

# The Drovers Solar Farm

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## Appendix 2.3: Scheme Response to Scoping Opinion

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APFP Regulation Reg 5(2)(a)

Planning Act 2008

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





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# 1 Consultation

## 1.1 Scoping Opinion

- 1.1.1 A request for an EIA Scoping Opinion was sought from the Secretary of State (SoS) through the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) in November 2024. PINS subsequently issued the Scoping Opinion in December 2024.
- 1.1.2 The issues raised in the Scoping Opinion relating to EIA methodology and approach are summarised and responded to within Table 2-1 which demonstrates how the matters raised in the Scoping Opinion are addressed in this ES.



**Table 2-1: Relevant Scoping Opinion Comments Related to EIA Methodology and Scope of Assessment**

Consultee and Date	Comment and Scoping Opinion ID No.	How has the comment been addressed in the ES chapter	Location of response in ES Chapter
The Planning Inspectorate, Scoping Opinion, December 2024	<p>2.1.1 <i>“Where significant effects are likely to occur because of decommissioning the Proposed Development these should be described and assessed in the ES.</i></p> <p><i>Where it is assumed that the effects of decommissioning are likely to be similar to or no worse than the effects from construction, this should be justified.</i></p> <p><i>It is the Inspectorate’s opinion that the decommissioning phase should be considered as distinct from construction with any potential effects considered separately”.</i></p>	<p>The potential for significant effects during the decommissioning phase of the Scheme has been assessed in individual ES aspect chapters where necessary. Justification has been provided in the ES aspect chapters on the suitability of assuming decommissioning effects to be similar to or no worse than the effects during the construction phase.</p> <p>The potential for significant decommissioning effects has been considered, as appropriate, against the future baseline scenario during which these effects would take place.</p>	Where relevant see <b>ES Chapters 6 to 16</b> (technical assessments) <b>[APP/6.2]</b> .
The Planning Inspectorate, Scoping Opinion, December 2024	<p>2.1.2 <i>“The Scoping Report states that whether an effect is determined as significant would be based on professional judgement. The ES should fully justify how significance of effects has been established. Where professional judgement is used in the assessment of likely significant effects this should be made clear in the ES”.</i></p>	<p>Professional judgement has been used, where necessary, to determine the significance of an effect <i>“where the matrix offers more than one level of significance”</i>.</p> <p>Each ES aspect chapter sets out the aspect specific methodology which has been informed by, where relevant, the National Policy Statements (NPSs), National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and relevant planning legislative requirements, aspect specific guidelines, standards and codes of practice, and the EIA Regulations.</p>	<p><b>ES Chapter 2: EIA Process and Methodology [APP/6.1]</b>.</p> <p>Where relevant see <b>ES Chapters 6 to 16</b> (technical assessments) <b>[APP/6.2]</b>.</p>



Consultee and Date	Comment and Scoping Opinion ID No.	How has the comment been addressed in the ES chapter	Location of response in ES Chapter
		In situations where the assessment matrix used by the ES aspect chapters offers more than one level of significance, it is clearly stated in the ES where professional judgement has been used to assign the level of significance, which has been clearly justified.	
The Planning Inspectorate, Scoping Opinion, December 2024	<p>2.1.3 <i>“The ES should consider other developments as part of the cumulative effects assessment (CEA). In addition to the High Grove solar farm proposal, the CEA should consider including the terrestrial components of the Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farm (OWF) and Norfolk Boreas OWF developments, and other non-solar developments which may have cumulative effects with the Proposed Development.</i></p> <p><i>The ES should explain why developments within the study area have been excluded from the CEA.</i></p> <p><i>Potential developments considered in the CEA should be consulted on with local planning authorities, the highways authority, and other relevant consultation bodies.</i></p> <p><i>The ES should include information on the locations of the developments included in the CEA and the distance from the Proposed Development supported by a figure</i></p>	<p>The ES has considered other developments as part of the cumulative effects assessment (CEA), in addition to those other developments set out in the Scoping Opinion Response <b>[APP/6.4]</b> and other non-solar developments which may have a cumulative effect with the Scheme.</p> <p>Potential developments considered in the CEA have been consulted upon with local planning authorities, the highways authority, and other relevant consultation bodies.</p> <p>The ES explains why developments within the relative study area have been excluded from the CEA, which includes information on the locations of the developments included in the CEA and the distance from the Scheme supported by a figure depicting the locations and extent of the identified cumulative developments in relation to the Scheme.</p>	<p><b>ES Chapter 2: EIA Process and Methodology [APP/6.1].</b></p> <p>The approach to the CEA assessment in relation to cumulative effects is detailed in <b>ES Appendix 2.4: Cumulative Schemes [APP/6.4].</b></p> <p><b>ES Appendix 2.4: Cumulative Schemes [APP/6.4]</b> and <b>ES Figure 2.1: Cumulative Schemes [APP/6.4].</b></p>





Consultee and Date	Comment and Scoping Opinion ID No.	How has the comment been addressed in the ES chapter	Location of response in ES Chapter
	<i>depicting the locations and extent of the identified cumulative developments in relation to the Proposed Development”.</i>		
The Planning Inspectorate, Scoping Opinion, December 2024	2.1.4 “ <i>The ES should set out the assumed worst-case assessment years. Where there is potential for construction activities to occur across several sites simultaneously this should be considered to ensure a worst-case assessment is provided. Where different aspect assessments use different assessment years, the reasons for the selection of assessment years should be clearly explained in each case, with reference to relevant guidance</i> ”.	The ES clearly sets out the assumed worst-case assessment years for the CEA.  Each aspect chapter has clearly set out the assumed worst-case assessment years.	<b>ES Chapter 2: EIA Process and Methodology [APP/6.1].</b>  The approach to the CEA assessment in relation to cumulative effects is detailed in <b>ES Appendix 2.4: Cumulative Schemes [APP/6.4].</b>
The Planning Inspectorate, Scoping Opinion, December 2024	2.1.5 “ <i>The ES should fully justify the study area for cumulative sites with reference to relevant guidance and the likely extent of impacts. The ES should provide a clear justification for the extent of each Zone of Influence (Zoi) and how it captures the effects from the Proposed Development</i> ”.	The ES has clearly justified the study area for cumulative sites and provided justification for the extent of each Zone of Influence (Zoi) and how it captures the effects from the Proposed Development.	<b>ES Chapter 2: EIA Process and Methodology [APP/6.1].</b>  The approach to the CEA assessment in relation to cumulative effects is detailed in <b>ES Appendix 2.4: Cumulative Schemes [APP/6.4].</b>
The Planning Inspectorate, Scoping Opinion, December 2024	2.1.6 “ <i>The Inspectorate notes the Applicant’s intention to apply a ‘Rochdale Envelope’ approach to maintain flexibility within the design of the Proposed Development.</i> ”	The ES includes comprehensive description of the Scheme including design, size, capacity, technology, and locations of the main components elements of the Proposed Development and is supported by appropriate drawings	<b>ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [APP/6.1].</b>  <b>ES Chapter 2: EIA Process and Methodology [APP/6.1].</b>



Consultee and Date	Comment and Scoping Opinion ID No.	How has the comment been addressed in the ES chapter	Location of response in ES Chapter
	<p><i>The Inspectorate expects that at the point an application is made, the description of the Proposed Development will be sufficiently detailed to include the design, size, capacity, technology, and locations of the different elements of the Proposed Development or, where details are not yet known, the ES 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.</i></p> <p><i>Where flexibility is sought, the ES should clearly set out and justify the maximum design parameters that would apply for each option assessed, and how these have been used to inform an adequate assessment in the ES.</i></p> <p><i>The Inspectorate advises that each aspect chapter includes a section that outlines the relevant parameters / commitments that have informed the assessment”.</i></p>	<p>and plans, as relevant to the nature of the development.</p> <p>Where details are not known or flexibility is sought as part of the Scheme the ES, assumptions or maximum design parameters applied to assessments are clearly set out in individual ES aspect chapters, which in some cases represents the reasonable worst-case assessment scenario.</p>	<b>ES Chapters 6 to 16</b> (technical assessments) [APP/6.2].
The Planning Inspectorate,	2.1.7 “The Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS has considered the Proposed Development and concludes that the Proposed	Noted.	N/A



Consultee and Date	Comment and Scoping Opinion ID No.	How has the comment been addressed in the ES chapter	Location of response in ES Chapter
Scoping Opinion, December 2024	<p><i>Development is unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or cumulatively on the environment in a European Economic Area State. In reaching this conclusion the Inspectorate has identified and considered the Proposed Development's likely impacts including consideration of potential pathways and the extent, magnitude, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impacts.</i></p> <p><i>The Inspectorate considers that the likelihood of transboundary effects resulting from the Proposed Development is so low that it does not warrant the issue of a detailed transboundary screening. However, this position will remain under review and will have regard to any new or materially different information coming to light which may alter that decision.</i></p> <p><i>Note: The SoS' duty under Regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process".</i></p>	The ES confirms that there are no transboundary effects arising from the Scheme.	





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