlements and as such, the Inspectorate would expect the assessment to consider wider tourism impacts such as users of the Weaver Navigation canal, other watercourses and PRow in and around the Site and therefore did not scope out tourism.
- 12.5.3 In addition, the Scoping Report (**ES Vol 2 - Appendix 1-1: Frodsham Solar Scoping Report [EN010153/DR/6.2]**) also requested that the effects on the recreational use of the public rights of way and the National Cycle Network be scoped out on the basis that there are unlikely to be any significant effects. However, in response and as part of the Scoping Opinion issued on 10th July 2023 (**ES Volume 2 - Appendix 1-2: Planning Inspectorate Scoping Opinion [EN010153/DR/6.2]**), the Planning Inspectorate was not able to agree to this matter being scoped out without further information being provided.
- 12.5.4 The Applicant engaged with CWaCC to agree the scope of the tourism and recreational assessment. This involved discussions with the Economic

Growth team to understand the nature of the visitor economy in and around Frodsham. From these discussions and based on the Applicant's study visit, it was clear that tourism to Frodsham is focused on the town centre's retail and leisure assets including the market and is driven, largely, by day visitors. Other tourism assets include the Castle Park Museum and the Sandstone Ridge Trail (a popular walking route beginning in Frodsham). The Site of the Proposed Development is set to the north of Frodsham town centre and is separated by the M56 with only limited access points from Frodsham. The Site of the Proposed Development is not currently seen as a tourism asset in its own right and although the National Cycle Network passes through the Site, existing leisure users of the Site are mainly local people for recreational purposes such as cycling, walking, exercising dogs, horse riding, and bird-watching. In addition, there are three established organisations operating from within the Site of the Proposed Development or within close proximity (Hoverforce, Runcorn Model Flying Club and the Frodsham and District Wildfowlers).

- 12.5.5 Tourism receptors in Frodsham town centre are therefore considered in the assessment of impact and significance of any potential effects, but none are considered to have a direct relationship to the development of the Site. The assessment also considers PRow and other recreational routes that pass through Frodsham.
- 12.5.6 As a result of the engagement with CWaCC, and in line with the Scoping Opinion above, the Study Area for this assessment therefore, includes:
- i) the **Site of the Proposed Development** and the tourism and recreational organisations within it (or within very close proximity to it (200m));
 - ii) the surrounding **Public Rights of Way (PRow)** including Restricted Byways, Footpaths and National Cycle Network (see **ES Vol 3 - Figure 1-5: Public Rights of Way [EN010153/DR/6.3]**);

- iii) the **nearby watercourses** (River Weaver; Weaver Navigation and Manchester Ship Canal) and the tourism and recreational organisations that use them;
- iv) other **off-site PRow and established recreational routes** that pass through Frodsham; and
- v) **Frodsham town centre** and its visitor economy businesses.

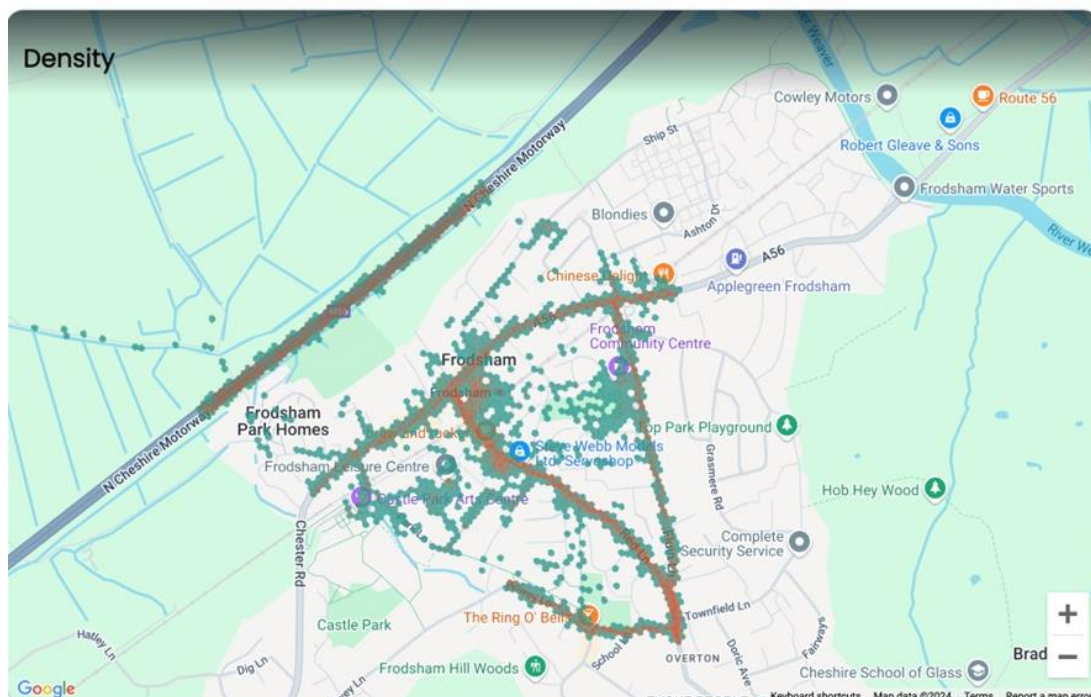
Establishing baseline and receptors

- 12.5.7 This assessment considers tourism and recreational assets (receptors) located within the Study Area and considers impacts during both the construction and operational phases. As set out in the Scoping Report it is considered that impacts during decommissioning would be comparable, most likely less impactful, than during the construction phase. As such a specific assessment relating to decommissioning has not been provided.
- 12.5.8 As part of the baseline section in 12.6 and to establish relevant receptors, a desk-based mapping exercise has been undertaken to understand all of the tourism, leisure and recreation businesses, facilities and assets operating within the Study Area. This initial baseline was further informed by discussions with Officers from CWaCC's economic development team responsible for tourism and the visitor economy; members of Frodsham Town Council; and the Director of Marketing Cheshire to establish any sensitive tourism receptors that they were aware of.
- 12.5.9 Separately, an assessment of footfall using mobile phone data was commissioned from Huq Industries. This data source uses real-time, anonymised location data from users' smart phones and can help to understand the volume of footfall in a destination. Unfortunately, there is insufficient data to provide meaningful analysis of people currently using the Site of the Proposed Development for leisure, tourism and recreation (the volume of people is too low). However, by comparison, the data for Frodsham

Town Centre indicates that Frodsham has an average of 16,311¹ people per day using the town centre whereas current levels of activity on the marshes are too low to register.

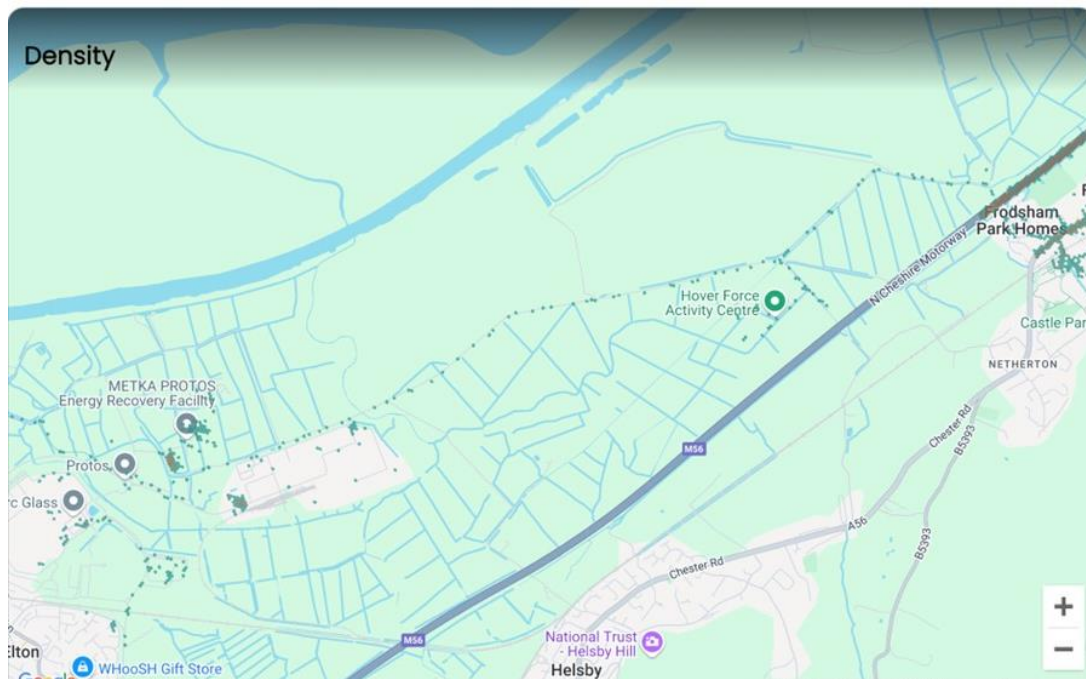
12.5.10 Image 1 and Image 2 below show the difference in footfall density between the Town Centre and the marshes.

Image 1: Footfall density - Frodsham Town Centre



¹ For context, Manchester City Centre has footfall of around 100,000 per day.

Image 2: Footfall density - Frodsham Marshes



12.5.11 This desk-based mapping, mobile phone data and initial consultation was supplemented with further telephone calls to operators, owners, users and organisers wherever possible (summarised in Table 12-4). These informal discussions with users and operators of leisure, tourism and recreational assets were focused on understanding current usage and potential impacts of the Proposed Development on future usage of these assets.

Process for assessing impact and significance

12.5.12 The approach to assessing the significance of an impact has involved identifying, qualifying and, where possible, quantifying the sensitivity of all relevant tourism and recreation receptors and the magnitude of change the Proposed Development would cause to these receptors. Using this information, an initial level of effect of each potential impact has been determined. Before assessing significance of any potential effects, a third dimension has been added which is the *importance* of the tourism or recreation receptor.

12.5.13 Since there is no accepted definition of ‘significance’ with regard to tourism or recreation, the sensitivity and magnitude of impact as well as the importance of receptors have been assessed using expert judgement and described with a standard semantic scale (detailed below) in line with other projects that have approached tourism effects in a similar way. The judgements of sensitivity, magnitude and importance are guided by the conceptual understanding of the baseline conditions which itself has been informed by desktop research, mobile phone data, consultation with those responsible for tourism and the visitor economy, a study visit and further telephone conversations with relevant operators, users and businesses in the Study Area.

12.5.14 The sensitivity of a receptor (Table 12-5) depends upon its:

- i) tolerance: the extent to which the receptor is adversely affected by an effect;
- ii) adaptability: the ability of the receptor to avoid adverse impacts that would otherwise arise from an effect; and
- iii) recoverability: a measure of a receptor’s ability to return to a state at, or close to, that which existed before the effect caused a change.

Table 12-5 - Sensitivity criteria

Sensitivity	Description
High	Tourism and recreation receptors that have very limited capacity to tolerate the impact. Unable to adapt to new effect. Tourism and recreation receptors are unable to recover, resulting in permanent or long-term change (>10 years).
Medium	Tourism and recreation receptors that have limited capacity to tolerate the impact. Limited ability to adapt to new effect. Tourism and recreation receptors are able to recover over the medium to long term (5-10 years).
Low	Tourism and recreation receptors that have some capacity to tolerate the impact.

	<p>Able to adapt to majority of new effect.</p> <p>Tourism and recreation receptors are able to recover to an acceptable status over the short term (1 - 5 years).</p>
Negligible	<p>Tourism and recreation receptors that have <u>capacity to tolerate</u> the impact.</p> <p>Able to adapt to new effect.</p> <p>Tourism and recreation receptors are able to recover to an acceptable status almost immediately (<1 year).</p>

12.5.15 The magnitude of the impact is assessed according to:

- i) the change in visitor or user numbers;
- ii) the extent of the area subject to a predicted impact; and
- iii) the duration and frequency the impact is expected to last.

12.5.16 Table 12-6 summarises the definitions of magnitude that have been used for the tourism and recreation receptors.

Table 12-6 - Magnitude criteria

Magnitude	Description
High	<p>Large change in numbers of visitors or users and the associated wellbeing impact (i.e. >20%).</p> <p>Large spatial extent (i.e. impacting on the wider Cheshire West and Chester area or Halton area).</p> <p>Permanent or long-term duration and/or very frequent/constant occurrence.</p>
Medium	<p>Medium change in numbers of visitors or users and the associated wellbeing impact (i.e. 5-20%).</p> <p>Medium spatial extent (i.e. impacting on Frodsham and/or Helsby).</p> <p>Medium-term duration and/or frequent occurrence.</p>
Low	<p>Small change in numbers of visitors or users and the associated wellbeing impact (i.e. 1 - 5%).</p> <p>Small spatial extent (i.e. impacting the Study Area).</p> <p>Short-term duration and/or infrequent occurrence.</p>

Negligible	<p>Very small change or no change numbers of visitors or users and the associated wellbeing impact (i.e. <1%)</p> <p>Small spatial extent (i.e. impacting the Site of Proposed Development).</p> <p>Very short-term duration and/or very infrequent occurrence.</p>
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12.5.17 The initial level of effect is determined through a combination of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of effect which is considered using the matrix presented in Table 12-7.

Table 12-7 – Initial level of effect

Initial level of effect				
	Sensitivity			
Magnitude	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	High	High	Medium	Low
Medium	High	Medium	Low	Low
Low	Medium	Low	Low	Negligible
Negligible	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible

12.5.18 However, before considering significance of the effects, a third dimension has been added to reflect the *importance* of the tourism or recreational receptor and these are described in Table 12-8 below. Since there is no accepted definition of importance for a tourism or recreational receptor, these criteria have been defined through professional judgement.

Table 12-8 – Importance criteria

Importance	Description
High	<p>Business, recreational activity or recreational asset of national or international importance in the context of tourism and/or recreation.</p> <p>In the case of visitor attractions, likely to have more than 500,000 visitors per annum.</p>

Importance	Description
	<p>In the case of towns or cities, likely to have more than 1,000,000 domestic tourists staying overnight².</p> <p>In the case of recreational assets, likely to have a 'national' designation e.g. National Cycle Network.</p> <p>Likely to be unique or have minimal potential for substitution. May also be of wider strategic importance outside of tourism or recreation³.</p>
Medium	<p>Business or recreational activity of regional importance for tourism and/or recreation.</p> <p>In the case of visitor attractions, likely to have between 100,000 and 500,000 visitors per annum.</p> <p>In the case of towns or cities, likely to have between 200,000 and 1,000,000 domestic tourists staying overnight.</p> <p>In the case of recreational assets, likely to be regionally recognised routes or trails e.g. Sandstone Trail.</p>
Low	<p>Business or recreational activity of local importance for tourism and/or recreation.</p> <p>In the case of visitor attractions, likely to have between 10,000 and 100,000 visitors per annum.</p> <p>In the case of towns or cities, unlikely to have more than 200,000 domestic tourists staying overnight but may be locally important day visitor destinations e.g. Frodsham.</p> <p>In the case of recreational assets, likely to be locally recognised routes or trails e.g. The Cheshire Circuit.</p>
Negligible	<p>Business or recreational activity not deemed of importance for tourism and/or recreation.</p> <p>In the case of visitor attractions, likely to have fewer than 25,000 visitors per annum.</p> <p>In the case of towns or cities, unlikely to have any domestic tourists staying overnight and not a day visitor destination.</p>

² For context, around 1,000,000 domestic tourists stay in Chester, 1,700,000 stay in Liverpool and 2,700,000 stay in Manchester.

³ For example, St Paul's Cathedral in London operates as a nationally important visitor attraction as well as a nationally important place of worship.

Importance	Description
	In the case of recreational assets, likely to be local public rights of way used for local exercise by local people.

12.5.19 The overall level of effect is determined through a combination of the initial level of effect (Table 12-7) and importance of the receptor which is considered using the matrix presented in Table 12-9 below.

Table 12-9 – Overall level of effect

Overall level of effect				
	Initial level of effect			
Importance	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor
Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Minor
Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible
Negligible	Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible

12.5.20 For this assessment, a major or moderate overall level of effect is deemed most likely to be a significant effect in EIA terms on the basis that this indicates large or medium scale changes in the receptor conditions or changes to a receptor of high or medium importance. Effects are unlikely to be significant where features of low importance are subject to small scale or short-term effects.

The assessment of likely significant effects takes into account mitigation measures embedded within the design and other committed mitigation such as measures described in the **Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.5]**, the **Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010153/DR/7.6]**, the **Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.7]**, the **Outline Landscape and Ecology Management**

Plan [EN010153/DR/7.13] and the **Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.9]**, to reduce environmental effects. Post-consent, these outline plans will be developed into full plans which must be in substantial accordance with the outline plans and will require approval by CWaCC. The Proposed Development must be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans. This is secured via a Requirements in Schedule 2 of the **draft DCO [EN010153/DR/3.1]**.

12.6 Baseline Conditions

- 12.6.1 According to STEAM⁴ data collected on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Council, there were approximately 28.7 million tourist visits to the local authority area in 2022. Of the 28.7 million visitors, 27.1 million were day visitors (94%) and 1.6 million were staying visitors (6%). In 2022, the volume of visitors to Cheshire West and Chester remained much lower than volume of visitors in 2019 (pre-pandemic) when the total figure was 37.4 million. Of the 37.4 million visitors in 2019, 35.8 million were day visitors and 1.6 million were staying visitors. By 2022, the number of staying visitors had therefore returned to pre-pandemic levels but there were 8.7 million fewer day visitors.
- 12.6.2 Unfortunately, tourism data does not exist at the Frodsham town/ward level, but it is clear from observing the town centre that it is a thriving local retail centre with a well-used weekly market. Data commissioned from Huq Industries which uses anonymised location-based mobile phone data suggests that Frodsham town centre has an average weekly footfall of 16,311. There is one hotel in Frodsham which is the three-star 58-bed Best Western Forest Hill Hotel. The Castle Park Arts Centre is an art gallery in the town that has total footfall of around 80,000 per annum. Frodsham is also the starting point for the Sandstone Trail – a 34-mile walk along Cheshire's Sandstone Ridge which is estimated to attract 250,000 walkers per annum.
- 12.6.3 Much of the surrounding area to the east and west of the Site, to the north of the M56, is the location of large-scale industrial operations / facilities. This includes several large industrial sites such as Ince Park Biomass Energy Plant, Stanlow Oil Refinery, Protos (an allocated industrial site) and Encirc Glass. The former CF Fertilisers UK plant is also a prominent industrial structure in the landscape. To the west of the Site is the INEOS Inovyn Runcorn plant. The M56 is located on the southern boundary of the Site. For

⁴ STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) – is a widely used Tourism Economic Impact model which estimates the annual volume, value and economic impact of tourism to individual destinations. It is owned and operated by Global Tourism Solutions. Local authorities commission GTS to run the STEAM model in their localities.

this reason, the area north of the M56 is considered unlikely to attract visitors seeking an outdoor experience where beauty and tranquillity are a priority.

12.6.4 As set out in the Assessment Methodology in Section 12.5, this assessment considers tourism and recreational assets (receptors) located within the Site of the Proposed Development or within very close proximity (200m) to the Site. It also includes the PRoW that pass through the Site as well as the adjacent watercourses. Furthermore, the assessment also considers the potential impacts on Frodsham town centre's visitor economy as well as other PRoW or established recreational routes that pass through Frodsham.

12.6.5 The summary of baseline activity is presented in Table 12-10 below.

Table 12-10 - Summary of baseline activity

Receptor	Description	Summary of baseline conditions
Businesses or organisations located on the Site or within very close proximity		
Hover Force Limited	Hover Force Limited owns land to the south-west of the Proposed Development from which it operates a leisure business involving outdoor activities such as buggy racing, land hover crafts, archery, axe-throwing, shooting, team building activities and other games. The business attracts groups such as stag parties, corporate away days and birthday parties.	Approximately 10,000 leisure uses per annum.
Runcorn Model Flying Association	Runcorn Model Flying Association is located adjacent to Hover Force Limited to the south-west of the Proposed Development. It is a private members' club and is affiliated to the British Model Flying Association (BMFA). BMFA has a total of 30,000 members across 750 clubs and it is therefore assumed that Runcorn Model Flying Association has around 40 members and that each member attends once a week.	Approximately 2,000 leisure uses per annum.
Frodsham Wildfowlers	The Frodsham Wildfowlers is a private members' club which owns land within the Site and is a recreational wildfowl shooting club. The land is managed to increase the wildfowl population. The club is affiliated to the British Association for Shooting and Conservation	Approximately 3,250 leisure uses per annum.

	(BASC) which has a total of 150,000 members across 1,200 clubs. It is therefore assumed that Frodsham Wildfowlers has 125 members and that each member attends once a week during the shooting season (September to February).	
Recreational uses of the PRoW and NCN		
Cyclists using the National Cycle Way	Route NCN 5 of the Sustrans National Cycle Way runs through Frodsham Marshes. Data derived from Strava (a sports GPS system) has recorded 73 different cyclists using the route between 1 st January 2024 and 14 th August 2024. If we assume that activity during this period of 227 days is typical, then this would suggest that there are 117 unique cyclists per annum using the route and using Strava. In the 90 days prior to 15 th August 2024, each unique cyclist had ridden the segment an average of 1.87 times. If we assume a constant profile throughout the year, this would mean that the 117 unique cyclists (using Strava) would make 220 rides along the route in a year. Strava claims that 17% of cyclists in the UK use the app. Grossing up would therefore suggest that 688 cyclists use the route annually and make an average of 1,287 rides in a full year.	Approximately 1,300 leisure uses per annum.
Recreational walking using Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	There are a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) running through the Site and within close proximity to the Site include Restricted Byways and footpaths. These PRoW are shown at ES Vol 3 Figure 1-5 [EN010153/DR/6.3] . Discussion with the PRoW Officer at CWaCC indicated that the number of people using these PRoW within the Site is minimal at present. This correlates with our own on-site informal observations. Furthermore, the mobile phone data referenced earlier in the report did not register enough footfall over a 12-month period to be statistically robust suggesting very low numbers. However, the area is clearly a well-used and valuable local recreational walking asset which also came through in the consultations and our informal on-site observations.	Unknown but potentially in the order of 15,000 leisure uses per annum (approximately 40 per day).
Birdwatchers	There is no organised activity in relation to birdwatching on the marshes and no facilities (e.g. toilets, car park, information boards, hides etc). Most bird watchers visit alone or in pairs.	Unknown but potentially in the order of 1,200

	Access to key areas is poor which limits the experience. Consultation with local enthusiasts suggest that between two and five bird watchers use the Site daily, with more in winter than summer. Our own on-site informal observations have identified very small numbers of birdwatchers.	leisure uses per annum.
Businesses or organisations using the Weaver Navigation and other watercourses		
Weaver Sailing and Ski Club (WSC)	WSC is a members club located on Weaver Island on the lower reaches of the River Weaver adjacent to the Site. The club caters for dinghy sailing and canoeing on two-and-a-half miles of water and water skiing on one mile of water. Facilities include a modern club house with social area, kitchen, changing facilities and sauna. There are between 80 and 100 members who use the facilities, on average, once a week. The club is not accessed via the Site of the Proposed Development but is considered relevant since its members use the River Weaver which is adjacent to the Site.	Approximately 4,500 leisure uses per annum.
Frodsham Kayaking	Small business offering hire of kayaks, pedal boats and stand-up paddle boards at weekends only. The business uses the slipways located at Frodsham Watersports Centre (Bridge Lane). From the slipway, users of the kayaks, paddle boards and pedal boats must turn left under the Sutton Causeway Bridge to use the River Weaver (adjacent to the Site of the Proposed Development).	Approximately 500 leisure uses per annum.
Frodsham Water Sports	Small business offering access to the River Weaver for jet skis as well as hire of jet skis. The business uses the slipways located at Frodsham Watersports Centre (Bridge Lane). From the slipways, users of jet skis must turn right heading away from the Sutton Causeway Bridge and towards the Sutton Sluice Gates. For clarity, the users of jet skis do not use the section of the River Weaver that passes the Site of the Proposed Development.	Approximately 1,500 leisure uses per annum.
Runcorn Rowing Club	The club owns the boathouse and access land and has permission to use the water on the Weaver Navigation (the club does not use the section of River Weaver adjacent to the Site of the Proposed Development). The boathouse and the river are also used by other	Approximately 25,000 leisure uses per annum.

	stakeholders including: Liverpool University, Cadets & Sea Cadets, Merchant Taylors school and All About Rowing (charity providing access for deprived pupils). Across all users, there is an estimated 25,000 leisure uses per annum. The club is not accessed via the Site of the Proposed Development.	
The Daniel Adamson Steamship (The Danny)	The Danny is a restored steam ship that provides leisure cruises on the River Weaver (upstream of the Site), Weaver Navigation, River Mersey and the Manchester Ship Canal between the months of May and October. For clarity, the Danny does not use the section of the River Weaver that is adjacent to the Site. Instead, it uses the Weaver Navigation between Sutton Weaver and the Manchester Ship Canal. In 2024, it is running 36 cruises with 18 using the Weaver Navigation and/or the Manchester Ship Canal. The ship has a capacity of 80 and is usually sold out. On this basis, it is estimated that the Danny carries 1,440 passengers on the Weaver Navigation and/or the Manchester Ship Canal each year. The boat is not accessed via the Site of the Proposed Development..	Approximately 1,400 leisure uses per annum.
Mersey Ferries	Mersey Ferries operates a small number of leisure cruises from Liverpool to Warrington on the Manchester Ship Canal which passes near to the Site. In 2025, there are 8 scheduled leisure cruises. With a capacity of 350 passengers and most cruises selling out, it is assumed that there are 2,800 leisure passengers per annum.	Approximately 2,800 leisure uses per annum.
Recreational usage of off-site PRow and established recreational routes passing through Frodsham		
Sandstone Trail	The Sandstone Trail was one of the earliest middle-distance ways in Britain, and the first true 'Cheshire Way'. Conceived by Cheshire County Council's Countryside and Recreation Department in the early 1970s, the Trail was officially opened in 1974. The Sandstone Trail was extended in the 1990s and now stretches for 55 kilometres/34 miles, between Frodsham and Whitchurch. It is estimated to	Estimated 250,000 walkers per annum.

	attract 250,000 walkers per annum. A notable feature of the Sandstone Trail is the view of the Mersey Estuary.	
Delamere Way	A long-distance footpath of 21 miles in Cheshire which begins in Frodsham and follows the Sandstone Trail south to Delamere Forest Park, before turning east and north and exploring the Cheshire countryside, before finishing in Walton near Warrington.	Unknown number of users.
Eddisbury Way	27km recreational route between Frodsham and Higher Burwardsley created by the Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society.	Unknown number of users.
North Cheshire Way	The North Cheshire Way is Cheshire's longest path. It provides 70 miles of waymarked walking between Wirral and the Peak District passing through Frodsham.	Unknown number of users.
Frodsham town centre's visitor economy		
Town centre businesses including retail, food and drink, and the market	Thriving market town which attracts people from across Cheshire and the Liverpool City Region. In recent years, despite some retail consolidation, the town's food and beverage offer has been particularly strengthened. A weekly market runs on Thursdays whilst a monthly artisan market runs on the last Saturday of every month.	Average footfall of 16,000 per day.

Future Baseline

- 12.6.6 This section provides a brief description of how the baseline would evolve if the Proposed Development were not to be implemented. The only changes to the baseline are the expectation from the owner of Hover Force that visitor numbers would increase from 10,000 to 15,000 over the next few years through business development and investment and the expectation from the Weaver Sailing and Ski Club of 1,000 additional uses per annum as a result of their investment in facilities. Otherwise, it is not expected that there would be any change to the receptors since many of the clubs are operating at

capacity and there are no external factors (such as population growth) that would cause a material increase in usage.

Table 12-11 – Summary of future baseline activity

Receptor	Existing baseline conditions	Future baseline conditions without proposed development
Businesses or organisations located within the Site or within very close proximity		
Hover Force Limited	Approximately 10,000 leisure uses annum.	Approximately 15,000 leisure uses per annum by 2030 (based on the owner's growth forecasts).
Runcorn Model Flying Association	Approximately 2,000 leisure uses per annum.	Approximately 2,000 leisure uses per annum.
Frodsham Wildfowlers	Approximately 3,250 leisure uses per annum.	Approximately 3,250 leisure uses per annum.
Recreational uses of the PRoW and NCN		
Cyclists using the National Cycle Way	Approximately 1,300 leisure uses per annum.	Approximately 1,300 leisure uses per annum.
Recreational walking using Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	Unknown but potentially in the order of 15,000 leisure uses per annum.	Unknown but potentially in the order of 15,000 leisure uses per annum.
Birdwatchers	Unknown but potentially in the order of 1,200 leisure uses per annum	Unknown but potentially in the order of 1,200 leisure uses per annum
Businesses or organisations using the Weaver Navigation and other watercourses		
Weaver Sailing and Ski Club	Approximately 4,500 leisure uses per annum.	Approximately 5,500 leisure uses per annum based on the proposed redevelopment of the club house to provide additional access.
Frodsham Kayaking	Approximately 500 leisure uses per annum	Approximately 500 leisure uses per annum
Frodsham Water Sports	Approximately 1,500 leisure uses per annum	Approximately 1,500 leisure uses per annum

Runcorn Rowing Club	Approximately 25,000 leisure uses per annum.	Approximately 25,000 leisure uses per annum.
The Daniel Adamson Steamship (The Danny)	Approximately 1,400 leisure uses per annum.	Approximately 1,400 leisure uses per annum.
Mersey Ferries	Approximately 2,800 leisure uses per annum.	Approximately 2,800 leisure uses per annum.
Recreational usage of off-site PRow and established recreational routes passing through Frodsham		
Sandstone Trail	Estimated 250,000 walkers per annum.	Estimated 250,000 walkers per annum.
Eddisbury Way	Unknown number of users	Unknown number of users
Delamere Way	Unknown number of users	Unknown number of users
North Cheshire Way	Unknown number of users	Unknown number of users
Frodsham town centre's visitor economy		
Town centre businesses including retail, food and drink and the market	Average footfall of 16,000 per day.	Average footfall of 16,000 per day.

12.7 Incorporated Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

- 12.7.1 As set out previously, the assessment of likely significant effects takes into account incorporated mitigation measures such as those embedded within the design or implemented via committed management plans to reduce environmental effects.

Mitigation during construction phase

- 12.7.2 All HGV construction traffic would be routed along routes that avoid Frodsham town centre to prevent noise, congestion and general disturbance. The routing strategy is set out in the **Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) [EN010153/DR/7.4]**. A Community Liaison Group (CLG) will be formed prior to construction and will continue through until the end of the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development as set out in the **Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.5]** and **Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.6]**. The CLG would liaise with Frodsham Town Council and local businesses to keep them informed of progress on the construction and allow them to raise any queries or concerns with the construction team.
- 12.7.3 To protect road access to businesses and recreational clubs located within very close proximity to the Site (specifically Hover Force and Runcorn Model Flying Club), construction or operational traffic (save in emergencies) would be specifically excluded from using Brook Furlong via measures set out in the **Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) [EN010153/DR/7.4]**. As such there would be limited potential for access to these activities to be affected by the construction of the Proposed Development.
- 12.7.4 Drawing on the experience of the construction works for the Frodsham Wind Farm, the Applicant is committed to minimising the impacts on users of the restricted byways and footpaths throughout the construction period. A range

of measures will be employed to avoid or reduce impacts on PRoW (included in the **Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.9]**) which will include:

- i) Avoiding regular use of the PRoW by construction vehicles by providing segregated construction access routes, where necessary this may include fencing of PRoW.
- ii) Where this is not possible, implementing measures to ensure routes remain open and safe for use during the majority of the construction period such as:
 - a) Use of traffic marshals (banks people) or traffic light systems if construction vehicles are required to cross a PRoW;
 - b) Provision of short-term temporary diversions; and
 - c) Fencing short sections of routes if safe segregation of users from vehicles is deemed necessary due to proximity.

12.7.5 Measures adopted during the construction of the Frodsham Wind Farm, which were subject to agreement with CWaCC via discharge of planning conditions, included procedures for holding construction traffic when cyclists were using the section of the NCN which was also used as a construction access into the wind farm site. Construction traffic was only allowed to continue travelling along the NCN route once cyclists had passed. The same construction access route would be utilised for the Proposed Development, and as such a similar approach to mitigating effects on this section of the NCN is proposed (set out in the **Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.9]**), noting that the traffic numbers and length of construction period would be lower for the Proposed Development than for the wind farm (30-month construction period, with an average of 8 HGV deliveries per day across the 30-month Construction Phase, with a peak of 28 deliveries per day during the period of access track construction works). Outside construction hours, the NCN will be open for free use by all PRoW

- users. It is evident that there is the ability to effectively maintain the use of the NCN during the construction period using the previously agreed approach.
- 12.7.6 Further detail on the measures used to manage users of the PRow across the Site during the construction period are provided in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Proposed Development [EN010153/DR/6.1]** and in the **Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.9]**. This document sets out the principles by which PRow will be managed during the construction and operational phases with a detailed Public Rights of Way Management Plan produced following grant of the DCO and prior to the start of construction. The production and implementation of the Public Rights of Way Management Plan would be a Requirement of the DCO. In respect of decommissioning, an Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) **[EN010153/DR/7.7]** has been prepared, which includes consideration of how the PRow network within the Order limits will be managed during the Decommissioning Phase. Post-consent, this outline plan will be developed into a detailed plan which must be in substantial accordance with the outline, and the Proposed Development must be decommissioned in accordance with that detailed plan as secured via a Requirement in the draft DCO.
- 12.7.7 Sufficient height clearance across the River Weaver would be maintained to allow boats to continue to operate with particular reference to overhead cabling between the Site and Frodsham substation. The cabling would be no lower than the nearest existing headroom limitation.
- 12.7.8 The works to 'string' the high voltage cables into the SPEN substation will be undertaken over a two-week period. Whilst the 'stringing' operations are being undertaken it would be necessary to prevent use of this section of the river by craft, swimmers, fishermen and other recreational and navigation purposes. It is possible that the closure would be over a much shorter period of time.
- 12.7.9 It is understood that there is very little commercial navigation on this section of the River Weaver and use is predominantly limited to recreational purposes (via Frodsham Kayaking and the Weaver Sailing and Ski Club). As such, the

river would remain open over weekend periods and only closed during the construction working hours, Monday to Friday during the 'stringing' operations over a two-week period (as a maximum).

- 12.7.10 As set out in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.5]** is a commitment to provide at least three months' advance notice to the recreational clubs on the River Weaver of any closure of the River Weaver. This would include Weaver Sailing and Ski Club (WSC) and Frodsham Kayaking (operating from Frodsham Watersports Centre). Notices shall also be published in local newspapers and online community resources e.g. Frodsham Town Council newsletters of scheduled closures.

Mitigation during the operational phase

- 12.7.11 Mitigation measures include the application of a 10m PRoW buffer and landscape treatment to preserve users' enjoyment of the routes through the Site.
- 12.7.12 Furthermore, the Applicant is proposing a range of enhancements to the PRoW and access within the Site as part of the Proposed Development that could potentially have a positive impact on the user experience and increase the number of leisure uses.
- 12.7.13 Measures include improved surfacing, landscape screening, educational displays, improved bird viewing opportunities, and better maintenance of existing footpaths. The Proposed Development also includes the provision of 4.7 km of additional permissive paths and a potential new car park on Moorditch Lane which would help improve access to the Site and increase user levels. These measures are illustrated on **ES Vol 3 - Figure 2-3 (a-e): Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010153/DR/6.3]**. The permissive paths have been located to provide enhanced views of the Mersey Estuary and River Weaver, and also to offer linking paths between the existing PRoW to provide a network of routes of differing lengths within the Site.

12.7.14 It is not expected that the 132kV connection to Frodsham Substation will require replacement during the 40-year operational period, as the components are designed to last for this duration. However, should any scheduled maintenance be required, the **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.6]** commits to provide at least three months' advance notice to the recreational clubs on the River Weaver of any closure of the River Weaver. This would include Weaver Sailing and Ski Club (WSC) and Frodsham Kayaking (operating from Frodsham Watersports Centre).

12.7.15 The **Design Approach Document (DAD) [EN010153/DR/5.8]** provides a more detailed explanation of the design strategies employed to minimise the impact on users of the PRow network, as well as the provision of additional permissive paths throughout the Site, enhancing access for a variety of user groups.

12.8 Assessment of Likely Impacts and Effects

12.8.1 The likely significant effects associated with the following tourism and recreation receptors have been assessed and are presented in this section in accordance with the methodology presented in Section 12.5 above:

- i) tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups located within the Site or within very close proximity to the Site (including Frodsham Wildfowlers, Hover Force and Runcorn Model Flying Association);
- ii) the recreational usage of public rights of way (PRow) within the Site including Restricted Byways, Footpaths and the National Cycle Network (primarily focused on walking, cycling and birdwatching);
- iii) tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups using the Weaver Navigation and other watercourses (including Weaver Sailing and Ski Club, Frodsham Kayaking, Frodsham Water Sports, Runcorn Rowing Club, the Daniel Adamson Steamship and Mersey Ferries);

- iv) recreational usage of other off-site PRow and established recreational routes that pass through Frodsham (including the Sandstone Trail, the Eddisbury Way, the Delamere Way and the North Cheshire Way); and
- v) Frodsham town centre's visitor economy.

12.8.2 The assessment of likely significant effects makes a distinction between construction and operational phases of the project.

Construction Phase

12.8.3 As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Proposed Development [EN010153/DR/6.1]** it is anticipated that construction works would start in 2028 and require an estimated 30 months to complete. It is therefore expected the Proposed Development would be operational in 2030.

The construction works would result in temporary noise, visual, traffic, access and health and safety impacts which could cause disturbance to the tourism and recreation receptors noted above. Construction Impact 1 – disturbance to tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups operating within the Site or within close proximity

12.8.4 There are three businesses and organisations identified in the baseline that operate within the Site or within very close proximity and provide leisure and recreational activities. Hover Force and Runcorn Model Flying Association are located off-site and as such are likely to incur very little disturbance as a result of construction noise or construction visual impact. Their activities (outdoor adventure/flying model aircraft) do not require tranquil environments to operate successfully or to continue to attract visitors and members. They already operate successfully in an industrialised environment. Access to both Hover Force and Runcorn Model Flying Association is from Frodsham via Brook Furlong which would not be impacted by construction traffic to and from the Proposed Development. On the basis that both organisations would be in a position to fully tolerate the impact, the organisations' sensitivity to this impact is considered to be negligible and on the basis that there would be no

impact on the number of visitors or users, the magnitude of change is also considered to be negligible. This would give an initial level of effect of negligible. In terms of importance, both organisations would be ranked low (of local importance) and therefore the overall level of effect would also be **negligible**.

- 12.8.5 The activities of the Frodsham & District Wildfowlers would be curtailed by both the construction and operation of the Proposed Solar Array. However, it is noted that the club is a landowner that has agreed to the use of the land for the Proposed Development. It is understood that the club will continue to function and maintain a recreational resource and re-provide its activities elsewhere in the local area. On the basis that the club will have some capacity to experience the impact and recover to an acceptable status within 1-5 years, the club's sensitivity to this impact is considered to be low and on the basis that there would only be a small and temporary reduction in leisure uses, the magnitude of change is also considered to be low. This would give an initial level of effect of low. In terms of tourism/recreational importance, the group would be ranked low (of local importance) and therefore the overall level of effect would also be **minor**.

- 12.8.6 The overall level of effect for Construction Impact 1 (disturbance to leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups operating within the Site or within close proximity) is considered to be **negligible to minor**. As such, this effect is **not considered to be significant**.

Construction Impact 2 – disturbance to the recreational usage of public rights of way (PRoW) including Restricted Byways, Footpaths and the National Cycle Network

- 12.8.7 Drawing on the experience of the construction works for the Frodsham Wind Farm, the Applicant is committed to minimising the impacts on users of the restricted byways and footpaths throughout the construction period. Measures to ensure this are outlined in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Proposed Development [EN010153/DR/6.1]** and in the **Outline Public Rights of Way**

Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.9]. A range of measures will be employed to avoid or reduce impacts on PRow as set out above. The key aim is to ensure that PRow remain open, accessible and safe at all times throughout the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development.

- 12.8.8 With regard to the National Cycle Network (NCN 5), some construction traffic will be required to use a short (1.3km) section of the route for access. However, appropriate measures such as temporary gates, signage and banksmen will be implemented to control the flow of traffic. As such, cycling along the NCN will remain possible throughout construction.
- 12.8.9 In addition, there will also be temporary but minor disruption to a number of the footpaths and restricted byways. These are summarised in Table 12-12 below.
- 12.8.10 Two restricted byways (RB98 and RB103) would be closed for the duration of the construction works. However, pedestrians would be re-directed to alternative byways (RB97 and RB101) which are within very close proximity, start and end at the same points as RB98 and RB103 and offer slightly shorter routes. Recreational walking would therefore be unimpeded.
- 12.8.11 Small sections (190 metres) of two further restricted byways (RB108 and RB102) would be used as construction access roads but would remain open to PRow users through the use of banksmen. Recreational walking and access to birdwatching locations would therefore be unimpeded.
- 12.8.12 A footpath and a restricted byway (FP81 and RB99) would each have a temporary crossing for construction traffic. This would be controlled by a two-gate system ensuring that pedestrians can still access the footpath and restricted byway. Recreational walking would therefore be unimpeded.
- 12.8.13 One footpath (FP93) would be closed temporarily for a period of up to two weeks to allow the 'stringing' of the high voltage cables for the overhead line into the Substation. This closure would be temporary for a maximum of two

weeks and only during working hours. Throughout the rest of the construction period, recreational walking would be unimpeded.

12.8.14 Furthermore, a 1.3km section of Frodsham RB40 (which forms part of the National Cycle Network) would be used as a construction access road. Pedestrians would be prohibited from accessing this section of RB40 during construction working hours. Banksman would be used to ensure safe passage of cyclists. Outside construction working hours the route would be re-opened for use to all users. However, this particular section of byway is unlike other footpaths and byways within the Site such as FP93, FP81 or RB99 in that the latter are within much closer proximity to residential neighbourhoods of Frodsham and can be accessed easily via the Saltworks Farm Playing Fields, Weaver Lane or Brook Furlong. As such, FP93, FP81 and RB99 are used as recreational and circular walking routes by local residents. RB40 (at the Western edge of the Site) is not used as part of the circular network of footpaths and byways at the Eastern edge of the Site. Therefore, general recreational walking within the Site from local residential communities is likely to continue largely unimpeded during construction.

Table 12-12 – ProW Management Measures

PRoW Reference	Impact on PRoW	Management Measures Proposed
Frodsham FP93	Frodsham FP93 runs along the easterly border of the Site but lies outside the construction perimeter fence line. As such no construction traffic would use this route. However, the proposed 132kV overhead line to Frodsham SPEN Substation would cross the PRoW. As such there would be a need to protect users during the stringing of the 132kV lines.	The PRoW would be closed for a period of up to 2 weeks (during the construction working hours) during the stringing of the high voltage cables for the 132kV overhead line construction into the SPEN substation.
Frodsham FP81	A single construction access crossing point would be required across FP81.	Gated access would be provided, preventing construction vehicles / plant from crossing the PRoW. In order for construction vehicles / plant to cross the PRoW, the gates would need to be

		reversed, preventing temporary access along the PRow whilst vehicles make the crossing. After crossing the PRow, the gates would be returned and locked into their original position.
Frodsham RB99	A single crossing point would be required across RB99.	A similar 2-gate system to FP81 would be implemented.
Frodsham RB108	A 190m section of Frodsham RB108 would be used as a construction access road to the western half of the SADA (to the west of Brook Furlong). As such it would be necessary to implement measures to avoid conflicts between users of the PRow and construction traffic.	During construction working hours, construction traffic would be managed using banksmen along this section of RB108. Banksmen would halt construction traffic when users need to access this section of PRow. Outside construction working hours the route would be re-opened for use.
Frodsham RB102	A 190m section of Frodsham RB102 would be used as a construction access road. As such it would be necessary to implement measures to avoid conflicts between users of the PRow and construction traffic.	During construction working hours, construction traffic would be managed using banksmen along this section of RB102. Banksmen would halt construction traffic when users need to access this section of PRow. Outside construction working hours the route would be re-opened for use.
Frodsham RB98	Temporary closure for the duration of the construction works	Users would be directed along the PRow Frodsham RB97 and Frodsham RB101. This diversion would provide a shorter route than the section closed.
Frodsham RB103	Temporary closure for the duration of the construction works	Users would be directed along the PRow Frodsham RB97 and Frodsham RB101. This diversion would provide a shorter route than the section closed.
RB40	A 1.3km section of Frodsham RB40 (which forms part of the National Cycle Network) would be used as a construction access road. As such it would	Pedestrians and horses would be prohibited from accessing this section of RB40 during construction working hours. Banksmen would be used to

	be necessary to implement measures to avoid conflicts between users of the PRow and construction traffic.	ensure safe passage of cyclists. Cyclists wanting to access this section of RB40 would be held until construction traffic has been halted, they would then be allowed to proceed. Outside construction working hours the route would be re-opened for use to all users.
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12.8.15 As a result of the measures proposed for the construction period, it is likely that any reduction in the number of people using the PRow and NCN for recreational purposes would be minimal and temporary. On the basis that individuals will have some capacity to experience the impact and recover to an acceptable status within 1-5 years, the receptor's sensitivity to this impact is considered to be low and on the basis that there would only be a very small and temporary reduction in leisure uses, the magnitude is considered to be negligible. The initial level of effect is therefore **negligible**.

12.8.16 The initial level of effect is therefore negligible but the importance is considered to range from negligible for the majority of the PRow across the Site to high for the National Cycle Network that passes through the Site.

12.8.17 Combining negligible to high importance with negligible level sensitivity and magnitude would give an overall level of effect of **negligible to minor**.

12.8.18 The overall level of effect for Construction Impact 2 (disturbance to recreational usage of PRow and the NCN) is considered to be **negligible to minor which is not considered to be significant**.

Construction Impact 3 – disturbance to the tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups using the nearby watercourses

12.8.19 There are six businesses and organisations identified in the baseline who use the Weaver Navigation or other watercourses for leisure or recreation. Only two of these organisations use the section of River Weaver adjacent to the Site of the Proposed Development – Frodsham Kayaking and the Weaver Sailing and Ski Club. However, neither of these two organisations access their

moorings or slipways from within the Site of the Proposed Development. Therefore, the presence of temporary construction traffic on the Site would present no barrier to these activities.

12.8.20 The activities of the Runcorn Rowing Club, the Danny Steamship, Mersey Ferries and Frodsham Water Sports take place on the Weaver Navigation, the Manchester Ship Canal or upstream on the River Weaver. The construction works are expected to have no impact on these activities.

12.8.21 The activities of Frodsham Kayaking and the Weaver Sailing and Ski Club take place on the River Weaver adjacent to the Site of the Proposed Development. There will be a temporary but minor disruption to these activities during the construction period as works to 'string' the high voltage cables into the SPEN substation will be undertaken over a two-week period. Whilst the 'stringing' operations are being undertaken it would be necessary to prevent use of this section of the river. However, it is possible that the closure would be over a much shorter period of time and could remain open at weekends and in the evenings.

12.8.22 As set out in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.5]** there would be a commitment to provide at least three months' advance notice to the recreational clubs on the River Weaver of any closure of the River Weaver. This would include Weaver Sailing and Ski Club (WSC) and Frodsham Kayaking (operating from Frodsham Watersports Centre). Notices shall also be published in local newspapers and online community resources e.g. Frodsham Town Council newsletters of scheduled closures. On the basis that four organisations would be unaffected and two organisations would have a brief interruption to their river access, it is considered that the organisations' sensitivity to this impact is negligible and on the basis that there would be only a very small and temporary impact on the number of visitors or users, the magnitude of change is considered to be low. The initial level of effect is therefore negligible.

12.8.23 The importance of these six leisure/recreation assets is considered to be low (of local importance).

12.8.24 Combining low importance with negligible level sensitivity and magnitude would give an overall level of effect of **negligible**.

12.8.25 The **overall level of effect** for Construction Impact 3 (disturbance to leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups using the adjacent watercourses) **is considered to be negligible and not considered to be significant**.

Construction Impact 4 – disturbance to the recreational usage of off-site PRow and other recreational routes that pass through Frodsham

12.8.26 Although not passing through the Site, there are a series of well-established walking routes that pass through Frodsham and, at limited points, offer views of the Mersey Estuary and the Site of the Proposed Development. The most notable of these routes, in terms of tourism, is the Sandstone Trail with an estimated 250,000 users per annum which offers a view of the Mersey Estuary and the Site of the Proposed Development from Frodsham Hill War Memorial.

12.8.27 Construction activities including traffic movements would be temporary, variable in location and intermittent. Much of the construction plant and equipment would be relatively low in height and would not be visually conspicuous over a wide area. Exceptions to this that would be more widely visible include the movement of plant and delivery vehicles along the Main Site Access and within the Solar Array Development Area, and the presence of cranes whilst structures are erected.

12.8.28 This temporary construction impact and the visual effect from Frodsham Hill War Memorial is unlikely to deter visitors from the Sandstone Trail and other established routes. This is consistent with the conclusions in both the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment and the assessment of Cultural Heritage and Archaeology - **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual**

Amenity [EN010153/DR/6.1] and ES Vol 1 Chapter 11: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010153/DR/6.1])

- 12.8.29 The view from Frodsham Hill (as part of the Sandstone Trail) will be temporarily changed as part of the construction. Recognising that this temporary change is actually evolving into a permanently changed view, the receptor's sensitivity to this impact is considered to be medium. However, on the basis that there would be little impact on the number of visitors or users, the magnitude of change is considered to be low.
- 12.8.30 The initial level of effect is therefore low, but the importance is considered to be medium since the Sandstone Trail is considered to be an important regional tourism asset with 250,000 visitors. The Sandstone Trail may, in the future, become part of a National Landscape (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty).
- 12.8.31 Combining medium importance with low level sensitivity and magnitude would give an overall level of effect of **minor**.
- 12.8.32 The **overall level of effect** for Construction Impact 4 (disturbance to the recreational usage of PRow and other recreational routes that pass through Frodsham) **is considered to be minor and not considered to be significant.**

Construction Impact 5 – disturbance to Frodsham town centre's visitor economy

- 12.8.33 As set out in the baseline, Frodsham is a busy local centre which attracts day visitors from elsewhere in Cheshire and the Liverpool city region. Its food and beverage offer, its heritage and its market make it an attractive place to visit.
- 12.8.34 During construction, all site traffic will be directed along routes that avoid the town centre and as such there should be no impact on its attractiveness as a place to visit during the construction phase. This is consistent with the conclusions drawn in the assessment of cultural heritage and archaeology

chapter with particular reference to the conservation area within the town centre - (**ES Vol 1 Chapter 11: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010153/DR/6.1]**)

- 12.8.35 On the basis that the town centre would be in a position to fully tolerate the impact, the receptor's sensitivity to this impact is considered to be negligible and on the basis that there would be no impact on the number of visitors or users, the magnitude of change is also considered to be negligible. The initial level of effect is therefore negligible.
- 12.8.36 The tourism importance of Frodsham is considered to be low (it is of local importance rather than regional or national).
- 12.8.37 Combining low importance with negligible level sensitivity and magnitude would give an overall level of effect of **negligible**.
- 12.8.38 The **overall level of effect** for Construction Impact 5 (disturbance to Frodsham town centre's visitor economy) **is considered to be negligible** and **not considered to be significant**.

Operational Phase

- 12.8.39 There is potential for both adverse and beneficial impacts on tourism and recreation during the operational phase of the Proposed Development.
- 12.8.40 Once operational, the Proposed Development requires minimal on-site maintenance and as such, there will be very little by way of traffic and noise. As set out **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010153/DR/6.1]** there would be landscape and visual effects on some of the PRoW on Site and in the surrounding area, some of which would be significant. However, these will be mitigated where possible through planting, landscaping and screening.
- 12.8.41 There would be potential disruption to PRoW during major replacement campaigns, but the measures proposed for the construction period would be implemented to ensure impacts on PRoW users are minimised. This is

provided for within the **Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.6]**.

12.8.42 Measures to mitigate and enhance the user experience on-site are proposed including improved surfacing, landscape screening, educational displays, improved bird viewing opportunities, and better maintenance of existing footpaths. The Proposed Development also includes the provision of 4.7 km of additional permissive paths and a potential new car park on Moorditch Lane which would help improve access to the Site, increasing user levels. These measures would create positive impacts on leisure, recreation and tourism within the Site and its immediate environs.

12.8.43 Six potential impacts on tourism and recreational receptors at the operational stage have been identified:

- i) Disturbance to tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups operating within the Site or within very close proximity.
- ii) Disturbance to the recreational usage of public rights of way (PRoW) including Restricted Byways, Footpaths and the National Cycle Network.
- iii) Enhancements to the PRoW, NCN and general environment leading to an increase in recreational usage (walking, cycling, birdwatching).
- iv) Disturbance to tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups using the nearby watercourses.
- v) Disturbance to recreational usage of other off-site PRoW and established recreational routes that pass through Frodsham; and
- vi) Disturbance to Frodsham town centre's visitor economy.

Operational Impact 1 – disturbance to tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups operating within the Site or within close proximity

12.8.44 Hover Force and Runcorn Model Flying Association are located off-site and as such are unlikely to incur any traffic or noise disturbance as a result of the very minimal operational site maintenance whilst the visual impact will be

irrelevant to their operations and ability to attract visitors or members. In addition, the nature of those activities including hovercraft experiences, archery, off-road driving and remote-controlled aircraft flying is not expected to be affected by the solar array's operation. They already operate successfully in an industrialised environment. On the basis that both organisations would be in a position to fully tolerate the impact, the organisation's sensitivity to this impact is considered to be negligible and on the basis that there would be no impact on the number of visitors or users, the magnitude of change is also considered to be negligible. The initial level of effect is therefore negligible. In terms of importance, both organisations would be ranked low (of local importance) and therefore the overall level of effect would also be **negligible**. Combining low importance with negligible level sensitivity and magnitude would give an overall level of effect of **negligible**.

12.8.45 Frodsham Wildfowlers would be impacted by the Proposed Development and would not be able to shoot within or over the Site during its operation. However, it is noted that the club is a landowner that has agreed to the use of the land for the Proposed Development. As such the impacts from the Proposed Development on their activities at the Site is appreciated by the membership. It is understood that the club intend to continue their activities at other sites within the local area. On the basis that the club will have some capacity to experience the impact and recover to an acceptable status within 1-5 years, the club's sensitivity to this impact is considered to be low and on the basis that there would only be a small and temporary reduction in leisure uses, the magnitude is also considered to be low. This would give an initial level of effect of low. In terms of tourism/recreational importance, the group would be ranked low (of local importance) and therefore the overall level of effect would also be **minor**.

12.8.46 The **overall level of effect** for Operational Impact 1 (disturbance to leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups operating within the Site

or within close proximity) **is considered to be minor**. As such, this is **not considered to be significant**.

Operational Impact 2 – disturbance to the recreational usage of public rights of way (PRoW) including Restricted Byways, Footpaths and the National Cycle Network

12.8.47 The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010153/DR/6.1]**) has concluded that some significant visual impacts would be incurred at the location of some PRoW, and these are listed as:

- i) Viewpoint 18 – restricted byway leading to Frodsham Marsh Farm (See **ES Vol 3 - Figure 6-5 a-e: Viewpoint locations [EN010153/DR/6.3]**).
- ii) Viewpoint 25 – public footpath adjacent to the River Weaver (See **ES Vol 3 - Figure 6-5 a-e: Viewpoint locations [EN010153/DR/6.3]**).
- iii) Users of byways RB102 and RB108 (See **ES Vol 3 - Figure 1-5: Public Rights of Way [EN010153/DR/6.3]**).
- iv) Users of approximately 800m of footpath FP93 (See **ES Vol 3 - Figure 1-5: Public Rights of Way [EN010153/DR/6.3]**).
- v) Users of approximately 530 metres of footpath FP81 **ES Vol 3 - Figure 1-5: Public Rights of Way [EN010153/DR/6.3]**.

12.8.48 From the list above and after mitigation including planting, the visibility of the Proposed Development at Viewpoint 25, Footpath FP93 and Footpath FP81 would be reduced and over time, the long-term visual effects upon people at these locations would not be significant as concluded within the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010153/DR/6.1]**).

12.8.49 During the operational phase, all public rights of way and permissive routes within the Order Limits would be maintained, to allow access to occur without impediment, unless maintenance requires temporary obstructions/closures.

- 12.8.50 It is proposed that the route of Frodsham RB108 would be permanently diverted between Point M on Sheet 3 and Point N on Sheet 4, since the existing definitive route of this PRow along this section runs through the field to the west of Alder Lane, which will comprise part of the Western Solar Array Development Area. The northern end of the existing route also runs through an area of marshland which will be developed as an area of wetland habitat. The diverted route of the PRow would follow the course of Alder Lane. It should be noted that this is the route which is currently practically used. However, this appears to be an informal arrangement. It is envisaged that this permanent diversion would take place during the construction phase to enable works access and would then remain in place during the operational phase.
- 12.8.51 It is proposed that new permissive pathways through the Proposed Development site would be created to link up existing routes, fill gaps in the existing network and create loops where possible, to enhance appeal to users and to improve connectivity. The final route, surfacing material, permitted user groups and widths of proposed permissive paths will be defined in the full PRow Management Plan.
- 12.8.52 Works would also be undertaken to improve the condition of existing rights of way within the Order limits where deemed appropriate (e.g. in locations which are periodically flooded or where sections become impassable due to mud). The full PRow Management Plan will set out the approach to be adopted to monitor and review the status of PRow within the Order limits and the maintenance schedule for improvements or upgrades.
- 12.8.53 Wayfinding signage and information will be provided for the routes available within the Order Limits and in respect of onward connections. Information would consist of both physical signage on site and published material to provide guidance to potential visitors. It is also proposed to design and install interpretative material along access routes, providing information regarding the social and natural history of the Order limits and its present use for

generating renewable energy. Formal public car parking area(s) would also be provided and signposted within the Order limits. Details of these provisions are set out within the oLEMP [EN010153/DR/7.13].

12.8.54 There will be virtually no traffic or noise disturbance during the operational phase.

12.8.55 In spite of the residual visual effects in places, it is considered that the operation of the solar PV facility would have little negative impact on the number of users of the PRow and NCN.

12.8.56 On the basis that mitigation will ensure that individuals have capacity to tolerate the impact but that the visual effect at some viewpoints and footpaths will be permanent, the sensitivity to this impact is considered to be low but on the basis that that there would be little impact on the number of visitors or users, the magnitude of change is considered to be negligible.

12.8.57 The initial level of effect is therefore negligible, but the importance is considered to range from negligible for the majority of the PRow across the Site to high for the National Cycle Network that passes through the Site.

12.8.58 Combining negligible to high importance with negligible level sensitivity and magnitude would give an overall level of effect of **negligible to minor**.

12.8.59 The **overall level of effect** for Operational Impact 2 (disturbance to the recreational usage of the PRow and NCN) **is considered to be negligible to minor which is not considered to be significant**.

Operational Impact 3 – Enhancements to the PRow, NCN and general environment leading to an increase in recreational usage (walking, cycling, birdwatching).

12.8.60 The Applicant is considering a range of enhancements to the local PRow as well as increasing access across the Site and providing other measures that would enhance user experience.

- 12.8.61 It is considered likely that these measures could plausibly lead to a small increase in local recreational usage of the Site including walking, cycling and birdwatching. A small level of change would be considered to be of low magnitude and given that the receptor would be able to quickly adapt to the new effect, the sensitivity value would be negligible.
- 12.8.62 The initial level of effect is therefore negligible, but the importance is considered to range from negligible for the majority of the PRoW across the Site to high for the National Cycle Network that passes through the Site.
- 12.8.63 Combining negligible to high importance with negligible level sensitivity and magnitude would give an overall level of effect of **negligible to minor beneficial effect**.
- 12.8.64 The **overall level of effect** for Operational Impact 3 (enhancement to the PRoW, NCN and general environment leading to an increase in recreational usage) **is considered to be negligible to minor beneficial and therefore not considered to be significant**.

Operational Impact 4 – disturbance to the tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups using the nearby watercourses

- 12.8.65 As set out above, there are six businesses and organisations identified in the baseline who use the Weaver Navigation or other watercourses for leisure or recreation. Only two of these organisations use the section of River Weaver adjacent to the Site of the Proposed Development – Frodsham Kayaking and the Weaver Sailing and Ski Club. However, neither of these two organisations access their moorings or slipways from within the Site of the Proposed Development. It is anticipated that the overhead lines across the River Weaver would require little maintenance and would not require “re-stringing” during the Proposed Development’s operational lifetime. If works were required during the operation phase, then the Applicant would notify the recreational clubs using the river (including Frodsham Kayaking and Weaver Sailing and Ski Club) following the same procedure as described in the

construction phase section above and as set out within the **Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010153/DR/7.6]**.

12.8.66 The activities of the Runcorn Rowing Club, the Danny Steamship, Mersey Ferries and Frodsham Water Sports take place on the Weaver Navigation, the Manchester Ship Canal or upstream on the River Weaver. There will be no impact on these activities during the operational phase.

12.8.67

12.8.68 On the basis that the six organisations would be in a position to fully tolerate the impact, the organisations' sensitivity to this impact is considered to be negligible and on the basis that there would be no impact on the number of visitors or users, the magnitude of change is also considered to be negligible.

12.8.69 The initial level of effect is therefore negligible and the importance of these six leisure/recreation assets is considered to be low (of local importance).

12.8.70 Combining low importance with negligible level sensitivity and magnitude would give an overall level of effect of **negligible**.

12.8.71 The **overall level of effect** for Operational Impact 4 (disturbance to leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups using the adjacent watercourses) **is considered to be negligible and is not considered to be significant**.

Operational Impact 5 – disturbance to the recreational usage of PRow and other recreational routes that pass through Frodsham

12.8.72 Although not passing through the Site, there are a series of well-established walking routes that pass through Frodsham and, at limited points, offer views of the Mersey Estuary and the Site of the Proposed Development. The most notable of these routes, in terms of tourism, is the Sandstone Trail with an estimated 250,000 users per annum which offers a view of the Mersey Estuary and the Site of the Proposed Development from Frodsham Hill War Memorial.

- 12.8.73 In the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010153/DR/6.1]**), Frodsham Hill War Memorial is listed as Viewpoint 9 from which the Proposed Development would be visible in the middle ground. The LVIA states that whilst the introduction of the solar arrays would introduce a new component in the view, the underlying nature of the view would not change. The view would remain an expansive panoramic view with a dynamic mosaic of built development and land use including a diverse array of industry and infrastructure which has been a well-established presence for some time. With regard to the view from Frodsham Hill War Memorial, the LVIA concludes that whilst the scale of the Proposed Development within the view is such that a moderate adverse effect would occur, the complexity of the context is such that the overall effect would not be significant. This is also consistent with the conclusions drawn in the assessment of cultural heritage and archaeology chapter with particular reference to visits to the Frodsham War Memorial (**ES Vol 1 Chapter 11: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010153/DR/6.1]**)
- 12.8.74 The assessment of tourism impact concurs with the view of the LVIA and that the change in the view from Frodsham Hill War Memorial is highly unlikely to deter people from continuing to walk the Sandstone Trail and other established routes. Frodsham, as a starting point for these tourism walking routes will be therefore unaffected.
- 12.8.75 The view from Frodsham Hill (as part of the Sandstone Trail) will be changed over the long-term change and therefore, the receptor's sensitivity to this impact is considered to be medium but on the basis that that there would be little impact on the number of visitors or users, the magnitude of change is considered to be low.
- 12.8.76 The initial level of effect is therefore low, but the importance is considered to be medium since the Sandstone Trail is considered to be an important regional tourism asset with 250,000 visitors. The Sandstone Trail may, in the

future, become a National Landscape (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

12.8.77 Combining medium importance with low level sensitivity and magnitude would give an overall level of effect of **minor**.

12.8.78 The **overall level of effect** for Operational Impact 5 (disturbance to the recreational usage of PRow and other recreational routes that pass through Frodsham) **is considered to be minor and not considered to be significant**.

Operational Impact 6 – disturbance to Frodsham town centre’s visitor economy

12.8.79 As set out in the baseline, Frodsham is a busy local centre which attracts day visitors from elsewhere in Cheshire and the Liverpool city region. Its food and beverage offer, its heritage and its market make it an attractive place to visit.

12.8.80 During the operational phase, the maintenance of the Site will be minimal with no discernible impact on the town centre and its businesses. From the town centre, there is no visual impact or noise impact. As such, there should be no impact on Frodsham’s attractiveness as a place to visit during the operational phase. This is consistent with the conclusions drawn in the assessment of cultural heritage and archaeology chapter with particular reference to the conservation area within the town centre (**ES Vol 1 Chapter 11: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010153/DR/6.1]**)

12.8.81 On the basis that the town centre would be in a position to fully tolerate the impact, the receptor’s sensitivity to this impact is considered to be negligible and on the basis that there would be no impact on the number of visitors or users, the magnitude of change is also considered to be negligible. The initial level of effect is therefore negligible.

12.8.82 The tourism importance of Frodsham is considered to be low (it is of local importance rather than regional or national).

12.8.83 Combining low importance with negligible level sensitivity and magnitude would give an overall level of effect of **negligible**.

12.8.84 The **overall level of effect** for Operational Impact 6 (disturbance to Frodsham town centre's visitor economy) **is considered to be negligible and not considered to be significant**.

Summary of overall effects and significance

Table 12-13 - Overall effects and significance

Potential impact and receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Initial effect	Importance	Overall effect	Significant
Construction phase						
Impact 1: disturbance to tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups operating within the Site or within close proximity	Low	Low	Low	Low	Minor adverse	No
Impact 2: disturbance to the recreational usage of (PRoW) and the NCN.	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible to High	Negligible to Minor adverse	No
Impact 3: disturbance to the tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups using the nearby watercourses	Negligible	Low	Negligible	Low	Negligible	No
Impact 4: disturbance to the recreational usage of PRoW and other recreational routes that pass through Frodsham	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Minor adverse	No
Impact 5: disturbance to Frodsham town centre's visitor economy	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Low	Negligible	No
Operational phase						

Potential impact and receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Initial effect	Importance	Overall effect	Significant
Impact 1: disturbance to tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups operating within the Site or within close proximity	Low	Low	Low	Low	Minor adverse	No
Impact 2: disturbance to the recreational usage of (PRoW) and the NCN.	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible to High	Negligible to Minor adverse	No
Impact 3: enhancements to the PRoW, NCN and general environment leading to an increase in recreational usage	Negligible	Low	Negligible	Negligible to High	Negligible to Minor beneficial	No
Impact 4: disturbance to the tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups using the nearby watercourses	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Low	Negligible	No
Impact 5: disturbance to the recreational usage of PRoW and other recreational routes that pass through Frodsham	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Minor adverse	No
Impact 6: disturbance to Frodsham town centre's visitor economy	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Low	Negligible	No

12.9 Additional Mitigation, Enhancement and Monitoring

Additional Mitigation and Enhancement

- 12.9.1 Since none of the impacts are considered to be significant, no further mitigation, enhancement or compensation are deemed necessary above and beyond those measures already set out in Section 12.7.

12.10 Residual Effects

12.10.1 Given no further mitigation or enhancement measures have been proposed, the assessment of likely significant effects identified in Table 12-13 remains valid.

12.10.2 The residual effects therefore remain the same as stated in the preliminary assessment, with no likely significant effects identified on tourism and recreation.

12.11 Inter Project Cumulative Effects Assessment

- 12.11.1 Cumulative effects can result from a combination of impacts, which on their own may not be significant but when combined with others, could generate significant effects.
- 12.11.2 As set out in **ES Vol 1 - Chapter 4: Methodology [EN010153/DR/6.1]** there are a number of development schemes located within Protos, a significant development site with the benefit of planning permissions for a range of energy generation and resource management businesses.
- 12.11.3 The assessment in this chapter concludes that there are unlikely to be any significant effects on tourism and recreation as a result of the Proposed Development. On this basis, and considering that all but two of the projects presented in the short list of planning developments for the cumulative effects assessment are situated outside of the Study Area, it is highly unlikely that there would be any cumulative effects in relation to tourism and recreation.
- 12.11.4 The only two projects that are situated within the Study Area and could have a potential cumulative effect on tourism and recreation are the HyNet Hydrogen pipeline (ref. 38) and the Eni Runcorn Spur CO2 pipeline, both of which would cross the Site of the Proposed Development. However, on the basis that there is no permanent above ground infrastructure, any impacts on tourism and recreation are likely to be short term during the construction phase(s). Furthermore, it is likely that if the HyNet Hydrogen pipeline were to be constructed at the same time as the Proposed Development the same mitigation measures in respect of the PRoW during the construction period would apply and could run concurrently. As such it is unlikely that the two pipeline projects would give rise to significant cumulative effects with the Proposed Development.

12.12 Conclusions

Methodology and Assessment

12.12.1 The methodology used for this assessment involved a multi-step process aimed at evaluating the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on tourism and recreation in the Study Area. The key steps included:

- i) Scoping and Stakeholder Consultation: Engagement with officers in CWaCC's economic development team to help understand and define the scope of the assessment and identify relevant receptors.
- ii) Baseline Study: Comprehensive data collection was conducted through desktop research, mobile phone data, consultation with those responsible for tourism and the visitor economy, a study visit and further telephone conversations with relevant operators, users and businesses. The baseline included an analysis of local tourism patterns, visitor numbers, and recreational use in the Study Area.
- iii) Impact Analysis: Assessing the potential impacts during the construction and operational phases of the development on identified receptors such as local businesses, recreational users of public rights of way (PRoW), and users of adjacent watercourses.
- iv) Significance Evaluation: The significance of potential impacts was determined evaluating the sensitivity and importance of the receptors as well as the magnitude of impact on tourism and recreation.

Baseline Conditions

12.12.2 The baseline assessment identified key tourism and recreational assets in the Study Area, including:

- i) tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups located within the Site of the Proposed Development or within very close proximity (including Frodsham Wildfowlers, Hover Force and Runcorn Model Flying Association;

- ii) public rights of way (PRoW) including Restricted Byways, Footpaths and the National Cycle Network within the Site of the Proposed Development and primarily focused on walking, cycling and birdwatching;
- iii) tourism, leisure and recreational businesses, organisations or groups using the nearby watercourses (including Weaver Sailing and Ski Club, Frodsham Kayaking, Frodsham Water Sports, Runcorn Rowing Club, , the Daniel Adamson Steamship and Mersey Ferries);
- iv) other off-site PRoW and established recreational routes that pass through Frodsham (including the Sandstone Trail, the Eddisbury Way, the Delamere Way and the North Cheshire Way); and
- v) Frodsham town centre's visitor economy including the market, food and drink and heritage.

Incorporated Mitigation Measures

12.12.3 The Proposed Development includes several incorporated mitigation measures to minimise potential adverse impacts on tourism and recreation:

Construction Mitigation

- i) Implementing the **CEMP [EN010153/DR/7.5]** to manage construction traffic and ensure safety for recreational users.
- ii) Avoiding regular use of the PRoW by construction vehicles by providing segregated construction access routes or other short-term measures to ensure routes remain open and safe as set out in the Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan.
- iii) Implementing the CTMP would direct all construction traffic along routes that avoid the town centre to prevent noise, congestion and general disturbance.

Operational Mitigation

- i) Application of a 10m PRoW buffer.

- ii) Enhancements to the PRow network, including 4.7 km of new permissive paths, a potential new car park on Moorditch Lane, improved surfacing, and better signage to increase recreational use and connectivity.
- iii) Development of additional facilities such as viewing areas and educational displays to enhance the visitor experience.
- iv) Landscaping and visual screening to mitigate potential visual impacts of the solar arrays.

Conclusion

12.12.4 The assessment concluded that with the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, the Proposed Development would not result in any likely significant negative effects on tourism and recreational activities in the Study Area. The construction phase may cause temporary disruption, but these are not expected to lead to any significant effects and will be effectively managed through the **CEMP** and the Public Rights of Way Management Plan.

12.12.5 During the operational phase, the enhanced PRow network and additional recreational facilities are likely to have a positive effect on local tourism and recreation, potentially increasing the number of visitors to the Study Area. Overall, the Proposed Development is not anticipated to adversely affect the local tourism economy or recreational use of the Study Area.

12.12.6 In summary, the Proposed Development, with the incorporated mitigation measures, would not have any significant adverse effects on tourism and recreation, and may even provide opportunities for enhancing local recreational infrastructure and visitor experiences.