



# Meridian Solar Farm

EN010169

Volume 6

Environmental Statement

6.1 ES Chapter 4: Overview  
of the EIA Process

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

Infrastructure Planning (Applications:  
Prescribed Forms and Procedure)  
Regulations 2009

March 2026

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## 4. Overview of the EIA Process

### 4.1. Introduction

- 4.1.1. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the process undertaken to present a clear and impartial assessment of the likely beneficial and adverse significant environmental effects of the Scheme. It is informed by consultation with statutory consultees, other interested bodies, and members of the public. It identifies mitigation measures, as required, through design modifications and environmental management for all phases of the Scheme. The direct and indirect residual effects of the Scheme are then identified following the inclusion of mitigation.
- 4.1.2. The Applicant is promoting a Scheme design that takes account of the results of environmental surveys and stakeholder input to embed opportunities for mitigation and enhancement early. Where practicable, adverse environmental effects identified as part of the EIA process will be avoided in line with the mitigation hierarchy.
- 4.1.3. This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) presents the approach and methodology applied to the EIA, which has been prepared in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (hereafter referred to as 'the EIA Regulations')<sup>1</sup>.
- 4.1.4. The Scheme is defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under Sections 14(1)(a), 14(1)(b), 15(2) and 16 of the Planning Act 2008 ('PA2008')<sup>2</sup>, as it comprises an onshore generating station in England with a capacity exceeding 100 MW and the installation of two above ground electric lines greater than two kilometres in length. As it is an NSIP, the Applicant is required under the PA2008 to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to develop the Scheme.
- 4.1.5. The key elements in an EIA for an NSIP are:
- Iterative project design, taking feedback from consultation and environmental studies and applying feedback to the design development process on an ongoing basis throughout the EIA;

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<sup>1</sup> The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/572/contents> [Accessed 21 September 2025]

<sup>2</sup> The Planning Act 2008. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/contents> [Accessed 21 September 2025]

- Scoping and ongoing consultation, including consideration of responses and how these are addressed as part of the EIA;
- Technical environmental impact assessments, including baseline studies, input to the design process, refinement of the design, and identification and reporting of residual environmental effects;
- Consultation on the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR);
- Updating the assessment following consultation to reflect feedback and address stakeholder concerns; and
- Preparation and submission of the ES.

4.1.6. In preparing this ES, reference has been made to the following guidance:

- Planning Inspectorate's Guidance NSIPs: Advice on EIA Consultation and Notification<sup>3</sup>;
- Planning Inspectorate's Guidance NSIPs: Advice on the Preparation and Submission of Application Documents<sup>4</sup>;
- Planning Inspectorate's Guidance NSIPs: Advice Note 7: Environmental Impact Assessment: Process, Preliminary Environmental Information and Environmental Statements<sup>5</sup>;
- Planning Inspectorate Guidance NSIPs: Advice Note 9: Rochdale Envelope<sup>6</sup>;
- Planning Inspectorate Guidance NSIPs Advice on Working with Public Bodies in the Infrastructure Planning Process<sup>7</sup>;

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<sup>3</sup> Planning Inspectorate (2025). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on EIA Notification and Consultation. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-on-eia-notification-and-consultation> [Accessed 21 September 2025]

<sup>4</sup> Planning Inspectorate (2025). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Preparation and Submission of Application Documents. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-on-the-preparation-and-submission-of-application-documents> [Accessed 21 September 2025]

<sup>5</sup> Planning Inspectorate (2025). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice Note Seven: Environmental Impact Assessment: Process, Preliminary Environmental Information and Environmental Statements. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-note-seven-environmental-impact-assessment-process-preliminary-environmental-information-an> [Accessed 21 September 2025]

<sup>6</sup> Planning Inspectorate (2025). Advice Note Nine: Rochdale Envelope. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-note-nine-rochdale-envelope> [Accessed 21 September 2025]

<sup>7</sup> Planning Inspectorate (2025). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Working with public bodies in the infrastructure planning process. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-on-working-with-public-bodies-in-the-infrastructure-planning-process> [Accessed 21 September 2025]

- Planning Inspectorate Guidance NSIPs: Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment<sup>8</sup>;
- Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) (formerly Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)) Guidance: EIA Guide to Shaping Quality Development (2015)<sup>9</sup>;
- ISEP Guidance: Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to: Delivering Quality Development, July 2016<sup>10</sup>;
- ISEP Guidance: Delivering Proportionate EIA (2017)<sup>11</sup>; and
- ISEP Guidance: Implementing the Mitigation Hierarchy from Concept to Construction (2024)<sup>12</sup>.

## 4.2. Consultation and Engagement

- 4.2.1. The process of consultation is critical to the preparation of a comprehensive and balanced ES. The views of key statutory and non-statutory consultees serve to focus the environmental assessments and help identify specific matters which require further investigation. Early consultation and engagement also enables mitigation measures to be incorporated into the Scheme design, thereby avoiding or limiting adverse effects and enhancing benefits.
- 4.2.2. Key stages involved in the development of the EIA include:
- Non-statutory consultation;
  - EIA Scoping;
  - Statutory consultation; and
  - Targeted consultation.
- 4.2.3. An EIA Scoping Report (**ES Appendix 1-1 (Doc Ref. 6.3)**) was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 31 May 2024 with a request for the Secretary of State

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<sup>8</sup> Planning Inspectorate (2025). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-on-cumulative-effects-assessment> [Accessed 21 September 2025]

<sup>9</sup> ISEP (formerly IEMA) (2015). Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to Shaping Quality Development. IEMA. November 2015.

<sup>10</sup> ISEP (formerly IEMA) (2016); Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to: Delivering Quality Development, July 2016

<sup>11</sup> ISEP (formerly IEMA) (2017). Delivering Proportionate EIA: A Collaborative Strategy for Enhancing UK Environmental Impact Assessment Practice.

<sup>12</sup> ISEP (formerly IEMA) (2024). Implementing the Mitigation Hierarchy from Concept to Construction.

to adopt a scoping opinion in relation to the Scheme. In considering the request for a scoping opinion, the Secretary of State consulted with the relevant statutory stakeholders. The Secretary of State provided its Scoping Opinion on 10 July 2024 (**ES Appendix 1-2** (Doc Ref. 6.3)).

- 4.2.4. In parallel, a non-statutory consultation (Stage 1 consultation) for the Scheme ran from 30 May 2024 until 11 July 2024, which involved three in person-public events and an online webinar. The consultation introduced the proposals to the local community and sought feedback on the initial proposals. The details of this consultation are set out in more detail in the **Consultation Report** (Doc Ref. 5.1).
- 4.2.5. Following a year of design development, further environmental surveys and initial assessments, a statutory consultation (Stage 2 consultation) was held between 24 April 2025 to 8 June 2025, during which the Applicant hosted a number of in-person events and published online information presentations. The statutory consultation included the publication of the PEIR, which presented a preliminary assessment of the environmental effects of the Scheme.
- 4.2.6. Subsequently, a round of targeted consultation was held between 24 September and 22 October 2025, to consult on further changes to the Scheme since statutory consultation. A second round of targeted consultation was run from 8 January to 5 February 2026, following the extension of the Grid Connection Route to the confirmed location of the NGET Weston Marsh B Substation.
- 4.2.7. Throughout all stages of consultation, the Applicant held technical meetings with statutory stakeholders to inform the preparation of environmental assessments of the ES.
- 4.2.8. Comments received from the above stages of engagement on the environmental aspects of the Scheme have been included within the relevant technical chapters (**ES Chapters 5 to 16** (Doc Ref. 6.1)) to show how and where comments from the Scoping Opinion, different consultation stages and other engagement with stakeholders have been addressed within the ES. Further information on consultation undertaken and how comments received have been taken into account in the preparation of the DCO Application for the Scheme is presented within the **Consultation Report** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

### 4.3. EIA Scoping

- 4.3.1. In preparing this ES, reference has been made to the EIA Scoping Opinion received from the Secretary of State on 10 July 2024 (**ES Appendix 1-2: EIA Scoping Opinion** (Doc Ref. 6.3)) and the advice contained within it regarding assessment methodology, topics and presentation of the ES. A table has been

included within each technical chapter (**ES Chapters 5 to 16** (Doc Ref. 6.1)) to show how and where comments from the Scoping Opinion have been addressed within the ES.

4.3.2. In response to the EIA Scoping Opinion, this ES includes assessments of the following environmental topics:

- Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils;
- Chapter 6: Air Quality;
- Chapter 7: Climate Change;
- Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage;
- Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity;
- Chapter 10: Human Health;
- Chapter 11: Hydrology and Flood Risk;
- Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual Amenity;
- Chapter 13: Noise and Vibration;
- Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use;
- Chapter 15: Traffic and Access;
- Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics (see below).

4.3.3. **ES Appendix 1-1: EIA Scoping Report** (Doc Ref. 6.3) prepared by the Applicant concluded that several topics would not require a full chapter within the ES, however, a summary of the relevant effects and mitigation will be set out within **ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics** (Doc Ref. 6.1). These topics are:

- Electric and Magnetic Fields;
- Glint and Glare;
- Major Accidents and Disasters; and
- Materials and Waste.

4.3.4. The Scoping Opinion requested further information to support this approach which has been provided in **ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics** (Doc Ref. 6.1).

4.3.5. Where environmental aspects within the scope of the above technical topics have been scoped out from further assessment, this is explained within each of the relevant technical chapters (**ES Chapters 5-16** (Doc Ref 6.1)).

- 4.3.6. Furthermore, the Planning Inspectorate agreed within its **ES Appendix 1-2: EIA Scoping Opinion** (Doc Ref. 6.3) that the assessment of telecommunications and utilities can be scoped out from the EIA, on the basis that the findings of a desk-based assessment of existing telecommunications and utilities is presented within the ES together with an explanation on how these have been taken into account within design to avoid impacts. As explained within **ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics, Section 16.5: Major Accidents and Disasters** (Doc Ref. 6.1), the design of the Scheme has avoided impacting on existing telecommunications and utilities, where possible. Where this has not been possible, protective provisions have been set out within the **Draft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1) submitted with the DCO Application for each of the relevant statutory undertakers.
- 4.3.7. Scoping responses relating to overarching comments from the Planning Inspectorate are discussed in Table 4-1 below.

Table 4-1: Scoping Responses in relation to overarching comments from the Planning Inspectorate

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
<b>Description of the Scheme</b>			
21.1 21.7	Clarity of Figures  Overlapping colours used in figures, making it difficult to distinguish between different features. No scale bar on figures provided.	All <b>ES Figures</b> (Doc Ref. 6.2) have been checked to ensure that no overlapping symbology is used and scale bars have been provided.	<b>ES Figures</b> (Doc Ref. 6.2)
21.2	Site Context  Section 2.2 Site Context states that the main land use across the site is agricultural and does not identify any other land uses. The Agriculture and Soils chapter subsequently identifies additional urban features within the site boundary and also refers to made ground in the site which could be potentially contaminated (but does not provide details on its nature or location). The introductory chapters of the ES should include a clear description of the existing land use so that the environmental baseline can be clearly understood from the outset.	A description of the existing land use, including in relation to urban features is presented in <b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1). Further detail on the nature and location of made ground within the Order Limits is presented in <b>ES Appendix 5-4: Contaminated Land Assessment</b> and <b>ES Appendix 5-5: Contaminated Land Assessment for Grid Connection Extension</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3).	<b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) and <b>ES Appendix 5-4: Contaminated Land Assessment</b> and <b>ES Appendix 5-5: Contaminated Land Assessment for Grid Connection Extension</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3).
21.3	Flexibility  At this stage of development, the number and locations of project elements such as	<b>Design Parameters</b> (Doc Ref 7.4) and <b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) include details of the design, size, capacity, technology, and locations of	<b>Design Parameters</b> (Doc Ref 7.4)

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
	<p>construction compounds, the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and on-site substation(s) have not been determined. The Inspectorate notes the Applicant's intention to apply a 'Rochdale Envelope' approach to maintain flexibility within the design of the Scheme. The Inspectorate expects that at the point an application is made, the description of the Scheme will be sufficiently detailed to include the design, size, capacity, technology, and locations of the different elements of the Scheme or where details are not yet known, will set out the assumptions applied to the assessment in relation to these aspects. This should include the footprint and heights of the structures (relevant to existing ground levels), as well as land-use requirements for all elements and phases of the development. The description should be supported (as necessary) by figures, cross-sections, and drawings which should be clearly and appropriately referenced. Where flexibility is sought, the ES should clearly set out and justify the maximum design parameters that would apply for each option assessed and how</p>	<p>the different elements of the Scheme or, where details are not yet known, the maximum parameters used to inform the EIA. Cross-references have also been provided to relevant figures and drawings used to inform the assessment. Furthermore, each of the technical aspect chapters (<b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)) set out any relevant parameters or commitments that have informed the assessment.</p>	<p><b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) and <b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)</p> <p><b>ES Figures</b> (Doc Ref 6.2).</p> <p><b>Works Plans</b> (Doc Ref 2.3).</p> <p><b>Draft DCO</b> (Doc Ref. 3.1).</p>

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
	<p>these have been used to inform an adequate assessment in the ES. The Inspectorate advises that each aspect chapter includes a section that outlines the relevant parameters/ commitments that have informed the assessment.</p>		
21.4	<p><b>Landscape and Cultural Heritage</b></p> <p>The Applicant is proposing to plant “small, isolated blocks of woodland”. Gedney Hill Parish Council states this is not in keeping with the existing landscape and Lincolnshire County Council note that tree planting can be very destructive to underlying archaeological remains. All landscaping should be well considered, and the Applicant should seek to agree the location and types of planting with relevant consultation bodies. The ES should explain and justify the assumptions made in respect of the growth rates of planting proposed to mitigate effects.</p>	<p>Details on the illustrative landscape masterplan, types of planting and growth rates assumed are provided within the <b>Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (OLEMP)</b> (Doc Ref. 7.16). The proposed landscaping has also been considered as part of the assessment of impacts on archaeology (refer to <b>ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)) and the Scheme’s heritage team have been involved in the development of the illustrative landscape masterplan. The illustrative landscape masterplan has also been shared and discussed with Lincolnshire County Council and South Holland District Council’s officers (refer to <b>ES Chapter 12: Landscape and</b></p>	<p><b>OLEMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.16), <b>ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1), <b>ES Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)</p>

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
		<b>Visual</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)) for summary of engagement.	
21.4	<p>Electricity export connection to Weston Marsh substation</p> <p>The Scoping Report does not outline whether any works at the National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) Weston Marsh substation would be included in the Meridian Solar Farm DCO works. The likely significant effects from such works should either be assessed in the ES as part of the Scheme, or as part of the cumulative effects assessment if consented separately.</p>	<p>Detail in relation to the extent of works at the National Grid Weston Marsh B Substation is outlined in <b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p> <p>Works in relation to the Weston Marsh B Substation will be completed by National Grid and consented separately although there would be overlap in consent boundaries where the two projects connect. The likely significant effects from such works have been assessed as part of the cumulative effects assessment within each discipline chapter (<b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)), as appropriate.</p>	<p><b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) and <b>ES Chapters 5 to 16</b> (technical assessments) Cumulative Effects sections (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>
21.1	<p>Construction activities</p> <p>The Scoping Report does not at this stage detail anticipated construction activities /methodologies. Section 2.7 identifies the potential for piling although does not detail the type to be used. The ES should clearly describe the construction activities insofar</p>	<p>Information on the construction phase including methodologies and activities, where available, is presented within <b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1). Where specific construction activities or methodologies are relevant to technical assessments, these have been</p>	<p><b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) and <b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)</p>

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
	as is reasonably possible; this will be particularly pertinent for the Noise and Vibration assessment.	discussed in further detail within each topic chapter ( <b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)). The chapters also clearly outline where optionality has been maintained particularly where construction activities and/or methodology are to be determined post-consent as part of the detailed design process.	
21.2	<p>Construction period</p> <p>The Scoping Report provides varying lengths for the construction phase. The construction period should be clearly defined and consistent throughout the ES. The ES should provide details of the anticipated construction working hours (including any night-time working required) and activities on which the assessments of likely significant effect have been based. This should be consistent with the working hours specified in the draft DCO.</p>	<p>The construction phase is anticipated to take between three to four years, as outlined in <b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1). This duration has been consistently assessed throughout the ES.</p> <p>As set out within <b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1), core working hours during the construction phase would be Monday to Friday from 07:00 to 19:00 and Saturday from 08:00 to 13:30. It is anticipated there would be no working outside these hours (including night-time, Sunday and Bank Holidays) unless crucial to construction. This may include, but not be limited to,</p>	<b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
		the delivery of abnormal indivisible loads, concrete pours for foundations, night working for cable installation within or above public highways, and/or continuous activities associated with trenchless cable installation.	
21.3	<p>Potential highways improvement works</p> <p>It is unclear whether any highways improvement works required to facilitate access to the site would be included as part of the Proposed Development or would form separate planning applications. The likely significant effects from such works should be assessed within the ES, either as part of the Proposed Development, or in the cumulative effects assessment if they are to be consented separately.</p>	<p>Potential works required to public highways to facilitate construction, operational and decommissioning access to the Scheme have been described within <b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1). These works have also been assessed within the technical topic chapters (<b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)).</p>	<p><b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1), <b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)</p>
21.4	<p>Operation</p> <p>The ES should describe the potential scope and duration of maintenance works that would be required during the operation of the Proposed Development, including predicted vehicle movements and staffing</p>	<p>Assumptions made with regards to the operational vehicle movements and staffing numbers have been presented within <b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1). These assumptions have informed the technical assessments presented within <b>ES Chapters 5-16</b></p>	<p><b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1), <b>OOEMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.11)</p>

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
	<p>numbers. Details should also be provided on any monitoring to be undertaken.</p>	<p>(Doc Ref. 6.1). Further information on measures to mitigate effects from the operational phase of the Scheme are also presented within the <b>Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (OOEMP)</b> (Doc Ref. 7.11) submitted with the DCO Application.</p>	
21.5	<p><b>Watercourse crossings</b></p> <p>The methods to be employed for watercourse crossings should be detailed within the ES. Should trenchless installation be relied upon to mitigate potential significant effects, the Applicant should ensure this construction method is demonstrably secured.</p>	<p><b>ES Appendix 2-1: Watercourse Crossing Schedule</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) presents the assumptions made with regards to the construction methodology of any watercourse crossings. The ES presents a reasonable worst-case assessment with regards to the method employed for watercourse crossings. As such, <b>ES Chapter 11: Hydrology and Flood Risk</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) has assessed the provision of culverts for access track crossings, except for the crossing of the South Holland Main Drain, where bridge crossings would be utilised. The use of open-cut trenching has been assessed for cable crossings, except for the</p>	<p><b>ES Appendix 2-1: Watercourse Crossing Schedule</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) and <b>OCEMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.10)</p>

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
		crossing of South Holland Main Drain in Parcel D, where trenchless methods would be employed. The use of bridge crossings and trenchless methods for cable crossings across the South Holland Main Drain is secured through the <b>Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP)</b> (Doc Ref. 7.10)	
21.6	<p>Vehicle movements</p> <p>The number of vehicle movements is key to a number of environmental aspect assessments. Construction and operational phase movements are estimated in the Traffic and Access chapter and Air Quality chapters of the Scoping Report, respectively. The number of anticipated vehicle movements should be confirmed upfront in the Project Description chapter of the ES. The assumptions made in reaching these estimates should be detailed.</p>	<p>The anticipated maximum number of vehicle movements during construction and operation has been set out within <b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1), including a summary of the assumptions made in reaching these estimates. These assumptions have informed the technical assessments presented within <b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>	<b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
<b><i>EIA Methodology and Scope of Assessment</i></b>			
22.1	<p>Management Plans</p> <p>The Scoping Report identifies a number of management plans that will be produced as part of the DCO application, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP);</li> <li>• Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP);</li> <li>• Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP);</li> <li>• Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP);</li> <li>• Outline Soil Management Plan (SMP); and</li> <li>• Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP).</li> </ul> <p>The outline plans should be sufficiently detailed to provide confidence in the delivery of mitigation, particularly that relied upon within the ES to avoid or reduce significant effects.</p>	<p>The following management plans have been submitted as part of the DCO Application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCEMP (Doc Ref. 7.10);</li> <li>• OOEMP (Doc Ref. 7.11);</li> <li>• Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (ODEMP) (Doc Ref. 7.12);</li> <li>• Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (OCTMP) (Doc Ref. 7.13);</li> <li>• Outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP) (Doc Ref. 7.14);</li> <li>• Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (PRoW-MP) (Doc Ref. 7.15);</li> <li>• OLEMP (Doc Ref. 7.16);</li> <li>• Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (OSSCEP) (Doc Ref. 7.17);</li> </ul>	<p><b>OCEMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.10);  <b>OOEMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.11);  <b>ODEMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.12);  <b>OCTMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.13);  <b>OSMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.14); <b>Outline PRoW-MP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.15);  <b>OLEMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.16);  <b>OSSCEP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.17);  <b>OBSMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.18);  <b>OSWMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.19).</p>

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline Battery Safety Management Plan (OBSMP) (Doc Ref. 7.18);</li> <li>• Outline Site Waste Management Plan (OSWMP) (Doc Ref. 7.19).</li> </ul> <p>These management plans include details on the mitigation proposed to avoid or reduce effects from the Scheme.</p>	
22.2	<p>Assessment of decommissioning</p> <p>Paragraph 2.9.6 states that “the effects of decommissioning.....will be considered where possible in the relevant sections”. An assessment of decommissioning should be undertaken wherever significant effects are likely to occur. Aspect specific comments are provided in Section 3 of this Opinion, where the Applicant has requested to scope out specific matters.</p>	<p>Each of the technical assessments presented within <b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) provides an assessment of decommissioning, as relevant to the technical topic. Some chapters use the construction assessment as a basis for evaluating decommissioning. Where this approach is applied, it is clearly defined within the chapter.</p>	<p><b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)</p>
22.3	<p>Cumulative effects – list of projects</p> <p>The Inspectorate agrees that minor developments are unlikely to have a significant interaction with the Proposed</p>	<p><b>ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) presents the long-list of cumulative schemes considered within this ES. The criteria used to identify cumulative schemes to</p>	<p><b>ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) and Section 4.7 of this chapter.</p>

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
	<p>Development and can be excluded from the short list of reasonably foreseeable future projects cumulative effects assessment (unless within the site boundary or permitted development associated with the scheme). However, some planning applications granted over three years ago may have a commencement date of greater than three years (e.g. DCOs) and these should not be excluded from the assessment. The Applicant should define the timeframes meant in respect of inclusion of only applications “proposed to be delivered before or shortly after construction of the Scheme”. Table 3.5 of the Scoping Report omits other solar projects in the region, as well as other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in Lincolnshire (e.g. Outer Dowsing Wind Farm and Eastern Green Link 3&amp;4). The Applicant should identify all relevant projects for inclusion in the assessment and should seek</p>	<p>be included on the long-list is provided within Section 4.7 of this chapter. For planning applications consented under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA)<sup>13</sup>, the criteria include cumulative schemes which have been granted planning consent no longer than three years ago. The three-year timeframe ensures that the assessment considers recent and relevant developments, focusing on cumulative impacts from projects that are reasonably expected to proceed within a foreseeable and practical timeframe. For DCO applications, the criteria include cumulative schemes which have been granted development consent no longer than five years ago. All DCO schemes in Lincolnshire, which meet the cumulative schemes criteria, have been included on <b>ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes</b> (Doc</p>	

<sup>13</sup> Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/contents> [Accessed 22 September 2025]

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
	agreement on these with relevant consultation bodies. The list of projects should be kept under review whilst preparing the ES.	Ref. 6.3). These include the Outer Dowsing Wind Farm and Eastern Green Link 3&4. Comments on the cumulative schemes list have also been received from Lincolnshire County Council and South Holland District Council, and incorporated within <b>ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3).	
22.4	<p>Cumulative effects - operational phase</p> <p>The Scoping Report refers to assessing projects which overlap with the construction period of the Proposed Development. The ES should also assess the operational phase where significant effects are likely to occur. This may include, but should not be limited to, cumulative economic impacts from the loss of agricultural land.</p>	<p><b>ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) presents the long-list of cumulative schemes considered within this ES and indicates where a temporal overlap with the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Scheme has been identified. Cumulative schemes with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects with the Scheme have then been short-listed for further assessment within <b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1). Cumulative economic impacts from the loss of agricultural land with other relevant DCO and TCPA schemes have</p>	<p><b>ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) and <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
		been assessed within <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).	
22.5	<p>Reporting of significant effects</p> <p>The Scoping Report states that only residual effects will be reported within the assessment of significant effects in the ES. The Inspectorate considers that the significance of effects prior to the implementation of mitigation measures should also be reported. This is to enable an understanding of the anticipated effectiveness of mitigation measures.</p>	<p><b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) report on the significance of effects prior to and following the implementation of any additional mitigation. Mitigation embedded within the design and implemented as part of standard practice or other legislative requirements (referred to as ‘embedded mitigation’) has already been accounted for within the initial reporting of effects. This is to avoid setting out effects that would never occur in practice and is in accordance with ISEP Guidance<sup>9,10,11,12</sup> for preparing ESs. Further details on the assessment methodology are set out within Section 4.4 of this chapter.</p>	<p>Section 4.4 of this chapter on assessment methodology;</p> <p><b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) on assessment of effects.</p>
22.6	<p>Baseline conditions</p> <p>The Scoping Report does not present a baseline description for the whole of the site boundary in each aspect chapter, for</p>	<p><b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) provide a baseline description for the entirety of the site with the Order Limits and the relevant study area.</p>	<p><b>ES Chapters 5-16</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)</p>

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
	example Ecology and Biodiversity and Agriculture and Soils only provide baselines for the PV area. The ES should describe the baseline conditions of the entire application site and surrounding areas where significant effects are likely.		
22.7	<p>Residues and emissions</p> <p>The ES should provide an estimate, by type and quantity, of anticipated residues and emissions resulting from construction and operation of the Proposed Development, as required by Schedule 4(1)(d) of the EIA Regulations 2017.</p>	<p>Schedule 4(1)(d) of the EIA Regulations 2017<sup>14</sup> sets out that the ES should provide 'an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases'. This information has been provided, as relevant, within the following chapters of the ES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ES Chapter 2: The Scheme (Doc Ref. 6.1)</li> </ul>	<p><b>ES Chapter 2: The Scheme</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1), <b>ES Chapter 6: Air Quality</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1); <b>ES Chapter 7: Climate Change</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1); <b>ES Chapter 11: Hydrology and Flood Risk</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1); <b>ES Chapter 13: Noise and Vibration</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1); <b>ES Chapter 15: Traffic and Access</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1); and <b>ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>

<sup>14</sup> Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/572/contents> [Accessed 26 September 2025]

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ES Chapter 6: Air Quality (Doc Ref. 6.1);</li> <li>• ES Chapter 7: Climate Change (Doc Ref. 6.1);</li> <li>• ES Chapter 11: Hydrology and Flood Risk (Doc Ref. 6.1);</li> <li>• ES Chapter 13: Noise and Vibration (Doc Ref. 6.1);</li> <li>• ES Chapter 15: Traffic and Access (Doc Ref. 6.1); and</li> <li>• ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics (Doc Ref. 6.1).</li> </ul>	
22.8	<p>Competent experts</p> <p>The ES must be accompanied by a statement from the Applicant outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts, as required by Regulation 14 of the EIA Regulations 2017.</p>	<p>This has been provided within <b>ES Appendix 1-3: EIA Statement of Competence</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3).</p>	<p><b>ES Appendix 1-3: EIA Statement of Competence</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3)</p>
22.9	<p>Use of standard terminology</p> <p>The ground level on page 99 is described using the term “aerosol optical depth (AOD)” rather than the typical term “Above</p>	<p><b>ES Glossary and Abbreviations</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) provides the consistent set of terms and abbreviations used across the ES. As clarified in that chapter, in</p>	<p><b>ES Glossary and Abbreviations</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1)</p>

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
	<p>Ordnance Datum” used for this abbreviation. The Inspectorate assumes this to be an error. Standard terminology should be used where possible.</p>	<p>this ES, AOD refers to ‘Above Ordnance Datum’.</p>	
22.10	<p>Transboundary</p> <p>The Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS has considered the Scheme and concludes that the Scheme is unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or cumulatively on the environment in a European Economic Area State. In reaching this conclusion the Inspectorate has identified and considered the Scheme’s likely impacts including consideration of potential pathways and the extent, magnitude, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impacts. The Inspectorate considers that the likelihood of transboundary effects resulting from the Scheme is so low that it does not warrant the issue of a detailed transboundary screening. However, this position will remain under review and will have regard to any new or materially different information coming to light which may alter that decision. Note: The SoS’ duty</p>	<p>In relation to transboundary effects, the characteristics and potential impacts of the Scheme have not changed since EIA Scoping. As such, it is considered that the conclusion that the Scheme is unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or cumulatively on the environment in a European Economic Area State remains valid. Therefore, transboundary effects have been scoped out from the ES.</p>	n/a

Ref.	Summary of matter raised	How has the matter been addressed?	Relevant DCO Application Documents
	<p>under Regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process. The Inspectorate’s screening of transboundary issues is based on the relevant considerations specified in the Annex to its Advice Note Twelve.</p>		

## 4.4. General Assessment Methodology

4.4.1. The general approach to the technical assessments provided within this ES includes establishing a baseline for each topic. Receptors are identified, and their sensitivity classified. The potential impacts of the Scheme on these receptors are assessed for the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Scheme, accounting for any embedded mitigation. Subsequently, additional mitigation measures are considered, as appropriate, allowing the likely significant residual and cumulative effects to be identified.

4.4.2. The key steps undertaken as part of the EIA process to inform this ES include:

- Consideration of legislation and relevant local, regional, and national planning policies, guidelines, technical standards relevant to the EIA;
- Development of significance criteria and specialist assessment methodologies;
- Engagement with statutory and non-statutory consultees and the contents of the Scoping Opinion;
- Establishing baseline conditions, including a review of secondary information, previous environmental studies, publicly available information and databases, desktop studies, and physical surveys and monitoring;
- Input into the development of design including embedded mitigation;
- Assessment of likely impacts and effects, on the basis of modelling, calculations and professional judgement;
- Identification of any necessary additional mitigation or monitoring required;
- Determination of residual effects; and
- Assessment of effect interactions and cumulative effects with other schemes, plans and projects.

### Structure of the Technical Chapters

4.4.3. Each technical chapter follows the same structure for ease of reference, as outlined below:

- Introduction;
- Legislation and Planning Policy;
- Stakeholder Engagement;
- Assessment Methodology;

- Assessment Assumptions and Limitations;
- Baseline Conditions;
- Embedded Mitigation;
- Assessment of Likely Impacts and Effects;
- Additional Monitoring, Mitigation and Enhancements Measures;
- Residual Effects; and
- Cumulative Effects.

### Rochdale Envelope

- 4.4.4. As discussed in **ES Chapter 2: The Scheme** (Doc Ref. 6.1), there are design aspects and features of the Scheme that cannot be confirmed until the detailed design is completed. This is important as the technology for solar PV and BESS is continuing to advance and there is a need for the Applicant to maintain flexibility to meet the changing demands of the UK market, prior to construction and to enable the Applicant to adopt the most up to date technology at the point of commencement of development. It also ensures that the Applicant can effectively address any unforeseen constraints or challenges that may emerge during the detailed design phase, such as environmental, technical, operational, or regulatory issues, before construction begins. The 'Rochdale Envelope' approach has therefore been applied within the EIA to ensure a robust assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Scheme, in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 9: The Rochdale Envelope<sup>6</sup>. This involves assessing the maximum (and where relevant, minimum) parameters for the elements of the Scheme where flexibility needs to be retained, recognising that the worst-case parameter for one technical assessment may differ from another. Where this approach is applied, this has been confirmed within the relevant chapters of this ES.
- 4.4.5. As is relevant for each technical discipline, the worst-case parameters for the Scheme, under the Rochdale Envelope approach, have been assessed in order to predict likely worst-case overall impacts for that topic. These have been used in the assessment of significance of effects for the Scheme. Each of the technical assessments (**ES Chapters 5 to 16** (Doc Ref. 6.1)) describe the parameters applied in relation to the assessment.
- 4.4.6. As the Scheme design has evolved, key elements of the design have been fixed. However, flexibility has been maintained for some aspects of the Scheme within the DCO Application. Where flexibility has been retained in the DCO Application,

any subsequent changes arising from detailed design will remain within the likely worst-case parameters assessed in this ES. Further explanation on flexibility incorporated within certain parameters is provided in **ES Chapter 2: The Scheme** (Doc Ref. 6.1).

### Determining the Baseline

- 4.4.7. In order to assess potential impacts of the Scheme on environmental receptors, and to identify any potential significant effects, an understanding of baseline conditions is necessary within the site and identified study area and/or zone of influence (Zol) for each topic chapter.
- 4.4.8. The identification of the baseline therefore requires the description of the existing conditions and then a prediction of how it is likely to evolve in the absence of the Scheme. This includes accounting for current conditions and using experience and professional judgment to predict what the baseline conditions might look like when accounting for natural change.
- 4.4.9. To gather a fully comprehensive, descriptive summary of the baseline, each individual topic has adopted appropriate data gathering methods following topic specific guidelines (where relevant). This typically includes the following:
- Data searches; for example, Historic Environment Record (HER) for information in relation to heritage assets, Lincolnshire Local Records Centre (LLRC) for ecology records and British Geological Survey (BGS) mapping in relation to the geology of the site;
  - Desk studies: a review of previous reports and studies;
  - Baseline surveys; for example, ecology surveys and noise monitoring; and
  - Environmental information submitted in support of other planning applications for developments in the vicinity of the site.

### Future Baseline

- 4.4.10. Where required, consideration has also been given to how the baseline conditions would evolve in the absence of the Scheme, known as the 'future baseline' scenario. This involves, where relevant, the consideration of the 'no development' or 'do nothing' scenario and, where required, allows impact assessments to consider and compare the scale of reasonably anticipated environmental changes, such as noise levels, with and without the Scheme during all phases. Developments that have planning permission or are allocated within adopted development plans (known as 'committed developments'), are also factored into the future baseline.

- 4.4.11. While there is potential for changes in relation to climate change such as a greater frequency of droughts and greater rainfall density, it is likely that these would not lead to a change in baseline conditions during the lifetime of the Scheme. There is the potential for land management practices and business approaches of landowners to change within the lifetime of the Scheme; however, these cannot be assessed to an acceptable degree of certainty. Furthermore, no allocated sites apply to the site. The latest South Holland District Council 5-year Housing Land Supply Assessment (March 2025)<sup>15</sup> considered that South Holland District had sufficient deliverable housing sites to meet requirements until March 2029. It is therefore considered reasonable to assume the site would remain in agricultural use in the medium to long term in the absence of the Scheme.
- 4.4.12. The future baseline has been further considered in each topic chapter, where relevant to the respective technical assessment.

### Spatial Scope: Geographical Area

- 4.4.13. The technical chapters of this ES (**Chapters 5 to 16** (Doc Ref. 6.1)) describe their spatial scope, including their rationale for determining the specific area within which the assessment is focussed. The Study Areas are a function of the nature of the impacts and the locations of potentially affected environmental resources or receptors. Justification for the spatial scope considered appropriate for each topic is documented in the respective chapter (**ES Chapters 5 to 16** (Doc Ref. 6.1)).

### Temporal Scope: Timescales and Assessment Years

- 4.4.14. The duration of effects identified are explained in each relevant topic chapter but are generally defined as:
- Short-term temporary (up to five years);
  - Medium-term temporary (between five and 10 years);
  - Long-term temporary (more than 10 years); and
  - Permanent (those effects that cannot be reversed following decommissioning).

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<sup>15</sup> South Holland District Council (2025) *5-year Housing Land Supply Assessment*. Available at: <https://www.sholland.gov.uk/article/11306/5-year-Housing-Land-Supply>. [Accessed 23 September 2025]

### Construction Phase

- 4.4.15. The effects of the Scheme in relation to the construction phase constitute those that may result from activities during enabling works, construction and commissioning activities. This accounts for sources of impacts, including but not limited to, noise and vibration, dust generation, and traffic associated with the construction activities outlined in **ES Chapter 2: Scheme** (Doc Ref 6.1). By their nature, the majority of construction impacts will be temporary and reversible, for example, the creation of construction compounds. Other impacts, for example, the erection of solar PV modules would extend across the construction and operational phases of the Scheme and represent a reversible impact, albeit over a longer period.
- 4.4.16. For the purposes of the assessment, it is assumed that the maximum duration of the construction phase would be four years. For a worst-case assessment, it has been assumed that the construction of the Solar Development Area, Inter-Array Connection and Grid Connection would be undertaken in parallel.

### Operational Phase

- 4.4.17. For the purposes of the assessment, the effects in relation to the 40-year operational phase constitute those that may result from the operation, physical presence and maintenance of the Scheme. The majority of the operational effects will therefore be considered as long-term, however, reversible.

### Decommissioning Phase

- 4.4.18. The effects in relation to the decommissioning phase constitute those that may result from activities during site decommissioning and restoration works. Typically, effects associated with the decommissioning phase are similar in nature to those during the construction phase, albeit to a shorter duration and degree of intensity. On this basis the construction assessment is used within several chapters as a basis for evaluating decommissioning, meaning the two assessments may be combined, with the decommissioning effects considered to be less than, or the same degree as those anticipated during construction.
- 4.4.19. For the purposes of the assessment, it is assumed the decommissioning phase would take up to two years.

### Assessment Years

- 4.4.20. The assessment considers the environmental impacts of the Scheme at key stages in its construction, operation and decommissioning, as outlined in Table 4-2.

4.4.21. As explained within the **Grid Connection Statement** (Doc Ref. 7.5), the Applicant has received a Gate 1 grid connection offer from the National Electricity System Operator (NESO) for a connection date post-2035. However, the Applicant is eligible to apply for an earlier connection date within the 2031 to 2035 window through future Gate 2 application rounds. The assessment years summarised within Table 4-2 below set out the assumptions used for the purposes of the ES. It is considered that the outcomes of the EIA would not be materially different, if the assessment years moved further into the future than those dates assumed below, noting commencement of construction is ultimately controlled by the seven year deadline from the grant of consent as set within the **Draft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1). The key implications for the EIA technical assessments are summarised below:

- Climate change – with a delay to the start of construction for the Scheme, a greater proportion or all construction greenhouse gas emissions would occur within the sixth carbon budget. However, this would not change any of the conclusions of the assessment presented within **ES Chapter 7: Climate Change** (Doc Ref. 6.1);
- Flood risk – hydraulic modelling for the Scheme has considered climate change allowances for the 2080s epoch. As such, there would be no change to the climate change allowances and hydraulic modelling completed for the Scheme to inform **ES Appendix 11-3: Flood Risk Assessment** (Doc Ref. 6.3);
- Traffic related assessment (traffic and access, air quality and noise) – a later construction peak year would likely result in slightly higher baseline flows, assuming traffic flows increase year on year. As the Scheme impacts are assessed as a percentage change compared to the future baseline, the effects predicted from the Scheme would likely decrease with regards to the traffic related assessments. Furthermore, considering the overall low baseline traffic within the study area, any increase in traffic flows would likely be minimal and the effects associated with the traffic assessments would not likely be materially different;
- All other environmental assessments scoped into the ES (agriculture and soils, cultural heritage, ecology and biodiversity, human health, hydrology, landscape and visual, socio-economics and land use, and other environmental topics) – there would be no change to the assessments as a result of the change in the assessment years.

4.4.22. The implications of the assessment years changing with regards to the cumulative effects assessment are further considered within Section 4.7 of this chapter.

**Table 4-2: Assessment Years**

Factor	Assessment Years	Description
Existing Baseline	2025	Unless stated otherwise, 2025 is the baseline year date from which the existing baseline has been described, and against which environmental effects have been assessed. It should be noted environmental surveys and investigations have been ongoing since 2022. Baseline data has been updated where no longer considered up to date.
Future Baseline (No Scheme)	2029, 2031, 2033, 2048, 2073	<p>The year from which an assessment against a future baseline without the Scheme has been conducted is outlined in each relevant topic chapter, based on the 'worst-case' scenario.</p> <p>Where relevant, the following future baseline years have been considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2029 – assumed start of construction;</li> <li>• 2031 – assumed peak year of construction for the Scheme;</li> <li>• 2033 – assumed start of operation;</li> <li>• 2048 – 15 years after the start of operation, following which any proposed landscape planting is assumed to have matured;</li> <li>• 2073 – assumed start of decommissioning.</li> </ul>
Construction phase	2029-2033	Start of construction in 2029 has been assumed for the purposes of the ES. Albeit it is considered unlikely that new or materially

Factor	Assessment Years	Description
		different effects would arise if construction started earlier or later than this date. The construction phase is anticipated to last between three to four years. The 'worst-case' scenario in terms of construction duration has been assessed per topic and is outlined within each relevant chapter.
Operational phase	2033-2073	It is proposed that the Scheme would be operational for 40 years from the completion of the construction phase. A start of operation in 2033 has been assumed.
Decommissioning phase	2073-2075	It is proposed that the Scheme is decommissioned following 40 years of operation. Decommissioning would take approximately two years. The assessment of the decommissioning phase is based on the earliest the phase would commence; however, this is not considered a determining factor and results are unlikely to differ if decommissioning occurs at a later date. Any later decommissioning date would not be expected to occur significantly beyond this period, and is anticipated to be within approximately 5–10 years, in line with the controls governing the commencement and duration of the authorised development

## 4.5. Assessment of Effects and Defining Significance

- 4.5.1. The evaluation of the significance of an effect is important; it is the significance that determines the resources that should be deployed in avoiding or mitigating a significant adverse effect, or conversely, the actual value of a beneficial effect. Where it has not been possible to quantify effects, qualitative assessments have been carried out based on available information and professional judgment.

Where uncertainty exists, this has been noted in the relevant technical chapter, where assumptions are stated.

- 4.5.2. Details relating to the specific assessment methodologies of individual technical topics are provided in the technical chapters of this ES. The significance of an effect has been assessed by considering the magnitude of impact (the degree of change experienced by a receptor), against the sensitivity of the affected receptor. In some cases, technical chapters may deviate from the general approach, where discipline-specific technical guidance requires a different methodology. Where this is the case, this has been clearly identified in the relevant technical chapters.

### Sensitivity of Receptors

- 4.5.3. A receptor is an entity that may be affected by an impact. Relevant receptors have been identified for each environmental topic area and an appropriate baseline established within the relevant topic-specific study area and Zol. The method to achieve this is usually topic-specific and has therefore been described in each of the technical chapters of this ES.
- 4.5.4. The general criteria and definitions for sensitivity/value that have been used to describe the sensitivity of receptors to change arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Scheme are shown in Table 4-3. Where applicable, technical assessments have set out their own specific criteria and definitions for determining sensitivity.
- 4.5.5. The sensitivity, value or importance of a resource or receptor is generally derived from:
- Designated status within the land use planning system;
  - Reference to standards in environmental assessment guidance;
  - The number of individual receptors, such as residents;
  - An empirical assessment on the basis of characteristics such as rarity or condition; and
  - Its ability to absorb change.

**Table 4-3: Environmental Value (Sensitivity) and Typical Definition**

Value (sensitivity) of Receptor	Typical Definition
High	High importance and rarity of receptor at international or national scale. Limited ability to absorb the change without fundamentally altering the present character of the receptor or resource.
Medium	Medium or high importance and rarity of receptor at regional or local scale. Moderate capacity to absorb the change without significantly altering the present character of the receptor or resource.
Low	Low or medium importance and rarity of receptor. The receptor or resource is tolerant of change without detrimentally altering the present character.
Very low	Limited importance and rarity of receptor. The receptor or resource can accommodate change without material effect.

### Magnitude of Impact

- 4.5.6. An impact is a change in baseline conditions caused by the Scheme. The general criteria and definitions for magnitude of impact to describe changes arising from the Scheme is shown in Table 4-4 below. Where applicable, technical chapters have set out their own specific approach to this assessment within **ES Chapters 5 to 16** (Doc Ref. 6.1).

**Table 4-4: Magnitude of and Definition**

Magnitude of Impact		Definitions
High	Adverse	Total loss or; severe damage to key characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Large scale or major improvement of quality; extensive restoration; major improvement of attribute quality.
Medium	Adverse	Loss of resource, but not adversely affecting the integrity; partial loss of/damage to key characteristics, features or elements.

Magnitude of Impact		Definitions
	Beneficial	Benefit to, or addition of, key characteristics, features or elements; improvement of attribute quality.
Low	Adverse	Some measurable change in attributes, quality or vulnerability; minor loss of, or alteration to, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Minor benefit to, or addition of, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements; some beneficial impact on attribute or a reduced risk of negative impact occurring.
Very low	Adverse	Very minor loss or detrimental alteration to one or more characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Very minor benefit to, or positive addition of, one or more characteristics, features or elements.
No change		No loss or alteration of characteristics, features or elements; no observable impact.
Table Source: Adapted from Table 3.4N DMRB LA 104 (2020) Environmental assessment and monitoring <sup>16</sup>		

## Significance of Effect

- 4.5.7. Once the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the impact have been established, the overall significance of the effect has been assessed using the matrix outlined in Table 4-5, unless otherwise stated in the relevant technical chapter.

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<sup>16</sup> Highways England; Transport Scotland; Welsh Government; Department for Infrastructure (Northern Ireland) (2020) Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB): LA 104 Environmental Assessment and Monitoring. Available at: <https://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/tses/attachments/0f6e0b6a-d08e-4673-8691-cab564d4a60a?inline=true> [Accessed 23 September 2025]

**Table 4-5: Significance Matrix**

Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity or Value			
	High	Medium	Low	Very low
High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor
Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
Very low	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

- 4.5.8. Following the classification of an effect, clear statements have been made within the technical chapters as to whether that effect is significant or not significant. Residual effects found to be 'moderate' or 'major' are deemed to be 'significant' and therefore important and relevant to the decision-making process. Effects found to be 'negligible' or 'minor' are considered to be 'not significant' and not material to the decision-making process, although they may be matters of local concern.
- 4.5.9. Where relevant, the following aspects have also been considered in determining the category of the effect:
- Effect duration and its frequency/likelihood;
  - The reversibility of the effect, and whether it is permanent or temporary;
  - Whether an impact is direct or indirect (whereby direct effects are those where the Scheme causes an impact or change experienced by a receptor as a result of a single primary change and indirect effects are those that result indirectly from the Scheme as a consequence of the direct effects);
  - The sensitivity of a receptor;
  - The magnitude of the impact;
  - Performance against any relevant environmental quality standards, where appropriate;
  - Compatibility with environmental policies; and
  - Whether the effect occurs in isolation, is cumulative or interacts with other effects.
- 4.5.10. The general definitions for the different categories of effects are outlined in Table 4-6 below.

**Table 4-6: Effect Categories and Definitions**

Effect	Generic Description
Major (significant)	Effects at this level are likely to be material in the decision-making process. Where adverse, effects indicate the Scheme is likely to result in severe and potentially irreversible impacts on the environment requiring mitigation.
Moderate (significant)	Effects at this level can be considered to be material decision-making factors. Where adverse, effects indicate the Scheme is likely to result in localised, temporary and / or reversible impacts on the environment requiring mitigation.
Minor (not significant)	Effects at this level are not considered to be material decision-making factors. Where adverse, effects indicate the Scheme is likely to result in minor impacts that do not pose significant environmental risks.
Negligible (not significant)	Effects at this level are beneath levels of perception, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error. Where adverse, effects indicate the Scheme is likely to result in impacts minor enough to not be considered further and would not generally require mitigation.

## Indirect Effects

- 4.5.11. An EIA is required to identify, describe and assess, among other factors, the likely “*direct and indirect significant effects*” of a Scheme on the environment<sup>17</sup>. Indirect effects often occur away from the site, or as a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway and may be separated by distance or time from the source of the effects. Indirect effects may be upstream (for example, effects from the production of materials used by a Scheme) or downstream (for example, effects arising from the management of waste generated by a Scheme). The Supreme Court Judgement in the case of Finch (on

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<sup>17</sup> The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/572/data.pdf>. [Accessed 15/09/2025]

behalf of the Weald Action Group) (Appellant) v Surrey County Council and others (Respondents)<sup>18</sup> reiterated the need for the relevant planning authority to consider both the beneficial and adverse indirect effects of a Scheme as a material planning consideration. Each technical assessment has outlined where indirect effects have been considered.

## 4.6. Approach to Mitigation

- 4.6.1. Regulation 14, paragraph (2)(c) of the EIA Regulations<sup>19</sup> requires the ES to provide “a description of any features of the proposed development, or measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment”. These are commonly referred to as mitigation measures. Mitigation measures can relate to actions taken to the design of the Scheme, as well as controls to the methodology of activities completed during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. All mitigation measures relied upon have been summarised within the relevant technical chapters of the ES.
- 4.6.2. The Scheme has adopted a standard hierarchical approach to identifying mitigation requirements. The mitigation hierarchy is defined within the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)<sup>20</sup> as ‘a term to incorporate the avoid, reduce, mitigate and compensate process that applicants need to go through to protect the environment and biodiversity’, Table 4-7 below sets out how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied to the Scheme.

**Table 4-7: Mitigation Hierarchy**

Mitigation Category	Examples
Avoid/ Prevent	Avoid impacting on sensitive receptors through site selection and the development of the Scheme layout.
Reduce	Take measures to amend the Scheme design to reduce impact.

<sup>18</sup> UK Supreme Court (2024) JUDGEMENT R (on the application of Finch on behalf of the Weald Action Group) (Appellant) v Surrey County Council and other (Respondents). Available at: [https://supremecourt.uk/uploads/uksc\\_2022\\_0064\\_judgment\\_c3d44bb244.pdf](https://supremecourt.uk/uploads/uksc_2022_0064_judgment_c3d44bb244.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/572/regulation/14> [Accessed 23 September 2025]

<sup>20</sup> DESNZ (2025). Overarching NPS for Energy (NPS EN-1). Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695d1015f41883f4e50ed9ab/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-web-accessible.pdf> [Accessed 23 January 2026]

Mitigation Category	Examples
Mitigate	Introduce mitigation measures such as landscaping. Restore or repair an impact, often due to construction.
Compensate / Offset	Such as provision of new habitat, open space or financial compensation for loss. Archaeological excavation and recording of archaeological remains prior to construction and the dissemination of information on findings.

4.6.3. In the first instance, opportunities have been taken to avoid adverse effects altogether. Where avoidance is not possible (for example, due to financial, operational or societal constraints), the EIA has then sought to minimise the significance of adverse effects. Where environmental effects remain significant, further mitigation or compensatory measures may then be required.

4.6.4. The principles of the mitigation hierarchy have been incorporated into the Scheme design. All mitigation relied upon within the ES and their securing mechanisms have also been set out within the **Environmental Mitigation and Commitments Register** (Doc Ref. 7.7) submitted with the DCO Application.

4.6.5. In addition, the following terms have been used to describe mitigation within the ES:

- Embedded mitigation;
- Additional mitigation; and
- Enhancement measures.

#### Embedded Mitigation

4.6.6. Embedded mitigation includes those measures incorporated into the design that are considered to form an inherent part of the Scheme. They also include any measures which are underpinned by compliance with legislation and standard industry practice with regards to environmental management, and would be implemented regardless of the outcomes of the EIA. Embedded mitigation is described in each topic chapter, where relevant, and it forms part of the Scheme from which the assessment of likely effects has been completed. Embedded mitigation could include, for example, the incorporation of buffer distances between infrastructure and environmental receptors, and/or the provision of and

compliance with the measures within an environmental management plan submitted with the DCO Application.

#### Additional Mitigation and Monitoring

- 4.6.7. Additional mitigation includes those measures, which have been identified to be required following the assessment of the Scheme's effects (which would have taken into account embedded mitigation). They include further measures to achieve a sought outcome, for example the use of additional noise barriers or the selection of quieter plant in the event that modelling or noise surveys show noise remains above acceptable levels.
- 4.6.8. Where a likely significant effect has been identified, requirements for monitoring and additional mitigation have been proposed within the relevant technical chapter in line with the EIA Regulations, where practicable.

#### Enhancement Measures

- 4.6.9. Enhancement measures are the benefits introduced over and above what is required to mitigate any identified adverse effects resulting from the Scheme. Enhancement measures may also include those benefits that, while not directly related to identified impacts, are included as part of the Scheme.

#### Residual Effects

- 4.6.10. Following the identification of any additional mitigation measures, if required, the residual effects of the Scheme are classified in accordance with the significance criteria. The residual likely significant effects are summarised within **ES Chapter 18: Summary of Likely Significant Effects** (Doc Ref. 6.1).

### 4.7. Assessment of Cumulative Effects

- 4.7.1. In accordance with the EIA Regulations, 'cumulative effects' associated with the Scheme have been considered as part of this ES. Cumulative effects occur where impacts caused by present and reasonably foreseeable activities create an increased level of effect. An individual environmental impact may not be significant on its own but may become significant when it is combined with other environmental impacts from the same scheme or other developments.
- 4.7.2. For the cumulative impact assessment, two types of impact are considered:
- The combined effect of individual impacts from the Scheme, for example, where a single receptor may be affected by noise and traffic disruption during the construction of the Scheme (these are commonly referred to as 'effect interactions', 'intra-project effects' or 'interrelationship effects'); and

- The combined effects of the Scheme with other committed developments which may interact cumulatively with the Scheme. The effects of these committed developments may be insignificant on an individual basis, but cumulatively with the Scheme have a new or different likely significant effect (these are referred to as 'cumulative effects with other developments' or 'inter-project effects').

## Effect Interactions

4.7.3. The assessment of effect interactions considers the potential for multiple direct or indirect effects caused by the Scheme to result in a new or greater effect on a select receptor. The following effect interactions have been assessed as part of the ES:

- Within **ES Chapter 17: Effect Interactions** (Doc Ref. 6.1):
  - The combination of individual types of effects arising from the Scheme on a receptor (e.g. noise and visual effects experienced by the same residential receptor).
- Within **ES Chapters 5- 16** (Doc Ref. 6.1), as relevant, to the technical assessments:
  - Multiple impacts relating to the same technical matter affecting the same receptor (e.g. ground disturbance and changes to hydrology impacting on the same below ground archaeological assets).
  - Combined effects of multiple elements of the Scheme's infrastructure relating to the same technical matter, for example, the combined noise effect of multiple Solar Stations.
  - Combined effects of multiple stages of work impacting on the same receptor. For example, noise from the construction of the Solar Development Area and the Grid Connection Route happening at the same time.

4.7.4. Further information on the above effect interactions and the assessment methodology adopted is provided within **ES Chapter 17: Effect Interactions** (Doc Ref. 6.1) and **ES Chapters 5-16** (Doc Ref. 6.1).

## Cumulative Effects with Other Developments

- 4.7.5. The assessment of cumulative effects with other developments is based on the Planning Inspectorate's Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment (2025)<sup>21</sup>. Cumulative effects could occur where the Scheme and one or more committed developments combine to generate a significant cumulative effect on a receptor.
- 4.7.6. The following four-stage approach has been adopted:
- Stage 1: Establishing the study area and a long list of committed developments;
  - Stage 2: Establishing the short list of committed developments;
  - Stage 3: Information gathering on each committed development; and
  - Stage 4: Assessment of cumulative effects of the Scheme in combination with the identified committed developments.

### Stage 1: Establishing the Study Area and a Long List of Other Developments

- 4.7.7. The Stage 1 activities focussed on establishing the Scheme's likely Zol associated with each of the environmental matters assessed in this ES. Table 4-9 sets out the Zols for each of the technical assessments within this ES.
- 4.7.8. On the basis of the Zols summarised within Table 4-9, a search radius of 30km for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and 15km for other types of applications was selected. Furthermore, all cumulative solar schemes within the administrative boundary of Lincolnshire County Council were listed for the assessment of cumulative effects on agricultural land and waste. Table 4-10 summarises the search criteria for the long-list of cumulative schemes.
- 4.7.9. All cumulative schemes on the long-list were assigned a tier in accordance with Table 4-11 and the Planning Inspectorate's NSIPs: Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment<sup>21</sup>.
- 4.7.10. The long-list of cumulative schemes is presented within **ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes** (Doc Ref. 6.3). It was shared for comment with Lincolnshire County Council and South Holland District Council, and comments received have

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<sup>21</sup> Planning Inspectorate (2025) Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-on-cumulative-effects-assessment>. [Accessed 23 September 2025]

been taken into account in finalising the list. A summary of the comments received on the long-list of cumulative schemes is provided in Table 4-8.

Table 4-8: Comments received on the long list of cumulative schemes

Local Authority	Comment	Response
LCC	<p>It is assumed the NSIP tab includes only those which are within 30km of the Meridian scheme - please note Eastern Green Link 5 is listed here and runs from Anderby Creek to the Lincolnshire Connections Node and is therefore outside the 30km.</p> <p>However, it is noted that in the Cumulative Impacts chapter of the PEIR identifies that NSIPs within a 50km ZOI were to be considered, but on the spreadsheet's introductory tab it states only 30km. Is there a rationale for this change?</p> <p>In addition, allocations were not addressed in the aforementioned chapter of the PEIR and as such is there a rationale for using a 5km ZOI?</p> <p>Please note also on the spreadsheet introductory tab, it states regarding TCPA 'within the last 3 years' does that refer to both permissions given and applications received during that period?</p> <p>It is noted and welcomed that the cumulative impact of waste and soils/BMV (both NSIP and TCPA) will be considered as a countywide issue.</p>	<p>As set out within Table 4-9 of this chapter, the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the Scheme does not extend beyond 30km. This Zoi has been selected as it is considered there is limited potential for significant cumulative effects to occur with developments beyond this distance. However, regardless of their distance, solar NSIP and TCPA applications within the county of Lincolnshire have been identified for a cumulative effects assessment for agricultural land use and waste, in order to provide an assessment of country-wide impacts. It is not considered necessary to otherwise identify NSIPs beyond 30km, as there is no potential for significant cumulative effects, beside the assessments for agricultural land use and waste.</p> <p>Regardless, where cumulative effects with specific NSIPs have been queried through consultation feedback, these schemes have been included within <b>ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) to present the reasoning why no further assessment has been undertaken. This includes the Eastern Green Link 5, which is located 49km from the Order Limits of the Scheme.</p>

Local Authority	Comment	Response
		<p>The list of allocations from local plans has been reviewed and updated to include allocations within a 15km buffer from the Order Limits of the Scheme.</p> <p>TCPA applications that meet the cumulative schemes search criteria and which have been granted consent within the last three years have been included on the long-list of cumulative schemes.</p>
LCC	<p>TCPA and/or Agricultural and Waste tab</p> <p>The following additional applications should be included and the list of cumulative schemes should be reviewed for any additional schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gunthorpe Road, Marsh - Solar Farm (H18-0741-21)</li> <li>• Cowbridge Road, Bicker Fen - Solar Array (H04-0849-22 &amp; B/22/0356)</li> <li>• Washdyke Farm, Folkingham (S23/0511)</li> <li>• Spalding Road, Bourne (S24/2191)</li> <li>• Pastures Farm, High Dike, Welby (S24/1623)</li> <li>• Green Lane Gonerby Moor Grantham (S23/1934)</li> </ul>	<p><b>ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) has been reviewed and the schemes referenced have been included.</p>
LCC	Allocations tab	<p><b>ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) has been updated to include these allocations.</p>

Local Authority	Comment	Response
	<p>Missing 2 sites from the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Site Locations document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WA16-SK - North of Manning Lane &amp; West of Meadow Drove, Bourne</li> <li>• WA22-BO - Riverside Industrial Estate, Boston (immediately adjacent to the 15km search area)</li> </ul>	
LCC	<p>NSIP tab</p> <p>There is a new solar farm NSIP at Kilinside (EN0110022), located to the north of Stamford. Scoping took place in June/July 2025 which has not been included in your list.</p>	<p><b>ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3), Table 1-6 has been updated to include Kilinside Energy Park [EN0110022]. However, it is noted that the application was withdrawn by the project developer in February 2026.</p>
SHDC	<p><b>NSIPs</b></p> <p>Comments on the local authorities assigned to the NSIPs.</p> <p>There are also a number of NSIPs that are missing from the NSIP list (Cottam Solar Farm (EN 1010133), West Burton Solar Farm (EN 010132), Gate Burton Solar Farm (EN 010131), Viking CCS Pipeline (EN 070008) and Tillbridge Solar Farm (EN 010142) because of the 30 km criteria but I suggest that this is acknowledged. There are others such as Leoda Solar Farm (EN011016), Springwell Solar Farm (EN010149), Fosse Green Energy Park (EN</p>	<p><b>ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) has been updated to include the correct local authorities for each of the NSIPs.</p> <p>The NSIPs listed are outside the 30km search radius, however, have been included on the list of projects for the assessment of cumulative effects for agricultural land use and waste.</p>

Local Authority	Comment	Response
	010154) and One Earth Solar Farm (EN010159) which are probably within the 30 km criteria again if not this should perhaps be explained.	
SHDC	<p>TCPA</p> <p>It appears that reference numbers (H14-0348-23, H16-0871-24, H05-0422-25, H09-1044-23, H23-0471-23, H14-0328-21, H08-1335-21 and H16-0136-23) also fall within the search criteria and that references numbers H02-0696-22 and H23-0534-23 are associated with allocations Cro 011 and WHA 002.</p>	<p><b>ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) has been updated to include the listed planning applications.</p>

**Table 4-9: Zol Extents for the Assessment of Cumulative Effects**

Environmental Topic	Zol for cumulative effects
Agriculture and Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Order Limits for effects within the Site;</li> <li>• Lincolnshire County Council administrative area for effects on agricultural land use regionally.</li> </ul>
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 250m for construction and decommissioning dust;</li> <li>• 200m of modelled road links.</li> </ul>
Climate Change	N/A
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5km for designated assets;</li> <li>• 1km for non-designated assets around the Solar Development Areas and Inter-Arrays;</li> <li>• 2km for non-designated assets around the Grid Connection Route.</li> </ul>
Ecology and Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15km for Internationally Important Wildlife Sites (IIWS);</li> <li>• 2km for all other designated sites, habitats and protected species.</li> </ul>
Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects other ES chapters</li> </ul>
Hydrology and Flood Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2km</li> </ul>
Landscape and Visual Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5km for Solar Development Areas and Inter-Array;</li> <li>• 10km for the Grid Connection Route.</li> </ul>
Noise and Vibration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 300m for construction and decommissioning activities;</li> <li>• 50m of modelled road links;</li> <li>• 300m for operational noise from Solar Development Areas;</li> <li>• 200m for operational noise from Grid Connection Route.</li> </ul>

Environmental Topic	Zol for cumulative effects
Socio-economics and Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30km for worker accommodation and economic impacts (with NSIPs only);</li> <li>• 2km for land use receptors.</li> </ul>
Traffic and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5km</li> </ul>
Other Environmental Topics – Electric and Magnetic Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Order Limits</li> </ul>
Other Environmental Topics – Glint and Glare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1km for impacts on ground-based receptors;</li> <li>• 5km for impacts on small aerodromes<sup>22</sup>.</li> </ul>
Other Environmental Topics – Major Accidents and Disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10km</li> </ul>
Other Environmental Topics – Materials and Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lincolnshire County Council administrative area.</li> </ul>

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<sup>22</sup> There are no large international aerodromes within 20km or military aerodromes within 10km of the Solar Development Areas, which would be impacted by the Scheme. Therefore, the Glint and Glare Zol on aviation receptors was reduced to 5km.

**Table 4-10: Search criteria for the long-list of cumulative schemes**

Type of Development	Size	Distance from Order Limits	Date of Consent (if granted)*
Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects	n/a	30km	Within last 5 years (since 30 September 2020)
Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990 <sup>13</sup> applications, Transport and Works Act Orders; Mineral and Waste EIA applications and allocations within Local Plans	Residential 10+ dwellings Residential development 0.5ha+ Development of floorspace 1000sqm+ Development of sites 1ha+ All refusals subject to appeal procedures not yet determined	15km	Within last 3 years (since 30 September 2022)
Solar schemes within administrative boundary of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) (for agricultural land use and waste cumulative assessments)	n/a	LCC boundary	Within last 5 years for NSIPs and 3 years for other types of applications

\* Note consents older than 5 years for NSIPs and 3 years for other types of applications have been excluded from long-list of cumulative schemes, as they have assumed to have been constructed, be under construction and completed prior to the construction of the Scheme starting, or the consent has expired.

**Table 4-11: Tier Status Criteria**

Tier	Stage	
1	Under construction and anticipated to overlap with the construction period of the Scheme	Decreasing level of information likely to be available 
	Permitted application(s), whether under the PA 2008 or other regimes, but not yet implemented.	
	Submitted application(s) whether under the PA 2008 or other regimes but not yet determined.	
2	Projects in PINS's Programme of Projects where a scoping report has been submitted	
3	Projects in PINS's Programme of Projects where a scoping report has not been submitted.	
	Identified in the relevant development plan (and emerging Development Plans - with appropriate weight being given as they move closer to adoption) recognising that there will be limited information on the relevant proposals	
	Identified in other plans and programmes (as appropriate) which set the framework for future developments consents/approvals, where such a development is likely to come forward.	

## Stage 2: Establishing the Short List of Other Developments

- 4.7.11. This stage involved reviewing the long list of other developments to identify those schemes to be taken forward (shortlisted) into the cumulative assessment.
- 4.7.12. The shortlisting process involved the application of inclusion/exclusion criteria and was informed by the professional judgement of the environmental specialists undertaking the EIA. The criteria for determining which other developments to shortlist to the cumulative effects assessments, included considering the temporal overlap of the other developments with the Scheme, the level of information available for them and their likelihood to result in cumulative effects with the Scheme on the basis of their scale or their potential to become a new receptor for effects from the Scheme.
- 4.7.13. Developments and projects that are already in existence, i.e. those which are completed and operational, were considered to form part of the environmental baseline conditions within which the Scheme is implemented. Similarly, where

other developments were expected to be completed prior to Scheme construction, and where the effects of those projects are fully determined, these were considered within the future environmental baseline adopted in the EIA.

- 4.7.14. In determining which of the developments should be shortlisted, a minimum level of information is necessary. In accordance with the Planning Inspectorate's NSIPs: Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment<sup>8</sup> generally only developments with at least an EIA Scoping Report or ES available were considered for shortlisting.
- 4.7.15. However, some exceptions to this were made. For example, if any non-EIA development was identified in close proximity, large in scale and/or particularly sensitive locations, this was also considered for shortlisting. With particular reference to solar development, any non-EIA solar developments identified in the Zol were also shortlisted. The cumulative schemes short-listed into the assessment are identified within **ES Appendix 4-1: List of Cumulative Schemes** (Doc Ref. 6.3) and presented in **ES Figures 4-1 and 4-2** (Doc Ref 6.2).

### Stage 3: Information Gathering

- 4.7.16. This stage involved reviewing the available information relating to the shortlisted developments to establish the details of their likely environmental effects. This considered factors including: the Zol of environmental topics assessed; the planned timescales for construction, operation and (where relevant) decommissioning; and information on the effects of the cumulative schemes, as presented within their applications.

### Stage 4: Assessment

- 4.7.17. Stage 4 involved identifying where cumulative effects are likely to occur with the shortlisted developments and assessing the significance of those effects on environmental receptors and resources, taking into account any mitigation measures. This assessment is presented within **ES Chapters 5 - 16** (Doc Ref. 6.1) and has used the same significance criteria as adopted for each technical topic chapter.
- 4.7.18. The cumulative assessment has been undertaken on a topic-by-topic basis rather than scheme-by-scheme as recommended by Annex 2 of the Planning Inspectorate's NSIPs: Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment<sup>8</sup>. This has been done so that a cumulative assessment of the Scheme with all identified cumulative developments could be provided. Information recommended to be provided by Annex 2 of the Planning Inspectorate's NSIPs: Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment<sup>8</sup> has still been presented.

- 4.7.19. In general, where the Scheme results in a negligible effect, it was not considered that the Scheme would significantly contribute to a cumulative effect with other developments. This is because, by virtue of their definition, negligible effects are considered to be imperceptible changes to an environmental / socio-economic resource or receptor. Therefore, the cumulative effects assessment has focused on effects of the Scheme that are minor, moderate, and major.

### **Cumulative Effects with Grimsby to Walpole, Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm, Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire and Ossian Wind Farm DCOs**

- 4.7.20. The Scheme has been considered carefully in relation to the Grimsby to Walpole DCO [EN020036], Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm DCO [EN010130], Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire (WMEL) Overhead Line DCO [EN0210007] and Ossian Wind Farm DCO [EN0210006], which are in close proximity to the Scheme. The Grimsby to Walpole DCO will deliver the National Grid Weston Marsh substation(s), which the Grid Connection Route of the Scheme, the Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm, WMEL and Ossian Wind Farm will connect into. These cumulative developments are shown indicatively on ES Figure 4-2 (Doc Ref. 6.2) and a summary of key information on each of them is provided within Table 4-12. Further information on these cumulative developments and how they are expected to interact with the Scheme is provided in the Interrelationships with Other Infrastructure Projects Report (Doc Ref. 7.2).
- 4.7.21. To inform the cumulative effects assessment presented within this ES, the PEIR and Weston Marsh Supplementary PEIR of the Grimsby to Walpole DCO<sup>23, 24</sup>, the DCO application of the Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm DCO<sup>25</sup>, the Stage 1 Consultation Document<sup>26</sup> and EIA Scoping Report<sup>27</sup> of the WMEL DCO and the EIA Scoping Report<sup>28</sup> of Ossian Wind Farm DCO have been reviewed and considered. However, it is noted that an updated assessment of cumulative effects would be undertaken as part of the Grimsby to Walpole, the WMEL and

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<sup>23</sup> NGET (June 2025) Grimsby to Walpole: Preliminary Environmental Information Report.

<sup>24</sup> NGET (November 2025) 2025 Weston Marsh targeted consultation - Supplementary Preliminary Environmental Information Report.

<sup>25</sup> Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm DCO Application. Available at: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010130> [Accessed 24 September 2025]

<sup>26</sup> NGET (June 2025) Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire: Stage 1 Consultation Document.

<sup>27</sup> NGET (November 2025) Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire EIA Scoping Report. Available at: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0210007/documents> [Accessed 23 January 2026]

<sup>28</sup> Ossian Wind Farm Ltd (2025) EIA Scoping Report. Available at: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0210006> [Accessed 5 November 2025]

Ossian Wind Farm DCO applications, once these projects have progressed further.

4.7.22. The following two assessment scenarios have been considered in relation to these schemes within this ES:

- Scenario 1: Construction periods and the peak construction of the Scheme and the Grimsby to Walpole DCO, Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm DCO, the WMEL DCO and Ossian Wind Farm DCO overlap in 2031; and
- Scenario 2: The projects are built out sequentially, with no overlap in peak construction periods but a longer overall cumulative construction period between 2028 and 2038.

4.7.23. It is noted that the dates for the construction of the Scheme and the cumulative schemes remain indicative and subject to change. However, the above two scenarios are considered to capture the worst-case cumulative effects, even if the dates changed. This is because the above scenarios provide a worst-case assessment where the peak construction of each of these schemes overlaps and also a worst-case total cumulative construction period, if the delivery of these projects was staggered. Each of the technical assessments of the ES have considered which of the above scenarios represents the worst-case scenario for the cumulative effects in relation to the topic area, prior to the assessment of the effects.

**Table 4-12: Summary of key interactions with the Grimsby to Walpole DCO [EN020036], Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm DCO [EN010130] and Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire (WMEL) Overhead Line DCO [EN0210007]**

Cumulative Scheme	Cumulative Scheme Description	Assumed Construction Timescales	Assumed Start of Operation	Key Interactions with the Scheme
Grimsby to Walpole DCO [EN020036]	The project will comprise a new approximately 140km long 400kV overhead line and 5 new substations stretching from a new substation to the west of Grimsby in the north to a new substation at Walpole near Wisbech in the south. Three further substations will be built, two to the south-west of Mablethorpe and one to the north-east of Spalding.	2029-2033  <i>Early works may be undertaken prior to these dates subject to a separate Town and Country Planning Act 1990 application.</i>	2033	The project will provide two new substations at Weston Marsh (Weston Marsh A and Weston Marsh B). The Scheme's Grid Connection Route will connect into Weston Marsh B Substation. From Austendike Road up to the Weston Marsh B Substation, the Scheme has been assumed to run in close parallel alignment with the Grimsby to Walpole 400kV overhead line. In addition, it is expected that both the Scheme and Grimsby to Walpole DCO will utilise the A16 Crowland Bypass, Austendike Road, and A151 High Road for construction traffic access.
Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm DCO [EN010130]	The Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind project comprises an offshore wind farm and associated offshore and onshore infrastructure including offshore and onshore high voltage electricity cables, onshore and offshore electricity substation(s),	2027-2030	2030	It has been assumed that the Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm will connect to the Weston Marsh A substation delivered by the Grimsby to Walpole project. The project approaches the Weston Marsh A Substation siting area from the opposite direction compared to the Scheme, i.e. from the north. However, for a worst-case assessment, it has

Cumulative Scheme	Cumulative Scheme Description	Assumed Construction Timescales	Assumed Start of Operation	Key Interactions with the Scheme
	connection(s) to the National Grid and ancillary and temporary works.			been assumed that construction traffic associated with this project will need to utilise the A16 Crowland Bypass and the A151 High Road for works near the Weston Marsh Substations at the same time as the Scheme.
Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire (WMEL) Overhead Line DCO [EN0210007]	A new circa 60 kilometre 400kV overhead electricity transmission line which connects into the Weston Marsh substation infrastructure (to be constructed under the Grimsby to Walpole Project), in the Spalding region of Lincolnshire, and runs west to a new 400kV transmission substation (WMEL-B) near Wartnaby in Leicestershire, via a new 400kV transmission substation (WMEL-A) near Corby Glen in Lincolnshire.	2030-2034	2034	WMEL 400kV overhead line will connect into the Weston Marsh B substation. Construction traffic data for the assessment of WMEL is not yet available, however, the cumulative scheme has been considered on a qualitative basis.
Ossian Wind Farm [EN0210006]	Ossian Offshore Wind Farm Ltd is intending to develop transmission infrastructure to connect the Ossian Offshore Wind Farm Array (located in Scottish waters and	Unknown. Assumed overlap for a	Unknown. Assumed overlap for a worst-	As the Ossian Offshore Wind Farm transmission cables will approach the Weston Marsh substation siting area from the north, it is likely that it will connect to the Weston Marsh A substation rather than the Weston

Cumulative Scheme	Cumulative Scheme Description	Assumed Construction Timescales	Assumed Start of Operation	Key Interactions with the Scheme
	<p>subject to application for consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989) to National Grid at substations in Lincolnshire. The Proposed Development comprises the installation of high voltage direct current offshore export cables (to the extent that these are located in English waters), landfall structures, HVDC onshore export cables and onshore converter stations, and all other development integral to the construction, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Development, including access. It is proposed that the lifetime of the Proposed Development will be 35 years, at which point the Proposed Development will be decommissioned.</p>	<p>worst-case assessment.</p>	<p>case assessment.</p>	<p>Marsh B substation that the Scheme will connect into. However, the EIA Scoping Report for Ossian Offshore Wind Farm provides the flexibility for either of the substations to be used. As such, for a worst-case assessment it has been assumed that it may connect into the same Weston Marsh substation as the Scheme. Construction traffic data for the assessment of the Ossian Wind Farm is not yet available, however, the cumulative scheme has been considered on a qualitative basis.</p>

