



# **East Pye Solar Equality Impact Assessment**

**Revision 1  
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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1.1 This Equality Impact Assessment (EQUIA) has been prepared on behalf of East Pye Solar Limited (the 'Applicant') in relation to an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) (the 'DCO Application') for East Pye Solar (the 'Scheme'), pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008).
- 1.1.2 The Scheme comprises the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station with a total capacity exceeding 100 megawatts (MW) and associated development including a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), up to three 132kV Project Substations and up to three 400kV Project Substations, Grid Connection Infrastructure and a new National Grid Substation. A description of the Scheme can be found in Chapter 4 of this report and in the **Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 1, Chapter 4 – The Scheme [EN0110014/APP/6.1.4]**.
- 1.1.3 The Scheme would be located within the **Order Limits** (shown on the **Location Plan [EN0110014/APP/2.1]** and **Works Plan [EN0110014/APP/2.3]** submitted as part of the DCO Application and secured by Article 3 of the **draft DCO [EN0110014/APP/3.1]**). The Order Limits contain all elements of the Scheme comprising the Solar PV Arrays, 132kV and 400kV Project Substations, the National Grid Substation, the BESS, Grid Connection Infrastructure, interconnecting cables within the Cable Route Corridor (CRC), Mitigation and Enhancement Areas and Highway Works. A description of the Order Limits is provided in the **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3 – The Order Limits [EN0110014/APP/6.1.3]**.
- 1.1.4 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) requires public authorities to have due regard to equality considerations when exercising their functions. This Equalities Impact Assessment (EQUIA) considers the potential for the Scheme to discriminate based on certain protected characteristics under the Act in order to assist the SoS in their consideration of the public sector equality duty under section 149.
- 1.1.5 The Scheme is also considered to be EIA Development as defined by the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations), and as such requires an EIA to be undertaken.
- 1.1.6 The Scheme is in the jurisdiction of Norfolk County Council (NCC) and South Norfolk Council (SNC). The methodology for this Equalities Impact Assessment (EQUIA) has been informed by correspondence with Norfolk County Council (NCC) and is aligned to the shared EQUIA template for proposals submitted to NCC.

- 1.1.7 The construction of the Scheme is anticipated to commence in 2028 for a period of approximately 24 months. It is expected that the Scheme could be completed by 2030 and energised in 2031, however the construction period will vary depending on detailed layout design and potential environmental constraints on the timing of construction activities. The construction period may vary across the Order Limits as larger Sites, and Sub-Sites will have multiple construction activities happening simultaneously.
- 1.1.8 The Scheme will produce enough clean, reliable energy to power approximately 115,000 homes annually. It aims to make a significant contribution to meeting national targets to triple solar power to 50 gigawatts (GW) by 2030 and decarbonise electricity systems to reach net zero by 2050.
- 1.1.9 The Scheme covers approximately 1,212.3 hectares (ha) of land south of Norwich and north of Harleston. It is grouped into Sites 1 to 10 and the BESS Site; with Sites 3 to 10 concentrated to the east of Long Stratton; an additional cluster of land parcels including Sites 1 and 2, and the BESS / 400kV Substation 1 Site are located south of Great Moulton; with the CRC linking up the Sites.

## 1.2 Context

- 1.2.1 The Scheme is being developed by East Pye Solar Limited, a 100% subsidiary of Island Green Power (IGP) UK Projects Ltd, which is in turn is a 100% subsidiary of IGP's UK group holding company, IGP Ltd. The Applicant is part of IGP, who are a leading international developer of renewable energy projects, established in 2013.
- 1.2.2 IGP has delivered nearly 40 solar projects worldwide totalling more than 3 GW of capacity. This includes 21 solar projects in the UK. Their mission is to increase solar energy usage, making more renewable energy possible and saving thousands of tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in the process. Recently, IGP have taken two NSIP solar projects (Cottam Solar Project and West Burton Solar Project) through the DCO process. The Cottam Solar project and West Burton Solar Project were granted development consent by the Secretary of State (SoS) on 5 September and 24 January 2025, respectively.

## 1.3 Report Structure

- 1.3.1 This EQUIA aims to:
- Identify and assess any likely effects of the Scheme on relevant receptors, including during the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the Scheme;
  - Set out measures, where possible, to minimise any adverse effects on relevant receptors; and

- Set out measures, where possible, to further enhance any beneficial effects on relevant receptors.
- 1.3.2 The EQUIA draws principally on the findings set out in the Environmental Statement (ES) - **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6 to Chapter 18 [EN0110014/APP/6.1]**, and **ES Volume 2 Figures**, namely:
- **Figure 4.1: Indicative Masterplan [EN0110014/APP/6.2.4.1]**
  - **Figure 4.2: Indicative Temporary Construction Compound Locations [EN0110014/APP/6.2.4.2]**
- 1.3.3 It also draws on information from the following DCO plans:
- **Location Plan [EN0110014/APP/2.1]**
  - **Land Plans [EN0110014/APP/2.2]**
  - **Works Plans [EN0110014/APP/2.3]**
  - **Streets Plan [EN0110014/APP/2.6]**
  - **Access and Rights of Way Plan [EN0110014/APP/2.7]**
- 1.3.4 Additionally, the following documents have also been appraised:
- **Design Parameters, Principles and Commitments [EN0110014/APP/7.18]**
  - **ES Volume 1, Chapter 18 – Appendix 18.1 Glint and Glare Assessment [EN0110014/APP/6.3.18.1]**
  - **Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.1]**
  - **Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.2]**
  - **Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.4]**
  - **Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.6]**
  - **Outline Operational Traffic Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.7]**
  - **Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.8]**
  - **Outline Skills Supply Chain and Employment Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.10]**
  - **Outline Battery Safety Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.5]**

- **Consultation Report [EN0110014/APP/5.1] and Appendices 1-12 [EN0110014/APP/5.2 – EN0110014/APP/5.13]**

1.3.5 These documents have been assessed to determine whether, and to what extent, potential effects could have different magnitude on relevant receptors compared to the general population.

1.3.6 Following on from this introduction, the remainder of the report has been aligned with the NCC EQUIA template, as per correspondence with NCC Equalities Officer, and is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2: Methodology
- Chapter 3: Legislation and Policy
- Chapter 4: Scheme Summary
- Chapter 5: Equalities Baseline
- Chapter 6: Consultation and Engagement Activities
- Chapter 7: Equality Impact Topics
- Chapter 8: Assessment of Impacts
- Chapter 9: Conclusion

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This section sets out the approach to assessing the equality impacts of the Scheme. The assessment considers potential direct and indirect equality impacts (both positive and negative) associated with the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the Scheme.
- 2.1.2 The approach is based on Stantec's professional judgement, an understanding of the Equality Act 2010, particularly section 149 regarding the Public Sector Equality Duty, and supporting technical guidance. The approach is consistent used for DCO Applications for Island Green Power solar power projects. The requirement for an EQUIA for this DCO was identified during consultation.
- 2.1.3 The approach follows a two-stage process:
- Desk-based review – including review of relevant national legislation, regional policy, documents associated with the Scheme and secondary datasets relating to groups with protected characteristics;
  - Assessment of potential impacts – informed by a consideration of the policy context, consultation and engagement activities, findings from ES Volume 1, and equalities baseline data.

### 2.2 Desk-based Review

- 2.2.1 As well as a review of recent relevant national legislation and regional policies, the desk-based review included the following:
- Review of all relevant documentation regarding the DCO Application including design information, relevant assessment work and mitigation and management plans;
  - Review of national and local datasets to develop an equalities baseline profile of groups with protected characteristics living within and surrounding the site. Data sources include Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2021 and 2024; Annual Population Survey (APS); Annual Survey of Hours and Wages; NOMIS; Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES). Data has been obtained from and shared with **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14 - Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]**; and
  - Review of the consultation and engagement activities undertaken to date by the Applicant in relation to the proposals to identify any issues of relevance to this EQUIA.

## Study Area

- 2.2.2 For equalities impacts, the Study Area has been identified at Local Planning Authority Level (South Norfolk) due to the scale of the Scheme, the number of villages, communities, businesses, tourist attractions, PRow, and transport networks within the Order Limits. The equalities impacts could be experienced wider than the immediate Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA).
- 2.2.3 In order to account for impacts at different spatial levels, the EQUIA is aligned with the Study Areas used within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14 - Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]** which provides an overview of the population of the area covered by the Scheme, and where relevant other technical assessment study areas have also been drawn on.
- 2.2.4 **Table 2.1** outlines the study areas used within this assessment, either as direct study areas or geographical comparators.
- 2.2.5 Where data has been collated from the **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14 - Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]**, this has been identified as the Local Areas and indicated accordingly.

**Table 2.1: Equalities Study Areas**

Areas	Definition
The Site	The Order Limits
Local Areas	The Local Areas comprise the following Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) which surround the Site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- South Norfolk 009F</li> <li>- South Norfolk 009G</li> <li>- South Norfolk 011D</li> <li>- South Norfolk 011E</li> <li>- South Norfolk 011F</li> <li>- South Norfolk 012D</li> </ul>
Local Authority, referred to as 'Study Area'	South Norfolk, as per South Norfolk District Council which is the host authority
County	Norfolk County Council in which South Norfolk District Council is located and also the neighbouring county of Suffolk County Council
Regional	The East of England region
National	England

## 2.3 Assessment of Impacts

- 2.3.1 The assessment of equality impacts takes into account the information gathered through the policy and legislation review, consultation activities, and relevant documentation regarding the DCO Application. A judgement is

made on how the Scheme would impact people with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. Protected characteristics groups (PCGs) are defined as follows:

- 2.3.2 **Age:** this refers to persons defined by either a particular age or a range of ages. This can include:
- Children (aged under 16)
  - Young people (aged 16–25)
  - Older people or pensioners (i.e., those aged 65+)
  - The elderly/very old (i.e., those aged 85+)
- 2.3.3 **Disability:** a disabled person is defined as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It can also include people who have progressive conditions such as HIV, cancer, or multiple sclerosis (MS) – even where someone is able to carry out day-to-day activities;
- 2.3.4 **Gender reassignment:** this refers to people who are planning to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process for the purpose of reassigning their gender identity. For this assessment, this category is referred to as ‘Gender Identity’;
- 2.3.5 **Marriage and civil partnership:** marriage or civil partnership can be between a man and a woman or between two people of the same sex;
- 2.3.6 **Pregnancy and maternity:** pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth. For this assessment, this category is referred to as ‘Pregnancy or Maternity’;
- 2.3.7 **Race** (referred to as **Ethnicity** in this EQUIA): Equality Act 2010 defines race as encompassing colour, nationality (including citizenship) and ethnic or national origins;
- 2.3.8 **Religion or belief:** religion means any religion a person follows. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief, and includes those people who have no formal religion or belief;
- 2.3.9 **Sex:** this refers to a man or to a woman or a group of people of the same sex, while gender refers to the wider social roles and relationships that structure men’s and women’s, boys’ and girls’ lives; and
- 2.3.10 **Sexual orientation:** a person's sexual orientation relates to their emotional, physical and/or sexual attraction and the expression of that attraction.

- 2.3.11 The assessment considers both disproportionate and differential impacts on groups with protected characteristics. A disproportionate equality effect arises when an impact has a proportionately greater effect on protected characteristic groups than on the general population overall at a particular location. For the purposes of this EQUIA, disproportionality arises:
- when an impact is predicted for the Scheme, where protected characteristic groups are known to make up a greater proportion of the affected resident population than their representation in the Scheme boundary or England; or
  - where an impact is predicted on a community resource which is predominantly or heavily used by protected characteristic groups (e.g., primary schools attended by children; care homes catering for elderly people).
- 2.3.12 A differential equality effect is one which affects members of a protected group differently from the rest of the general population because of specific needs, or a recognised vulnerability associated with their protected characteristic.
- 2.3.13 In some cases, protected characteristic groups are subject to both disproportionate and differential equality impacts. The EQUIA considers impacts on groups of people and not those on specific individuals.
- 2.3.14 The following protected characteristics, and corresponding justifications, have been scoped out of the assessment. However, they have remained in the assessment table in Section 8 and the lack of impacts marked accordingly. All other protected characteristics are considered scoped in:
- **Gender reassignment:** There is likely to be a no significant impact on this PCG that is able to be identified and attributed to all stages of the Scheme. However, detailed designs of the agreed interventions should consider setting out increased lighting for safety, facilities such as gender-neutral separate bathroom options, and surveillance could increase the perception of safety when interacting with the Scheme.
  - **Marriage & Civil Partnership:** The PCG of Marriage and Civil Partnership has been excluded from this EQUIA as under the Equalities Act 2010 this relates to employment practices and therefore is outside the scope of this assessment.
  - **Sexual Orientation:** There is unlikely to be a significant impact on this PCG that can be identified and attributed to the design and construction of the Scheme. However, detailed designs of the agreed interventions should consider setting out increased lighting for safety and surveillance. These could increase the perception of safety within the site. This is a potentially positive impact on people identifying as LGBTQ+ who are at a higher risk of violence and harassment.

## 2.4 Effect assessment methodology

- 2.4.1 For each equality group, equality effects are concluded as either positive, negative, or neutral.
- 2.4.2 Due to the temporary and short nature of the construction and decommissioning period, any effects during the construction and decommissioning phases would be temporary in nature, whilst effects during the operation and maintenance phase are considered to be permanent.
- 2.4.3 This EQUIA draws heavily on other technical assessments to inform the assessment. Given that the technical assessments look at the general impact only, a further level of interpretation is required to translate the technical findings into potential equality findings.
- 2.4.4 Sometimes this can further support the technical findings and at other times it can change their meaning/impact/significance. Equality effects are often difficult to quantify and assess accurately. Where suitable data is not available, the potential effects are described qualitatively.
- 2.4.5 The conclusions presented in this EQUIA are based on a systematic assessment of potential equality impacts across the consultation, construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the Scheme.
- 2.4.6 Conclusions are reached by analysing evidence from the legislation and policy review, equalities baseline, consultation feedback, and findings from the Environmental Statement to determine whether any groups with protected characteristics may be differentially or disproportionately affected by the Scheme.
- 2.4.7 Completion of the assessment and identification of impacts provides a clear and reasoned basis for demonstrating that the Applicant has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, as required under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

## 3 Legislation and Policy

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section explains the legislation and policy that set the framework driving the need for this EQUIA.

### 3.2 National Policy

3.2.1 Two policies – Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy; and National Planning Policy Framework – are relevant.

- Section 4.4 of the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy recognises the potential direct and indirect health impacts that can result from new energy infrastructure. The document highlights that opportunities should be taken to mitigate negative impacts by promoting local improvements to encourage health and wellbeing. This includes vulnerable groups within society and impacts on those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- Section 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework identifies that planning policies should promote healthy, inclusive and safe communities, including guarding against the unnecessary loss of values facilities and services.

### 3.3 Legislation

#### Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

3.3.1 The Equality Act 2010 (Ref 1) provides the framework to protect the rights of individuals against unlawful discrimination and to advance equal opportunities for all. Section 149 of the Equality Act sets out the PSED to which the Secretary of State, as a public authority, must have due regard to in the exercise of their functions, including decision-making in the DCO process.

3.3.2 Those subject to the PSED must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and

- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.3.3 The Equality Act 2010 states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities (section 149(4)). It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups (section 149(5)). It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others (section 149(6)).

3.3.4 The PSED applies fully to the following eight protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

3.3.5 Therefore, while marriage and civil partnership is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act, it is not covered by the PSED in relation to its aims of advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

## Human Rights Act 1998

3.3.6 The Human Rights Act 1998 (Ref 4) incorporated into UK law the European Convention on Human Rights (the 'Convention'). The following Articles of the Convention (as set out in Schedule 1 of the Human Rights Act 1998) are relevant to the Secretary of State's decision as to include powers of compulsory acquisition.

3.3.7 Article 1 of the First Protocol to the Convention provides that no one can be deprived of their possessions except in public interest and subject to the relevant national and international laws and principals.

3.3.8 Article 8 of the Convention protects private and family life, home and correspondence. No public authority can interfere with these rights except in accordance with the law, and so far, as is necessary in a democratic society in the interest of national security, public safety or the economic wellbeing of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

## Planning Act 2008

3.3.9 Planning Act 2008 ("the PA 2008") (Ref 5) establishes a legal framework for applying for, examining, and determining DCO applications for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. It sets out the requirement for obtaining development consent as well as thresholds for classifying projects as nationally significant. Under the PA 2008, the development consent may be granted only if an application is made for it, with the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (Ref 8) further setting out application requirements.

- 3.3.10 The PA 2008 does not contain any specific guidance relating to protected characteristics and equalities, but it does include a duty to consult with the local community as a part of the DCO application process.

## 3.4 Local Policy

- 3.4.1 The Scheme is located within the administrative areas of NCC, who are the host authorities. Local planning policies which are relevant to equality impacts and have informed the equality impact assessment are detailed below:

### Norfolk County Council (NCC) Strategy

- 3.4.2 Better Together, for Norfolk (Ref 8) outlines the strategic objectives being prioritised for the 2021–2025 period. These objectives include creating a vibrant and sustainable economy, providing better opportunities for children and young people, fostering healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives, building strong, engaged, and inclusive communities, and promoting a greener, more resilient future. The NCC's vision is for the county to be a place where everyone can start life well, live well, and age well, ensuring that no one is left behind. The aim is to cultivate a vibrant, entrepreneurial, and sustainable economy, supported by the right jobs, skills, training, and infrastructure. Additionally, communities should feel safe, healthy, empowered, and connected, with their unique characteristics respected and preserved.

### Greater Norwich Local Plan (adopted in 2024)

- 3.4.3 Both Broadland District and South Norfolk Councils have worked with Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council to prepare the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) (Ref 9).
- 3.4.4 The GNLP plans for the housing and job needs of the area to 2038 and builds on the long-established joint working arrangement for Greater Norwich. It includes strategic policies to guide future development and plans to protect the environment. It looks to ensure that delivery of development is done in a way which promotes sustainability and the effective functioning of the whole area.
- 3.4.5 The GNLP aims to stimulate the economy and create a strong, enterprising, and productive economy built on Greater Norwich's strengths in knowledge-intensive sectors. It prioritises clean growth and innovation in areas such as digital creative industries, health and life sciences, biotechnology, and advanced manufacturing. Strategic employment sites around Norwich will deliver most of the new jobs, supported by improved transport links and infrastructure.
- 3.4.6 The GNLP aims to generate significant employment growth, particularly in high-value sectors, while ensuring accessible jobs across urban and rural areas. The GNLP also focuses on developing a highly skilled workforce

through strong partnerships with local universities and colleges, fostering research expertise and innovation. Investment in new technologies, broadband, and mobile infrastructure will enable flexible working, support small businesses, and improve connectivity.

- 3.4.7 Overall, the GNLP seeks to drive sustainable economic growth, attract investment, and position Greater Norwich as a national and international leader in tackling global challenges related to energy, environment, life sciences, and climate change, contributing to the transition to a post-carbon economy.

## South Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Partnership (2022)

- 3.4.8 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy for South Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Partnership (Ref 10) sets out three core themes, with some associated drivers:
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** around 1,100 people over 65 years live with dementia in South Norfolk, and there is a 50% increased risk of dementia for people who report experiencing loneliness or isolation, comparable with other dementia risk factors.
  - **Access and Prevention:** South Norfolk residents without access to a vehicle are at significant risk of rural isolation. The average time taken to reach key services by foot or public transport is 52.5% higher than the England average. In South Norfolk, 30% people often or sometimes feel lonely.
  - **Resilient and Healthy Communities:** Musculoskeletal disorders are a barrier to physical activity with some 21.3% of South Norfolk residents experiencing issues with bones, joints and/or muscles. The rate of hip fractures in those aged 65 and over is above the England average.

## Norfolk County Council (NCC) Approach to Equalities

3.4.9 NCC has a legal duty and requirement to promote equality of opportunity, eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and promoting good relations. Through its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy (Ref 11), it has due regard to the PSED and carries out EQUIAs at design stages of planning and commissioning workforce opportunities and public services. It has set four objectives in its EDI Plan:

- Objective 1: Promote race equality and eliminate racism across our workforce, services and communities.
- Objective 2: Provide services, information and environments that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all disabled people.
- Objective 3: Promote equality for our LGBTQ+ service users and colleagues.
- Objective 4: Deliver our EDI transformation plans in response to external inspections, peer and safeguarding reviews.

## 4 Site and Scheme Description Summary Relevant to the EQUIA

### 4.1 The Order Limits and Surrounding Area

4.1.1 A full scheme description can be found within the following reports.

- **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3 - The Order Limits [EN0110014/APP/6.1.3]**
- **ES Volume 1, Chapter 4 - The Scheme [EN0110014/APP/6.1.4]**

4.1.2 This section includes information from a series of other reports listed below that have been summarised to demonstrate relevant information to the EQUIA regarding the Scheme:

- **ES Volume 1, Chapter 7 - Landscape and Visual [EN0110014/APP/6.1.7]**
- **ES Volume 1, Chapter 8 - Ecology and Biodiversity [EN0110014/APP/6.1.8]**
- **ES Volume 1, Chapter 11 - Transport and Access [EN0110014/APP/6.1.11]**
- **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14 - Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]**
- **ES Volume 1, Chapter 15 - Soils and Agricultural Land [EN0110014/APP/6.1.15]**
- **Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.8]**

### 4.2 Scheme Components

4.2.1 The main components of the Scheme include:

- Solar PV Arrays, Conversion Units and Inverters, 132kV substations located within the sites and up to three 400kV substations;
- A new National Grid substation operated by National Grid Electricity Transmission plc and associated works required to facilitate the export of electricity from the Scheme to the national grid including anticipated works related to the existing 400kV overhead line and associated pylon(s). Infrastructure connecting the Scheme to the existing 400kV overhead line runs north to south between Norwich Main and Bramford substations;
- A BESS;

- A Cable Route Corridor (CRC) for the underground electricity cables to run between the solar array sites to connect the solar array, the BESS and National Grid substation;
- Associated Development - including fencing, gates, boundary treatment and other means of enclosure; bunds; embankment; trenching and swales; irrigation systems; drainage systems; services and utilities connections; means of access; security and monitoring measures; improvement, maintenance and use of existing private tracks; landscaping and related works; habitat creation and enhancement; site establishment and preparation works; earthworks and excavations; works for the protection of buildings and land; tunnelling, boring and drilling works; and other works to mitigate any likely significant adverse effects from the construction, operation and maintenance or decommissioning phases of the Scheme;
- Highway Works are sections of the highway network that will contain localised improvements, such as improvements to deteriorated road edges or temporary highway and traffic works required to safely accommodate the Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) deliveries to construct the Scheme. These areas will support the movement of construction vehicles on narrower sections of the local highway networks within parts of the construction vehicle routes to the Site (refer to **ES Volume 1, Chapter 11 - Transport and Access [EN0110014/APP/6.1.11]**);
- Permissive paths.

## 4.3 Construction

- 4.3.1 Construction of the Scheme is anticipated to commence in 2028 for a period of approximately 24 months. It is expected that the Scheme could be completed by 2030 and energised in 2031. This construction period will vary depending on detailed layout design, potential environmental constraints on the timing of construction activities, and multiple construction activities occurring simultaneously at larger sub-Sites.
- 4.3.2 Construction works will include: grid connection infrastructure; tower construction; conductor stringing; site preparation and enabling/civil engineering works; installation of solar PV panels; construction of electrical cables; energy storage construction; fencing and security; CRC construction; and testing and commissioning.
- 4.3.3 Construction of the Scheme will impact a number of commercial properties, an educational facility, a nursery, and residential properties.
- 4.3.4 Nearby residential receptors include farm dwellings and associated buildings in the immediate vicinity of the Order Limits, as well as small rural villages and hamlets and the town of Long Stratton west of CRC4 and approximately 100 metres south-west of Sub-Site 4b.

- 4.3.5 Recreational receptors in proximity to the Order Limits include Norfolk Gliding Club, Seething Airfield, Long Stratton Sports Centre, open spaces such as New Buckenham Common, historic buildings, local sports grounds and golf clubs.
- 4.3.6 There are Grade I and II listed buildings within 100m and 1-2km from the Order Limits.
- 4.3.7 There are 84 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the Order Limits, with varying levels of proposed connections or intersections from the construction.
- 4.3.8 Three new permissive paths are proposed to maintain and enhance public access in the area, complement the existing PRoW network, provide alternative routes for walkers and support the Scheme's commitment to minimising disruption. The new permissive paths will include pedestrian-only use supported by necessary access features, along with fencing, gates and boundary treatments where required. Signage and interpretation boards will be provided to aid route awareness and the paths will be accompanied by landscaping and biodiversity measures, including planting.

## 4.4 Operation and Maintenance

- 4.4.1 The operational life of the Scheme is anticipated to be 60 years.
- 4.4.2 During the operation and maintenance phase, two scenarios have been considered within the ES:
- General operation and maintenance activities; and
  - Programme of replacement activities.

### General operation and maintenance activities

- 4.4.3 Activity would be restricted principally to vegetation management, equipment maintenance and servicing, ad hoc replacement of any components that fail or reach the end of their lifespan, periodic fence inspection, and monitoring to ensure the continued effective operation of the Scheme.
- 4.4.4 Along the Grid Connection Infrastructure, operational activity may consist of routine inspections and any reactive maintenance from National Grid.
- 4.4.5 There are anticipated to be up to five visits to each of the Sites per month for maintenance purposes and limited use of HGVs for ad-hoc replacement of components.
- 4.4.6 No permanent on-Site staff will be required to operate the Scheme, with limited staff facilities located in the control room associated with the 132 kV and 400 kV Substations. Approximately 20 net direct jobs are estimated during the operational phase based on the peak replacement scenario.

- 4.4.7 During operation, a small number of daily vehicle trips when required will occur, with additional staff tending for maintenance and cleaning activities, who will access the Sites by 4x4 vehicles or light van.
- 4.4.8 Solid waste materials generated during Scheme operation and maintenance would primary be general (Household type) waste form the staff visiting site. A limited volume of packaging waste associated with the delivery of spare components would be segregated prior to transport to an approved, licensed third party landfill and recycling facilities.
- 4.4.9 Components such as damaged PV panels, batteries, cables, connectors and mounting structures would be removed and recycled as far as practical and in accordable with legislation and guidance applicable at the time.
- 4.4.10 Due to the wet UK climate, solar PV panels are largely self-cleaning and deterioration in PV system output due to dust or dirt is generally low. The main factor influencing cleaning requirements in the UK is lichen growth, which is also influenced by site and climate factors.
- 4.4.11 Cleaning requirements for the Scheme can only be accurately determined once operational. Thus, to present a worst case for the assessments presented in the ES, an annual cleaning cycle is assumed. Cleaning will be carried out using water only.

## Programme of replacement activities

- 4.4.12 During the anticipated 60-year operational life of the Scheme, it is expected that there will be a requirement for the periodic replacement of some of the electrical infrastructure. This will include:
- With an expected operational life of solar PV panels being 40 years or more, all panels will be replaced once, taking a maximum period of 24 months.
  - BESS containers could be replaced up to five times.
  - Components such as Solar PV Mounting Structures, 132kV Project Substations, 400kV Project Substations, National Grid Substation and BESS Compound buildings are not anticipated to be replaced during the operational phase. No intrusive ground works are anticipated in the replacement of Solar PV Panels or BESS Containers.
  - With an assumed design life of 30 years, transformers may require replacement once, but only if required for performance or health and safety reasons.

## 4.5 Decommissioning

- 4.5.1 Decommissioning is expected to occur after the 60-year design life of the Scheme in 2091 and take between 12 and 24 months.

- 4.5.2 When the operation and maintenance phase ends, the Sites would be decommissioned and the land returned to the landowner (the National Grid Substation and the Grid Connection Infrastructure would remain in situ). All infrastructure, including Solar PV Panels, above ground cabling, Mounting Structures, Conversion Units / 33kV Sub-Distribution Switch Rooms, 132kV Project Substations, 400kV Project Substations and BESS would be removed and recycled or disposed of in accordance with good practice and market conditions. Foundations and other below ground infrastructure will be cut to 1.2m below the surface to enable future ploughing. The approach to decommissioning for the Interconnecting Cables and Grid Connection Cables would be dependent upon Government policy and good practice at that time.
- 4.5.3 Post-decommissioning, the landowners would choose how the land is to be used and managed, with the exception of the National Grid Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure. The landowner may return all of the land to arable use, although it is anticipated that some areas of habitat and biodiversity mitigation and enhancement within the Sites may be left in-situ given they could contain protected species and so relevant licences at the time would need to be obtained for any changes. However, the majority of the Sites would be returned to its original use after decommissioning. Permissive paths and community accessible space would be removed during decommissioning.
- 4.5.4 The effects of decommissioning are expected to be similar or of a lesser magnitude than construction effects. For the purpose of this EQUIA, the equalities impacts of decommissioning are expected to be similar to those in the construction phase.

## 5 Equalities Baseline

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A baseline profile of the population living in proximity of the Scheme enables an assessment of the potential impacts the Scheme may have on groups with protected characteristics.
- 5.1.2 Within the Study Area (Local Authority), the Scheme will impact a number of villages, towns, and communities, including:
- Great Moulton
  - Hempnall
  - Long Stratton
  - Tasburgh
  - Silver Green
  - Saxlingham Nethergate
  - Woodton
  - Brooke
  - Seething

### 5.2 Population

- 5.2.1 There are approximately 9,600 people (Ref 13) living in the Local Area to the Order Limits accounting for 6.5% of the total population of South Norfolk.
- 5.2.2 Most of the areas (see **Table 2-1**) have experienced steady positive growth, generally between 0.5% and 1.5% between 2012 and 2024, with England and East remaining relatively stable throughout. Norfolk and Suffolk have shown moderate growth with slight dips around 2016–2017, while South Norfolk and the Local Area display more volatility, including sharp declines below zero in 2016 and 2021 and peaks above 1.5% in 2018 and 2020. In recent years, all areas converge near 1% growth, indicating a more consistent pattern across the study areas.
- 5.2.3 The Study Area (South Norfolk) is projected to grow much faster than the surrounding areas and the national average. Starting at 150,200 residents in 2024, its population is expected to rise by 8.8% to 163,300 by 2030. In comparison, Norfolk grows by 4.0% over the same period, Suffolk by 3.2%, and the East of England by 3.3%. England sees only a 2.8% increase. This means South Norfolk's growth rate is more than double that of Norfolk and

nearly three times the national average, highlighting it as a significant hotspot for population expansion in the region. Population projections are not available for the Local Area.

## 5.3 Protected Characteristics

### Sex

- 5.3.1 The Study Area (South Norfolk) sex demographic has a slightly higher proportion of females to males (95.04 males to 100 females) than the national average for England (96.0 males to 100 females) (Ref 12).
- 5.3.2 Of the South Norfolk population over the age of 90, women outnumber men by 1.9 to 1.
- 5.3.3 The life-expectancy of a female born in South Norfolk is 85 (higher than the English average of 83), and 82 for a male (higher than the English average of 79).

### Age

- 5.3.4 The Study Area (South Norfolk) has a population of 148,448 people (Ref 12), 57.8% of whom are working age adults (aged 16-64) which is slightly lower than the England national average of 61.5%.
- 5.3.5 Consequently, South Norfolk has a higher older population of 24.8% aged 65+ compared to the 20.1% national average, and 3.3% aged 85+ compared to the 2.4% national average.
- 5.3.6 The percentage of younger people aged 0-15 years is comparable between South Norfolk (17.5%) and the national average (17.8%). Similarly, the percentage of infants is comparable with 4.9% in South Norfolk and 5.4% in England (Ref 13).
- 5.3.7 The Local Areas, Study Area (South Norfolk), Norfolk and Suffolk have an older population profile, in comparison to the East of England and England, with a higher proportion of the resident population aged 65+ and a lower proportion of working age (16 to 64 years). The Local Areas and Study Area (South Norfolk) have a very similar age distribution.
- 5.3.8 This suggests that people tend to reside in South Norfolk as a family for schooling and for retirement, but a number of people move away for their working years.

### Disability

- 5.3.9 In the Study Area (South Norfolk), 6.4% of the population has a long-term health condition or disability which limit their daily activities a lot (Ref 14). This is slightly lower than the national average of 7.5%. The percentage of

South Norfolk's population reporting their day-to-day activities are limited a little by a long-term condition or disability (10.5%) is comparable to the English average (10.0%).

- 5.3.10 In 2021, 4.9% of South Norfolk residents (aged five years and over) reported providing up to 19 hours of unpaid care each week. This figure decreased from 7.8% in 2011. The decrease (2.9 percentage points) was similar to the decrease across England from (2.6 percentage points).
- 5.3.11 1.5% of residents reported providing between 20 and 49 hours of unpaid care each week and 2.2% provided at least 50 hours of weekly unpaid care which is comparable to the 2011 data and the data across England.

## Ethnic Group

- 5.3.12 In the Study Area (South Norfolk), 95.4% of respondents identified their ethnic group as White; 1.8% identified as Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British (including Pakistani, India, Bangladeshi, Chinese, and other Asian ethnicities); 1.5% identified as mixed or multiple ethnicities; 0.8% identified as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African; and 0.5% identified as being part of Other ethnic groups (Ref 13).
- 5.3.13 Thus, nearly 5% of South Norfolk's population identifies as non-White, and proposal designs should consider their impact on this PCG. This is considerably less than the 19% of non-White identification in England. 93.5% of South Norfolk identify as British, English, or British and English, compared to 86.4% in England.

## Pregnancy & Maternity

- 5.3.14 In 2024, the West Midlands and London were the only regions where the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) increased, and remaining regions saw a decrease. In the Study Area (South Norfolk), the TFR was 1.44 (Ref 15).
- 5.3.15 In 2024, there were a total of 567,708 live births in England, and 63,109 in East of England. For the Study Area (South Norfolk) there were 1,162 live births, 1,155 maternities and the birth rate is 7.8 (per 1,000 population), which is lower than East of England (9.6), and England (9.7). This can be explained by an older population in the Study Area, and as per the Age baseline, people tend to reside in this region for schooling and retirement, but a number of people move away for their working years.

## 5.4 Socio-economic Profile

- 5.4.1 Although socio-economic background or status are not considered a PCG under the Equality Act 2010 the following baseline information can be used to provide wider context in regard to impacts on scoped in PCGs.

## Index of Multiple Deprivation

- 5.4.2 The East of England region has a varied socio-economic profile, with pockets of both urban and rural deprivation scattered across the region, particularly towards Great Yarmouth on the east coast.
- 5.4.3 Overall, 0% of the Study Area (South Norfolk) population were estimated to be living in the 30% most deprived areas of England (Ref 16). Income poverty, employment poverty, education poverty, health poverty and crime poverty are all relatively low for the South Norfolk area and are in the top 3 (3 least deprived) deciles for England.
- 5.4.4 According to the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), South Norfolk has a relatively high IMD score (21,810) compared to the national average (16,746) and therefore has less deprivation than other areas (Ref 17).

## Income

- 5.4.5 Between July 2023 and June 2024, 82.4% of the Study Area (South Norfolk) residents of working age were economically active, which is higher than the English average of 79.2%. 3.4% of South Norfolk residents of working age were unemployed, which is similar to the 3.9% national average (Ref 18).
- 5.4.6 In 2025, the weekly income for both male and female full-time workers in South Norfolk was slightly lower than the national average. The percentage of children under 16 living in families with low income in South Norfolk (22.3%) is comparable to the national average (22.1%), but slightly higher than the percentage for the regional East of England (17.8%).
- 5.4.7 In 2025, the wages of a person living in the Study Area (South Norfolk) are higher than those of a person working in Norfolk (£670.20 versus £570.20 per week). This is true only for full time workers. Part time workers experience the opposite effect. The situation is similar in Norfolk, Suffolk and the East of England, only here higher resident pay applies across full time and part time workers.

## Employment

- 5.4.8 Employment levels are higher in the Study Area (South Norfolk), yet lower in Norfolk, than the regional and national averages. The economic activity rate for South Norfolk was 85% (66,800 people). This means that 85% of the working aged population were either in work or searching for work and therefore are considered as part of the workforce. This figure is higher than all comparator areas and shows that South Norfolk has a healthy rate of employment (Ref 18).
- 5.4.9 The Study Area (South Norfolk) have a slightly higher proportion of residents employed in higher skilled occupations, including managers, directors and senior officials. Those in professional occupations, are similarly high,

- however regional and national averages appear to be quite similar. In contrast, the Local Area and South Norfolk have a lower proportion of residents working in lower skilled occupations such as elementary occupations and process, plant and machine operatives.
- 5.4.10 The industry employing the largest number of people in the Local Areas is the property industry (16.0%), while the health sector employs only 13.8% of employed residents. In the Study Area (South Norfolk) it is the health sector which accounts for the highest proportion of employment, with 28.8% of employed residents working in this sector. While the health sector is a prominent industry of employment in all areas, its size is much more substantial in South Norfolk than in the comparator areas. In Norfolk, 15.9% of employed people work in the health sector while this figure is 12.7% for Suffolk, 12.6% for the east and 13.8% nationally.
- 5.4.11 The second most prominent industrial sector of employment in the Study Area (South Norfolk) is the manufacturing sector, accounting for 8.5% of employment in the area. The Local Areas are similar (8.4%), while Norfolk stands at 9.0%, Suffolk at 8.8% and the East region and England both stand at 7.1% (Ref 19).
- 5.4.12 The construction sector accounts for 12.2% of employment in the Local Areas: higher than for South Norfolk (5.9% of employment), Norfolk (5.8%), Suffolk (6.2%), the East of England (6.5%) and England (4.9%).
- 5.4.13 Similarly, the Local Areas have a higher proportion of employment in the agriculture, forestry & fishing sector than the comparator areas. The sector accounts for 8.0% of employment in the Local Areas, but only 2.1% of employment in both the Study Area (South Norfolk) and Norfolk County. In Suffolk it accounts for 1.5% while regionally it is just 0.8% and nationally 0.5%.
- 5.4.14 The most popular industries in the Norfolk area are in Construction and Professional, Scientific and Technical professions. However, the most popular employment rates are in Manufacturing and Health.
- 5.4.15 There are a number of tourist attractions local to the Site and tourism visits generate significant expenditure contributing to the local economy. In 2024 there were 2,580 people within the Study Area (South Norfolk) employed within the tourism industry, representing 4.5% of total employment in South Norfolk. This level is comparable to the proportion of people employed within the tourism industry at the regional and national level (4.9% and 5.8%, respectively). The tourism industry appears to be of higher importance to Norfolk and Suffolk, with 6.1% and 4.9% of the county's employed population working within the tourism industry.
- 5.4.16 In the Local Areas in 2024 there were 50 people employed within the tourism industry, representing 2.0% of total employment in the Local Area. This level is considerably below all comparators. Almost 50% of those employed in the

- Local Area's tourism industry work in restaurants, half of which are unlicensed, representing 20% of the tourism workforce in the Local Area.
- 5.4.17 In the Study Area (South Norfolk) more than 50% of those employed in the tourism industry work in restaurants, the majority of which are unlicensed, representing 37% of South Norfolk's tourism workforce. This is significantly higher than for any of the comparator areas. Those who work in unlicensed restaurants represent 22% (Suffolk) and 24% (Norfolk) of tourism employment at the county and regional level, and 22% at the national level.
- 5.4.18 At almost 30% of South Norfolk's tourism employment, hotels and similar accommodation represent a significant proportion of those employed in South Norfolk's tourism sector. The Local Areas on the other hand have no employment in this area. The percentage is 20% for Norfolk, 21% for Suffolk, 16% for the East of England and 19% for England.
- 5.4.19 ONS data shows that in 2024 there were 350 establishments in South Norfolk in the accommodation and food services industry, representing 5% of all businesses (Ref 20).
- 5.4.20 There are a number of tourist attractions located near to the Site including:
- Seething Observatory to the east of sub-Site 10B (Ref 21);
  - 93rd Bomb Group Museum at Hardwick Airfield (Ref 22) and a Historical Landmark (National Trust) to the south of sub-Site 3 (Ref 23);
  - Norfolk Gliding Club at Tibenham Airfield to the west of sub-Site 1A (Ref 24);
  - The Norfolk Tank Museum in Forncett St Peter to the west of sub-Site 4A (Ref 25);
  - Forncett Industrial Steam Museum to the west of sub-Site 4A (Ref 26); and
  - A Campsite to the north-west of Site 7A (Ref 27).
- 5.4.21 Data published by Visit Britain identifies that there were 36.9 million tourism day visits to Norfolk in 2017-2019 (three-year average) of which 2.76 million (7.5%) were to the Study Area (South Norfolk) (Ref 28). The expenditure associated with these tourism day visits totalled £84 million in South Norfolk and £998 million in Norfolk. In addition, over the same period (2017-2019) there were 2.95 million overnight tourism stays in Norfolk, of which 790,000 (2.7%) were in South Norfolk. The expenditure associated with these overnight stays totalled £653 million in Norfolk and £11 million in South Norfolk.
- 5.4.22 In 2024, data published by Visit Britain identifies there were 96.7 million tourism day visits to the East of England, with a total spend of £6 million.

## Education

- 5.4.23 Despite residents in the Study Area (South Norfolk) generally working in higher skilled occupations, qualification levels appear to be lower than the national average. Also, over half of the workforce originate from outside of the area, indicating a mismatch between employment and skill levels required in the area.
- 5.4.24 The Local Areas and Study Area (South Norfolk) have a lower proportion of residents with no formal qualifications than the other comparator areas.
- 5.4.25 For Level 1 and entry-level qualifications, the Local Areas stand at 11%, close to South Norfolk's 10.1% and Suffolk's 11.2%. However, it is above the regional and national averages (Ref 29).
- 5.4.26 Conversely, the proportion of 16+ residents with degree level qualifications or higher is greater in South Norfolk than in the wider county and region, but below the national average. The Local Areas are above the counties however below the regional and national averages.
- 5.4.27 Combined, those with level two and three qualifications comprise 34% of the 16+ residents of the Local Areas. For the Study Area (South Norfolk) and Norfolk it is 32.3%, while in Suffolk, regionally and nationally the averages are slightly lower.

## Health

- 5.4.28 This EQUIA has incorporated mental health as part of the assessment, and the potential impacts on regional mental health and wellbeing from the Scheme's construction and operation and maintenance phases.
- 5.4.29 In the Study Area (South Norfolk) the anxiety score in 2022-23 was 3.4, just higher than the average of all local authorities in England. The score for feeling life is worthwhile was 7.9, compared to 7.8 of all local authorities. Happiness was scored 7.7, higher than 7.4 average for all local authorities; and life satisfaction was reported as 7.5, the same as the average for all local authorities (Ref 14).

## Crime

- 5.4.30 Between 2019 and 2025, Norfolk as a Local Authority became more deprived for the domains of Crime, and Barriers to Housing and Services (Ref 17).
- 5.4.31 For Norfolk between 2019 and 2025 the Crime domain increased from 4 indicators to 8. New types of crime included in the indicator are: (i) stalking and harassment, (ii) public order and possession of weapons, and (iii) antisocial behaviour.

## Barriers to Housing and Services

- 5.4.32 Within the Study Area (South Norfolk), 19.3% of the region experiences barriers to housing and services (10% most deprived areas of England) (Ref 17), and 21.6% experiences a poor-quality living environment (20% most deprived areas of England) (Ref 30). For the Barriers to Housing and Services, domain broadband coverage and patient-to-GP ratios were added in 2025, while the convenience of services is now measured by travel times by foot, cycling and public transport rather than by simple road distance.

## Living Environment

- 5.4.33 In 2024, greenhouse gas emissions within in the Study Area (South Norfolk), are measured as higher than average, measured at 6.9 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) per capita. Average emissions in 2023 were 4.7tCO<sub>2</sub>e.
- 5.4.34 Domestic electricity consumption was measured as similar to average, at 2,767.9 kilowatt-hour (kWh), and gas consumption was measured as 9,165 kWh in 2024. Increased electrification of domestic items and utilities such as appliances, heating and electric vehicle charging will increase electricity consumption levels, and the removal of gas cookers within new developments will reduce gas consumption. Improved public transport links can reduce a dependency on cars and reduce emissions.

## Transport and Connectivity

- 5.4.35 The 2021 Census identifies that of those people living in the Study Area (South Norfolk) who are in employment, 46% also work in South Norfolk (excluding people who work from home). This means 54% of South Norfolk's resident workforce, commute out of the district to work. Population workplace destinations include Norwich (20%), Breckland (8%), East Suffolk (7%), Broadland (7%), Mid Suffolk (4%) and Other (8%) (Ref 32).
- 5.4.36 The data set also identifies that of those people working in South Norfolk (excluding those who work from home), 43% also live in South Norfolk, meaning that 57% of people who work in South Norfolk live outside of the district. Those areas contributing a large proportion of South Norfolk's workforce include: Norwich (19%), Breckland (12%), Broadland (11%) and East Suffolk (5%).
- 5.4.37 In Norfolk, a slightly lower percentage of the population (25.4%) work from home compared to the English average (31.5%). Of these workers, 54% travel to work by car (Ref 33).

## 6 Consultation and Engagement Activities

### 6.1 Overview

- 6.1.1 This section provides a summary of consultation activities undertaken to date in relation to the Scheme, demonstrating the approach to preparing activities and consultation materials.
- 6.1.2 The consultation process for the Scheme was continued in line with PA2008, the Infrastructure Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, and associated guidance. Consultation was carried out in four main stages:
- Non-statutory consultation (23 October to 6 December 2024);
  - Statutory consultation (18 June to 6 August 2025);
  - Targeted consultation (22 October to 26 November 2025); and
  - Further engagement throughout preparation of the DCO application (September 2024 to February 2026). Details are included in the **Consultation Report [EN0110014/APP/5.1]**.
- 6.1.3 Each phase of consultation included tailored activities designed to inform the public, stakeholders, and statutory consultees, and to encourage feedback to inform the design of the Scheme.

### 6.2 Non-statutory consultation

- 6.2.1 The non-statutory consultation (Phase One consultation) included early engagement with stakeholders taking place between 23 October and 6 December 2024. This early consultation sought views on the initial proposals and informed the development of the Preliminary Environmental Information (PEIR).

#### Engagement activities

- In-person information events;
- Briefings with local authorities, parish councils, members of Parliament and statutory consultees;
- Provision of materials on the Applicant's website; and
- Promotion through press releases and local media outlets.

## Accessibility and inclusion measures

6.2.2 The Applicant identified a list of under-represented groups to approach for consultation that are likely to be affected by the Scheme, including:

- Older people;
- Disabled people;
- People with learning difficulties;
- Non-native English speakers;
- Minority ethnic groups;
- Carers;
- LGBTQIA+ community;
- Shift workers and time-poor individuals;
- Gypsy and Traveller communities; and
- Local military communities.

6.2.3 Inclusive measures comprised:

- Holding events at accessible venues with step-free access;
- Offering materials in large print and alternative formats on request;
- Hosting materials on the Applicant's website with intuitive navigation and options to submit feedback; and
- Advertising in accessible, widely read local media outlets.

## 6.3 Statutory consultation

6.3.1 The statutory consultation was held from 18 June to 6 August 2025, pursuant to Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the PA2008. The consultation aligned with the commitments set out in the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), provided in **Consultation Report Appendix 5: Statement of Community Consultation Materials [EN0110014/APP/5.6]**.

## Engagement activities

- Hosting seven in-person information events and one online information event across South Norfolk;
- Distributed community consultation postcards to over 8,400 addresses in the core consultation zone;

- Uploaded consultation materials to the Applicant's website and deposited them at community access points (**CAPs**) including public libraries;
- Distributed statutory notices and information posters to over 70 identified local information points and parish councils to publicise consultation opportunities;
- Maintained open communication channels via Freepost, email and telephone;
- Provided PEIR and a non-technical summary; and
- Feedback forms in both digital and hard copy formats.

## Accessibility and inclusion measures

- Event times were adjusted to accommodate those with caring or work commitments (e.g. online events started at 18:30 instead of 17:30);
- Events were held within the core consultation zone, across the Site, to ensure access to residents;
- Materials were made available in alternative languages and formats upon request; and
- The website and CAPs offered continuous access to documents and feedback portals.

## 6.4 Targeted consultation

- 6.4.1 Targeted consultation took place between 22 October and 26 November 2025, inviting comments on a series of specific changes and updates to the Scheme boundary and design. These changes primarily related to temporary traffic and access works.

### Engagement activities

- Letters were sent to all prescribed consultees, updated based on Regulation 11(c) of the Infrastructure Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017;
- A letter was sent to all properties contained within the core consultation zone, which was updated to reflect the changes to the Scheme boundary;
- Consultation materials were made available online and in hard copy on request; and
- The consultation period ran for 35 days – 7 days longer than the statutory minimum.

## Accessibility and inclusion measures

- Materials continued to be available in accessible formats and via multiple formats;
- Direct notifications ensured local residents were aware of changes and could participated meaningfully; and
- Under-represented groups, identified earlier in the process, were included in the mailing list (and were contacted through digital communications).

## Summary of key considerations and viewpoints from consultation

6.4.2 The following sections summarises key considerations and viewpoints relevant to the scope of the EQUIA across the engagement and consultation undertaken with both statutory and non-statutory stakeholders. Full details of this consultation can be found in the **Consultation Report [EN0110014/APP/5.1]**.

- It was raised during consultation that consideration of vulnerable and inclusive design groups under the Equalities should be considered as part of the Scheme. This has been addressed through the completion of this report.
- Concerns regarding the potential mental health impacts of the Scheme were raised by multiple stakeholders, including Norfolk County Council. This covered the following issues: potential distress and anxiety caused by the construction and operation and maintenance of the Scheme (including potential compulsory purchase orders); perceived impacts of Electromagnetic Fields on mental health; the cumulative impacts of the Scheme on real and perceived impacts on neighbourhood quality, noise, air quality, water environment and socio-economics (particularly on older adults and those with disabilities) and; the specific impact of the National Grid substation on those who are vulnerable and/or have disabilities. Specific discussion of mental health impacts have been included within this EQUIA.
- Concerns raised during consultation include: the impact on PRow and access to nature; impacts on tourism, local businesses and employment opportunities; impact of the Scheme on traffic, severance and road safety; environmental construction impacts including air quality and noise and these impacts on PCG's. Issues regarding a number of specific receptors were raised by respondents. These issues are addressed fully in their respective chapters and are also discussed within this EQUIA.
- A number of concerns were raised regarding the quality and legibility of the consultation. The Applicant's approach to consultation has been discussed in this EQUIA.

## 7 Equality Impact Topics

### 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Based on the findings of **ES Volume 1 [EN0110014/APP/6.1.0 – 6.1.20]** and the **Consultation Report [EN0110014/APP/5.1]**, this chapter presents an overview of the topics that have potential for disproportionate and/or differential equality impacts.
- 7.1.2 Chapter 8 of this EQUIA builds on these topics, considering the nature of their project-specific effects and an assessment of the consequent positive and negative impacts that may be experienced by equality groups.

### 7.2 Consultation Phase

- 7.2.1 Accessible and inclusive consultation could have a positive equality impact by reducing participation barriers for protected characteristic groups. Providing materials online, in-person events, and formats such as large print or alternative languages could support engagement from older people, disabled people, people whose first language is not English, and those with mobility issues.
- 7.2.2 Hosting events at accessible venues near public transport further increases opportunities for people who may otherwise struggle to take part in planning processes.

### 7.3 Construction Phase

#### Severance to Public Rights of Way or Changes to Journey Length or Time, or Access to Community Infrastructure

- 7.3.1 Disruption to PRow (notably temporary diversions and closures of PRow) used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders (WCH) has the potential to differentially affect equality groups. For example, elderly and young people that may be less likely to have access to a car as an alternative method of travel, young families with pushchairs, wheelchair users and other disabled people that may experience barriers to recreation, and children who may be more sensitive to changes in public access. Any changes in PRow journey length or severance therefore have the potential to affect these equality groups.
- 7.3.2 As set out in the **Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Management Plan [EN011001/APP/7.8]**, a total of 84 PRow are within the Order Limits (both Sites, sub-Sites and CRC) including: 71 footpaths; 9 restricted byways; 4 bridleways.

- 7.3.3 Boudicca Way, a promoted long-distance walking route in Norfolk, runs approximately 36 miles between Norwich and Diss, following a mix of public rights of way, quiet country lanes, and waymarked footpaths. The only section of the Boudicca Way that directly crosses the Order Limits is within CRC4.
- 7.3.4 Community infrastructure includes village halls, sports facilities, education, community retail centres, town or village centres, and places of worship.
- 7.3.5 Open spaces include green parks, trim trails, natural spaces, lakes or ponds for public access, PRow, pocket parks and areas of play for a variety of ages.
- 7.3.6 Access to these could be impacted by road closures and diversions from the Scheme, during its construction phase. The environment and ambience could be impacted by noise, mainly during the construction phase, when residents or visitors are spending time outdoors. People with neurodiversity or sensitivities to noise and visual changes could be impacted by changes to access to their green spaces and infrastructure.

### Increased Traffic Flows Leading to Changes in Pedestrian Amenity, Fear and Intimidation

- 7.3.7 Public transport routes could be impacted or disrupted altogether by road closures and diversions. Commuters and people with child or family care duties could be impacted by similar situations, especially during the construction phase.
- 7.3.8 Changes in traffic flows due to construction activity could differentially affect certain groups, particularly disabled people, women, older people, children, parents with young children and those using pushchairs. These impacts relate not only to physical safety but also to perceptions of danger, which may deter some groups from walking or cycling in affected areas.
- 7.3.9 Construction traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles (HGV), poses an elevated risk of road traffic accidents. HGV are associated with a disproportionate number of pedestrian and cyclist fatalities due to factors such as limited driver visibility and large vehicle size. These risks are especially acute for people with visual or hearing impairments, people with learning disabilities, and children.
- 7.3.10 Large construction vehicles could induce feelings of fear or intimidation on the road network and when passing pedestrians or cyclists on shared pathways and those more reliant on walking and cycling. Women may experience increased anxiety about walking in areas with heavy traffic, particularly those travelling with children or who do not have access to a private vehicle or having to access footpaths or pavements in close proximity to roads with larger vehicles. These effects could reduce pedestrian amenity

and deter active travel, undermining opportunities for safe and inclusive movement in local communities during construction.

## Severance and Accessibility Impacts during Construction

- 7.3.11 Increased traffic and construction activity could lead to severance of local communities. Severance occurs when traffic or physical barriers discourage or prevent people from accessing services, facilities, and social networks. This could be particularly impactful for children, older people, and disabled people who may face more difficulty in navigating changes to pedestrian routes or public transport services.
- 7.3.12 During construction, access to key destinations such as schools, healthcare facilities, public transport, and green space may be disrupted. Children and young people who rely on walking or public transport to access education, employment, or recreational activities may experience disproportionate impacts.
- 7.3.13 Similarly, older adults and disabled people may face barriers to accessing essential services, which may in turn lead to increased social isolation. Severance could also affect community cohesion, particularly in rural or semi-rural areas where access to amenities is more likely to be limited. In South Norfolk, this is a particularly rural area, where the Scheme is impacting small villages and surrounding land.
- 7.3.14 Temporary construction works that result in longer journey times, detours, or reduced mobility could disproportionately affect those who are less able to adapt, such as people with mobility impairments or those without access to private vehicles.
- 7.3.15 People with neurodiversity, or those with sensory impairments or conditions could be negatively impacted by severance or accessibility restrictions, which allow them to socialise, improve their mental wellbeing and health.
- 7.3.16 The most popular method of travelling to work in the study area is by car, therefore any road closures or diversions related to the Scheme will impact those commuting to work or carrying out childcare duties.

## Changes in Views and Landscape Character

- 7.3.17 Changes in views from community areas (people living and moving around the area) and recreational receptors as a result of construction activity and loss of vegetation, have the potential to affect some equality groups differently. In particular, such changes may affect those with neurodivergence such as autism that affect a person's ability to interact and experience their surrounding environments. People with sensory conditions could be impacted by glint and glare from panels, either when travelling past sections, or views from dwellings.

- 7.3.18 As such, visual changes experienced from residential properties may disproportionately affect individuals who spend more time at home during the day. This includes children, older people, and those who are pregnant or caring for young children.
- 7.3.19 Other impacts include disturbances to farm livestock, and agricultural activities such as road networks and road users with larger agricultural and solar-related vehicles sharing road space. Landscape views could be impacted by solar reflection from panels.

## Elevated Noise and Vibration Levels

- 7.3.20 According to the World Health Organisation: *“excessive noise can cause annoyance; in addition, research shows it increases the risk for IHD and hypertension, sleep disturbance, hearing impairment, tinnitus and cognitive impairment, with increasing evidence for other health impacts such as adverse birth outcomes and mental health problems” (Ref 35).*
- 7.3.21 Places of community, housing and green spaces near to various construction sites could be impacted in various stages by noise – construction, machinery, earthworks, and transport such as HGVs. Construction works could increase risk of ground vibration through drilling and cabling activities.
- 7.3.22 Certain groups with protected characteristics are more sensitive to changes in noise and vibration levels and may experience different effects compared to the overall population including children and young people, elderly, people with disabilities, people who are neurodivergent, people with sensory conditions, and pregnant people.
- 7.3.23 Traffic-related noise is correlated more broadly with lower health-related quality of life in children and increased health risks for the elderly. Elevated environmental noise has the potential to cause health impacts such as hearing impairment, hypertension, ischemic heart disease, annoyance, and sleep disturbance. Vulnerable groups include those with long-term health problems disabilities, the elderly, and the unemployed who both tend to spend more time in their homes.
- 7.3.24 Exposure to noise could be a particular problem around schools, leading to cognitive distractions for children during lessons. Autistic children could be particularly sensitive to their environment, and in some cases could be extremely distressed by loud noise. Children with hearing difficulties also benefit from a quiet learning environment, and background noise could reduce the effectiveness of hearing aids.

## Elevated Dust Levels and Air Pollutants

- 7.3.25 Increased air pollution and emissions from generator use and construction traffic may cause potentially negative changes to human health. Particulate matter, mainly generated from construction activities, could adversely affect human health in varying degrees depending on its size, composition, origin and the length of exposure. Dust emissions could irritate the eyes and aggravate pre-existing respiratory problems, such as asthma. Children, the elderly and the disabled (particularly those with respiratory illness) are more vulnerable to the effects of poor air quality and could experience differential and adverse health effects of poorer air quality due to vehicle emissions, construction plant and construction dust.
- 7.3.26 During the construction phase, increased traffic, especially larger construction and HGV traffic could generate further particulate matter and emissions as it travels through villages and dwellings nearby to the Order Limits.

## Employment, Skills and Training Opportunities

- 7.3.27 The Scheme has the potential to affect the following receptors (beneficially or adversely), during the Construction, Operation and Maintenance, and Decommissioning Phases:
- Supporting employment directly and indirectly through the supply chain
  - Provision of education, skills and training, upskilling the labour force
  - The availability of temporary accommodation
  - The local tourism economy such as access to small businesses and visitor attractions
- 7.3.28 The most popular method of travelling to work in the study area is by car, therefore any road closures or diversions related to the Scheme will impact those commuting to work, carrying out childcare duties or healthcare duties, such as actively employed age groups, parents, carers, people with disabilities, or who requiring healthcare support or emergency services.
- 7.3.29 Businesses such as visitor attractions could be impacted for similar reasons, thus creating barriers for people of different races who are visiting the region and its attractions, as well as those working in such businesses.
- 7.3.30 The Scheme could provide opportunities for training, apprenticeships, upskilling, employment, as well as educating the general public, local residents and school children about the benefits of renewables.
- 7.3.31 Construction is expected to generate temporary employment opportunities, such as in site labour, traffic management, and administration. The Scheme is expected to support an average of 278 workers per day, which is

equivalent to 233 FTE jobs. The estimated on-Site workforce is expected to peak at approximately 720 workers, equivalent to 604 FTE jobs.

- 7.3.32 There will be approximately 360 net direct jobs created during the construction phase, with 684 net indirect and induced jobs supported which will not be confined to the construction sector.
- 7.3.33 In total, the construction of the Scheme will support 1,044 net direct and indirect jobs. Of those, 29 are anticipated to be for people living in South Norfolk, 116 elsewhere in Norfolk, 261 in the rest of the East of England, and 638 outside the region
- 7.3.34 Employment, skills, and training opportunities generated during construction could positively affect protected characteristic groups that are disproportionately affected by unemployment, such as young people, people with disabilities, and certain ethnic minority groups.

### Mental health related equality impacts

- 7.3.35 There is no one recognised way to assess mental health impacts within major infrastructure projects. It is important to consider that this desk-top EQUIA assesses potential equalities impact at a population rather than individual level and therefore, specific individuals may be more or less effected by the Scheme.
- 7.3.36 During the EIA scoping stage and consultation, the potential for mental health impacts was raised as a concern. Whilst mental health impacts can affect any individual, those with particular PCGs may be differentially or disproportionately affected due to capacity to respond to these issues. Particular PCGs include age and disability.
- 7.3.37 To assess these potential impacts the toolkit developed for Mental Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment developed by Cooke et al, 2011 has been integrated into the assessment. This uses a four-factor framework, namely: *Enhancing control; Increasing Resilience and Community Assets; Facilitating participation; Promoting social inclusion to assess the impacts of a scheme* (Ref 36).
- 7.3.38 Mental health impacts could potentially be connected to noise, air quality, light, and access to spaces that boost our health such open green, natural or recreational and private garden areas. Diverted PRow could lead to community severance, increasing the risk of loneliness for some PCGs and communities. Other risks are increased mental health impacts or fears due to restrictions on access routes required for treatment, such as hospitals, clinics, care homes, carers and specialist facilities. As well as impacts regarding changes to neighbourhood characteristics, perception and risks to safety and impacts on quality of life.
- 7.3.39 Alternatively new proposed PRow could lead to greater access to open and green spaces, creating wider opportunities for health and wellbeing benefits.

## 7.4 Operation and Maintenance Phase

### Changes and Connectivity to Public Rights of Way and Recreational Access

- 7.4.1 During the construction phase, the framework management and maintenance measures of the existing PRow within the Scheme Order Limits are set out in the **Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.8]** and the **Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) [EN0110014/APP/7.4]**.
- 7.4.2 Upgrades will include signs, gates and re-establishing hedgerow gaps, planting, and landscape enhancements which can improve recreational experiences of users and can increase perceptions of safety for groups who feel less safe when walking, such as women. In addition, improvements to signage could benefit people who find wayfinding more difficult, such as some older people and people with disabilities. The Scheme will provide non-vehicular permissive paths.
- 7.4.3 During the operation and maintenance phase, the paths will remain open throughout the lifespan of the Scheme. The paths will provide improved connectivity to the wider PRow network and improve accessibility to the countryside for people walking, wheeling and cycling. The improvements to paths could benefit people with mobility impairments by providing clearer pathways, and removal of barriers who rely on PRow to access the countryside, for active travel routes and connectivity to wider transport options.
- 7.4.4 These permissive paths are shown on the **Works Plan [EN0110014/APP/2.3]** as demarcated by Work No.11.

### Changes in Views and Landscape Character

- 7.4.5 During the operation and maintenance phase, the main changes will relate to long-term alterations in the landscape character of the area, particularly in relation to views from PRow, surrounding residential properties and recreational spaces. Changes to the visual landscape could have differential effects on groups who rely on local outdoor spaces for wellbeing, routine, or mobility. For example, older residents and those with limited access to transport may be disproportionately affected if the visual character or amenity value of familiar walking routes is diminished. People with mental health conditions or cognitive impairments may also find long-term environmental changes disorienting or distressing. People with sensory conditions may also find it difficult to relate to their surroundings and changing environments.

### Employment, Skills, and Training Opportunities

- 7.4.6 During the operation and maintenance phase of the Scheme there will be periods of maintenance requiring temporary workers. In particular, the full replacement of the solar PV panels is anticipated to happen once (after approximately 40 years) over a maximum period of 24 months. The BESS would likely be replaced up to five times during the operation and maintenance phase. During this replacement period, it is estimated that an average of 129 workers would be supported, with a peak of 240 workers at any one time. It is estimated that there will be approximately 120 net direct jobs supported during the operation and maintenance phase based on the peak replacement scenario.
- 7.4.7 The roles are expected to consist of operation and maintenance crews (including technical professionals such as electrical engineers and performance managers), landscaping and occasional repair teams, as set out in the **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14 - Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/ 6.1.14]**.
- 7.4.8 The Applicant is committed to supporting education and skills development in the local area but there is a limited number of employment opportunities during the operation and maintenance phase. There could be limited opportunities to employ and positively affect protected characteristic groups that are disproportionately affected by unemployment, such as young people and people with disabilities.

## Mental health related equality impacts

- 7.4.9 There is no one recognised way to assess mental health impacts within major infrastructure projects. It is important to consider that this desk-top EQUIA assesses potential equalities impact at a population rather than individual level and specific individuals may be more or less effected by the Scheme.
- 7.4.10 During the EIA scoping stage and consultation, the potential for mental health impacts was raised as a concern. Whilst mental health impacts can affect any individual, those with particular PCGs may be differentially or disproportionately affected due to capacity to respond to these issues, including young and elderly people, and people with neurodivergence. Thus, notable PCGs include age and disability.
- 7.4.11 To assess these potential impacts the toolkit developed for Mental Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment developed by Cooke et al, 2011 has been integrated into the assessment. This uses a four-factor framework, namely: *Enhancing control; Increasing Resilience and Community Assets; Facilitating participation; Promoting social inclusion to assess the impacts of a scheme* (Ref 36).
- 7.4.12 Mental health impacts during operation and maintenance could potentially be connected to noise, air quality, light, and access to spaces that support health such as open space, natural or recreational and private garden areas. Furthermore, diverted PRoW could lead to community severance, increasing

the risk of loneliness for some PCGs and communities. Other potential effects to mental health could occur due to restrictions on access routes required for treatment, such as hospitals, clinics, care homes, carers and specialist facilities, as well as impacts regarding changes to neighbourhood characteristics, perception and risks to safety and impacts on quality of life.

- 7.4.13 Although there are concerns as outlined above regarding the mental health impacts of major solar developments, elements such as new proposed PRoW could lead to greater access to open and green spaces, creating wider opportunities for health and wellbeing benefits, as well as considering population impacts regarding energy security.

## **7.5 Decommissioning Phase**

- 7.5.1 The same impact topics identified during construction may also arise during decommissioning. Based on the findings of the ES Volume 1, any effects on protected characteristic groups are expected to be similar in nature and no more severe than those experienced during construction.

## 8 Assessment of Impacts

### 8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 The next table, **Table 8.1: Topics with potential for equality impacts**, sets out the topics where there could be a potential pathway for equality impacts and the protected characteristic groups that may be affected.
- 8.1.2 Where potential impacts are experienced by different PCG, a tick is shown. Where impacts are not likely to be experienced by PCG, a cross is shown and this PCG is scoped out of the Assessment. Table 8.2: Assessment of Impacts then goes on to provide the rationale behind the equalities impacts identified.
- 8.1.3 Note, decommissioning impacts are anticipated of equal or similar nature and extent as experienced during construction and have therefore been omitted here.

**Table 8.1: Topics with Potential for Equality Impacts**

Topics with potential for equality impacts	Equality Groups								
	Sex	Age	Disability	Ethnic Group	Religion	Sexual Orientation	Gender Identity	Marriage or Civil Partnership	Pregnancy or Maternity
<b>Consultation</b>									
Accessible and Inclusive Activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓
<b>CONSTRUCTION PHASE</b>									
Severance to PRoW or changes to journey length or time or access to community infrastructure and open spaces	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×	×	×	✓
Increased traffic flows leading to changes in pedestrian amenity, fear and intimidation	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×	×	×	✓
Severance and Accessibility Impacts during Construction	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×	×	×	✓
Elevated noise and vibration levels	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓

Topics with potential for equality impacts	Equality Groups								
	Sex	Age	Disability	Ethnic Group	Religion	Sexual Orientation	Gender Identity	Marriage or Civil Partnership	Pregnancy or Maternity
Elevated dust levels and air pollutants	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Changes in views and landscape character	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Employment, skills, and training opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Mental health related equality effects	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
<b>OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PHASE</b>									
Employment, skills, and training opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Changes in views and landscape character	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Changes and connectivity to Public Rights of Way and recreational access	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
Mental health related equality impacts	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓

## 8.2 The Assessment

- 8.2.1 As per **Table 8.1: Topics with potential for equality impacts**, there are potential pathways for equality impacts and the scoped-in protected characteristic groups that may be affected.
- 8.2.2 The Assessment, as in Table 8.2, expands the impacts on each PCG.
- 8.2.3 The impacts have been categorised as negative, positive or neutral (post mitigation), and separated into Construction and Operation and Maintenance Phases, with embedded mitigations and additional recommendations set out for each assessment.

**Table 8.2: Assessment of Impacts**

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
<b>Consultation</b>			
<p><b>Accessible and inclusive activities</b></p>	<p>Implementation of accessible and inclusive consultation methods could support positive equality outcomes among protected characteristic groups who may otherwise face barriers to engagement. The Applicant adopted a multi-channel approach to consultation, combining digital and in-person methods to accommodate a wide range of access needs and preferences.</p> <p>Provision of consultation materials on the Applicant's website and at Community Access Points (CAPs) offered flexibility for people who are more likely to spend extended periods at home, such as older people, disabled people, and carers. Online events were scheduled during early evening hours to support participation from working adults and those with caring responsibilities. Offering consultation materials in alternative formats, including other languages and large print upon request, helped removed barriers for people with visual impairments and those for whom English was not a first language.</p> <p>In-person consultation events were held at accessible venues across the core consultation zone. These included community and village halls with step-free access, which may have benefited older people, disabled people, and others with mobility needs including parents with young people or those using pushchairs. Locating events across a geographically dispersed area, including in Great Moulton, Seething and Mundham, Hempnall and Brooke, ensured that rural residents without access to cars had an opportunity to attend. These measures collectively helped reduce structural barriers to participation and supported more inclusive engagement with the planning process.</p> <p>By offering multiple participation channels, using accessible venues, identifying and contacting underrepresented groups and making materials available in alternative formats, the approach to consultation has made efforts to mitigate the common barriers to engagement.</p> <p>This supported better opportunity to equitable involvement from groups who wished to participate and who may otherwise have been excluded – such as older people, disabled individuals, carers, and those with limited English proficiency.</p> <p>This impact has been assessed as <b>Neutral</b> within this EQUIA as removing barriers to participation is viewed as an action to reduce differential or disproportionate effects rather than enhance equalities impacts. It is acknowledged that during consultation a number of comments have been</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Any further public consultation or engagement should follow accessible and inclusive measures.</p>

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	<p>raised regarding the quality and extent of the consultation. This perception is acknowledged to have a dampening impact on engagement with the Scheme and may particularly effect equalities groups including those with disabilities and those who have higher time constraints. The Applicant considers that the consultation was adequate and reduced barriers to participation for the reasons outlined above.</p> <p>Full details are included in Consultation Report Appendices 3: Phase One Consultation Materials [EN0110014/APP/5.4]; Statement of Community Consultation Materials [EN0110014/APP/5.6]; Appendix 7: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN0110014/APP.5.8] each contain lists of the identified consultees the Applicant engaged with through the pre-application process.</p> <p>Further details regarding the Applicant’s engagement strategy and activities can be found in the Consultation Report [EN0110014/APP/5.1].</p>		
<b>CONSTRUCTION PHASE</b>			
<p>Severance to PRoW or changes to journey length or time, or access to community infrastructure and open spaces</p>	<p>A total of 84 PRoW are located within the Order Limits.</p> <p>No PRoW are expected to require long-term closures. Medium-term closures will be for a month or longer, while short-term closures are for less than a day to a few weeks.</p> <p>It is anticipated that on-site access routes will follow the alignment of existing agricultural tracks where practicable. There are potential for differential, and, in some cases, disproportionate equality impacts on groups with protected characteristics, particularly those relating to age, disability, and pregnancy and maternity. For example, older people and disabled individuals may be more sensitive to temporary changes to familiar walking routes if diverted paths are longer, steeper, uneven, or lack clear signage. These accessibility barriers may discourage use or reduce independence. This may have a disproportionate effect on over 65s who make up a greater proportion of the Study Area population compared to at a regional and national level or have a differential effect where alternative routes are not appropriately accessible or well-communicated to users who may need alternative transport options.</p> <p><b>Age:</b> School children and their parents could be impacted during school runs, sports matches, childcare duties by works, road closures and diversions, or increased construction traffic on the road network.</p> <p><b>Age and Disability:</b> Those requiring specialist care such as hospitals, particularly more elderly people, young children, and pregnant people could be impacted.</p>	Neutral	<p>Methods of communication about any disruptions to the PRoW network or limited access points during construction should cater to intended audiences and their requirements, such as online, social media and website updates, but also physical through newsletters, noticeboard posters, community forums.</p> <p>Where disruption is planned for any route accessibility, this should be communicated en route, as well as community notices.</p>

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	<p>People with disabilities could be impacted by road closures and diversions, particularly those requiring regular hospital attendances or home care support. Road closures or diversions could impact emergency services access to residents and people in need.</p> <p>Where community groups are impacted, such as those that provide local social cohesion, this would be a concern for people who live alone, elderly, or part of smaller communities. Due to the location and scale of the Scheme, there are places of worship within walking distance of the Scheme, with public transport options providing further links to places of worship in Norfolk town centre. Road closures or diversions could impact people needing to access places of worship or community and religious leaders needing to access their communities.</p> <p>Impacts on green spaces could be experienced by all ages, particularly when accessing the 84 PRoW and recreational routes such as the Boudicca Way who use these routes for exercise and wellbeing.</p> <p>As set out in <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 4 - The Scheme [EN0110014/APP/6.1.4]</b> will seek to increase the green infrastructure connectivity and access to the countryside, with consideration to be given to creating new permissive paths and community accessible space. Where practicable, PRoW will remain open during construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning. However, there may be short periods of temporary closure or diversions to PRoW.</p> <p>Certain PRoW crossings will be unavoidable, particularly where internal haul routes between adjacent Sites are required to reduce the number of construction vehicles on the local road network. Public access will be maintained as far as practicable, with appropriate safety measures as set out in the <b>Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Management Plan [EN011001/APP/7.8]</b>. Safety measures include control of routes in accordance with standard management procedures, including the use of appropriate signage, Banksmen, temporary surfacing where required, and clearly demarcated pedestrian corridors to maintain safe passage at all times. Landscape buffers will be provided for visual and noise improvements. Detailed measures are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider access tracks to pass all PRoW users safely</li> <li>• Appropriate signage installed along the PRoW such as construction hours and contact details</li> <li>• Banksmen to hold vehicles</li> <li>• Vehicle speeds across and on the approach to the PRoW to be limited to 5 to 10mph</li> </ul>		<p>Information should be shared appropriately to reduce the risk of community severance.</p>

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drivers to must yield to all PRoW users</li> <li>• PRoW kept clear of construction vehicles and apparatus outside of permitted construction hours</li> </ul> <p>This impact has been assessed as <b>Neutral (post mitigation)</b>. Whilst there may be some short-term negative impacts on specific PRoW during this phase it is expected that these will be temporary in nature and impacts are likely to be managed through communications plans.</p>		
<p>Increased traffic flows leading to changes in pedestrian amenity, fear and intimidation</p>	<p>During the construction phase, increased traffic flows – particularly from HGVs accessing construction compounds and moving along local rural roads – may affect pedestrian experience and perceived safety. This includes effects such as reduced pedestrian amenity, increased noise, and a greater sense of fear and intimidation near construction traffic routes.</p> <p>Access points to each sub-Site Area have been set out in <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 11 - Transport and Access [EN0110014/APP/6.1.11]</b>. There are links to highway access covered by the Order Limits. Three main links (A140; B1332; B1527) comprise the key arterial connectors for construction traffic, with the remaining links being more rural roads with intermittent markings and varying widths. These pass through a range of residential and commercial areas, with some overhanging trees, adjacent hedgerows, varying visibility, and challenges of passing points and two-way movements.</p> <p>Individuals may be more sensitive to actual or perceived risks from nearby traffic, particularly on narrow or shared-use rural roads with limited pavement infrastructure. Vehicle presence, engine noise, or reduced sightlines could discourage walking, increase feelings of anxiety or intimidation, or reduce independence for these groups.</p> <p>Women are often primary caregivers for children and relatives and likely to be impacted by road closures and diversions when carrying out such duties, particularly with irregular hours that such activities can occur.</p> <p>Men are more likely to drive to commute to work, more often at regular hours. They are also going to be impacted by road closures.</p> <p>Sensitive pedestrian receptors in the local area that may be disproportionately affected include primary schools, GP surgeries, places of worship, and community halls, which are commonly accessed on foot and frequently used by those with protected characteristics. The presence of construction vehicles near these locations may lead carers and parents to alter behaviour, such as</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Communications related to works should be communicated in a range of methods such as braille, voice messages, email, alternative font sizes.</p>

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	<p>avoiding walking routes, limiting children’s independent travel, or driving more frequently, which may exacerbate existing disadvantage for those without private vehicles.</p> <p>Temporary changes to the walking environment may result in differential impacts for groups such as older people, disabled people, and those who are pregnant or caring for young children. These groups may be more sensitive to increased traffic flows, noise, or proximity to HGVs, particularly where walking routes serve key community facilities or lack formal pedestrian infrastructure.</p> <p>The <b>Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN011001/APP/7.6]</b> and <b>Outline Operational Traffic Management Plan [EN011001/APP/7.7]</b> incorporates measures to control routes in accordance with standard management procedures, including the use of appropriate signage, Banksmen, temporary surfacing where required, and clearly demarcated pedestrian corridors to maintain safe passage at all times.</p> <p>Construction hours will be: Monday to Friday 07:00 to 18:00; Saturday 08:00 to 13:30; and no Sunday or Bank Holiday working unless crucial to construction or in an emergency. Where practicable, construction deliveries will be coordinated to avoid HGV movements during peak morning hours (08:00 to 09:00) and peak afternoon (17:00 to 18:00), to reduce traffic on the road network. The anticipated average HGV arrivals per day will be 47 (95 movements); and peak HGV per day will be 69 (138 movements).</p> <p>There will be an anticipated average of 116 vehicle arrivals (232 movements) and a peak of 205 arrivals (410 movements) associated with cars, LGVs and shuttles to transport construction workers. Parking for workers will be provided within the Order Limits and not permitted on public roads, so not to cause road blockages, disruption to pedestrian amenity, and elevated intimidation.</p> <p>For CRC access, anticipated peak daily LGV arrivals per day will be 15 (30 movements); and peak HGV arrivals per day will be 33 (66 movements). Anticipated peak of car, LGV and shuttle arrivals per day will be 30 (60 movements) to transport workers.</p> <p>As set out in the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 11 - Transport and Access [EN0110014/APP/6.1.11]</b>, three internal haul routes have been incorporated to connect Sub-Site groups 7A-F, 7G-L and 8A-B and minimise the use of public roads for material and equipment movements during construction. This approach reduces the number of vehicle trips, congestion, and highways safety risks.</p> <p>Temporary construction compounds will feature: areas of hardstanding; car parking; site and welfare offices and workshops; security infrastructure, including cameras, perimeter fencing and</p>		

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	<p>lighting; area to store materials and equipment; site drainage and waste management infrastructure (including sewerage); and electricity, water, waste water and telecommunications connections. Areas will be secured using fencing and security cameras, and on completion, these areas will be removed and land reinstated.</p> <p>This impact has been assessed as <b>Neutral (post mitigation)</b>.</p>		
<p>Severance and Accessibility Impacts during Construction</p>	<p>Sensitive pedestrian receptors in the local area that may be disproportionately affected include primary schools, GP surgeries, places of worship, and community halls, which are commonly accessed on foot and frequently used by those with protected characteristics. The presence of construction vehicles near these locations may lead carers and parents to alter behaviour, such as avoiding walking routes, limiting children's independent travel, or driving more frequently, which may exacerbate existing disadvantage for those without private vehicles. School children and their parents could be impacted during school runs, sports matches, childcare duties or connecting with their friends.</p> <p>Temporary changes to the walking environment may result in differential impacts for groups such as older people, disabled people, and those who are pregnant or caring for young children and using pushchairs may be more sensitive to temporary changes to familiar walking routes if diverted paths are longer, steeper, uneven, or lack clear signage. These groups may be more sensitive to increased traffic flows, noise, or proximity to HGVs, particularly where walking routes serve key community facilities or lack formal pedestrian infrastructure. These accessibility barriers may discourage use or reduce independence. This may have a disproportionate effect on over 65s who make up a greater proportion of the Study Area population compared to at a regional and national level or have a differential effect where alternative routes are not appropriately accessible or well-communicated to users who may need alternative transport options.</p> <p>No PRoW are expected to require long-term closures. Medium-term closures will be for a month or longer, while short-term closures are for less than a day to a few weeks.</p> <p>Where community groups are impacted, such as those that provide local social cohesion, this would be a concern for people who live alone, elderly, or part of smaller communities. Due to the location and scale of the Scheme, there are places of worship within walking distance of the Scheme, with public transport options providing further links to places of worship in Norfolk town centre. Road closures or diversions could impact people needing to access places of worship or community and religious leaders needing to access their communities.</p> <p>The <b>Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN011001/APP/7.6] and Outline Operational Traffic Management Plan [EN011001/APP/7.7]</b> incorporates measures such as</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Methods of communication should range for the intended audiences and their requirements, such as online, social media and website updates, but also physical through newsletters, noticeboard posters, community forums.</p> <p>Communications related to works should also be communicated in a range of methods such as braille, voice messages, email, alternative font sizes.</p> <p>Maps and wayfinding methods communicated to local communities could provide greater clarity on access, accessibility and route and land conditions.</p>

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	<p>banksmen, reduced speed limits, advance warning signage, and access design controls to reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.</p> <p>As set out in <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 4 - The Scheme [EN0110014/APP/6.1.4]</b> will seek to increase the green infrastructure connectivity and access to the countryside, with consideration to be given to creating new permissive paths and community accessible spaces. Where practicable, PRoW will remain open during construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning. However, there may be short periods of temporary closure or diversions to PRoW.</p> <p>Certain PRoW crossings will be unavoidable, particularly where internal haul routes between adjacent Sites are required to reduce the number of construction vehicles on the local road network. Public access will be maintained as far as practicable, with appropriate safety measures as set out in the <b>Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Management Plan [EN011001/APP/7.8]</b>.</p> <p>This impact has been assessed as <b>Neutral (post mitigation)</b>. Whilst there may be some short-term negative impacts on specific ProW during this phase it is expected that these will be temporary in nature and impacts are likely to be managed through communications plans.</p>		
Changes in views and landscape character	<p>Changes to local landscape character and visual amenity during the construction of the Scheme may lead to equality impacts for a small number of protected characteristic groups. Some individuals with disabilities, those who are neurodivergent people, and those with sensory or cognitive impairments may be more sensitive to changes in their environment. For example, alterations to the openness or visual structure of familiar landscapes may affect how certain individuals perceive safety, orientation, or emotional comfort. These effects may be more pronounced near rural walking routes or open landscapes that are frequently used for recreation or wellbeing and access to nature and green spaces. The visual disruption and accompanying acoustics from construction traffic and works could reduce the attractiveness or perceived accessibility of these settings for individuals.</p> <p>Restrictions to green open spaces, PRoW and recreational routes will impact families and individuals who use such routes for exercise, play, access to nature, and wellbeing.</p> <p>Land use changes could impact local farmers such as shared road use, and diversions, or greater traffic on the road networks.</p> <p>There remains a possibility that changes in views and landscape character during construction could affect certain individuals, as set out in the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 7 - Landscape and</b></p>	Negative	<p>Maps and wayfinding methods communicated to local communities could provide greater clarity on landscape and land use changes, including new permissive paths and how these are connected, which areas users would expect to find security fencing, additional lighting, planting, and potential construction transport vehicles and earthworks.</p>

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	<p><b>Visual [EN0110014/APP6.1.7]</b> particularly those identified residential properties within the Glint and Glare Assessment, which are in sight of the solar panels and construction works, as well as the users of nearby PRow, and where there are close range, open views toward the proposed solar infrastructure.</p> <p>During construction and operation and maintenance phases, areas will be secured using fencing and security cameras, and during the decommissioning phase, these areas will be removed and land reinstated.</p> <p>This impact has been assessed as <b>negative (post mitigation)</b> in the EQUIA due to the potential differential impact on PCG's through changes during the construction, although these impacts may not be significant on a population level.</p>		
Elevated noise and vibration levels	<p>The World Health Organisation states: <i>Excessive noise can cause annoyance; in addition, research shows it increases the risk for IHD and hypertension, sleep disturbance, hearing impairment, tinnitus and cognitive impairment, with increasing evidence for other health impacts such as adverse birth outcomes and mental health problems</i> (Ref 35).</p> <p>Noise may be differentially experienced by certain individuals, particularly those more vulnerable to heightened noise and vibrations such as older people, disabled people, children, and those with sensory impairments. For example, construction noise could impact young children, as noise can affect cognitive development and disrupt sleep. This could also impact elderly people, with sleep disruptions.</p> <p>The presence of community-facing receptors near construction areas means there could be temporary disturbance for these PCG's at these locations. The <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 12 – Noise and Vibration [EN011001/APP/6.1.12]</b> sets out how early communication with surrounding off-site receptors would assist with reducing potential for and in managing any complaints arising during the construction works associated with the Scheme.</p> <p>Noise impacts from associated construction could affect pregnant people, who require more sleep and could be experiencing health conditions related to pregnancy. Noise is also disruptive for babies and young children who require sleep and sleep at regular intervals during the day. Noise impacts can be severe for cognitive development in small children. Certain construction activities such as HDD works have been treated as the highest impact trenchless installation method due to elevated noise levels and the potential need to carry out during night-time hours. At the current design stage, points along the CRC have been identified where HDD <u>(or other quieter trenchless solutions)</u> may be required as per the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 12 – Noise and Vibration</b></p>	Neutral	Contractors will adhere to the Considerate Construction Code which sets out construction hours, and mitigation for noise effects. Construction noise will be managed via appropriate sound barriers or proofing of sites during development.

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	<p><b>[EN011001/APP/6.1.12]</b>. It is anticipated that, if required, HDD will take place over 3-4 days within one drilling location and therefore, temporary accommodation or noise insulation measures are not required to be offered to the residents due to the short-term nature of the works.</p> <p>Construction noise and vibration will be managed via the <b>Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) [EN011001/APP/7.1]</b>, to reduce noise impacts potentially on those more vulnerable to noise and heightened vibrations. Embedded mitigations, as also per the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 12 – Noise and Vibration [EN011001/APP/6.1.12]</b>, include: 'silenced' plant and equipment; switched off engines for standing vehicles; acoustic enclosures to suppress noisy equipment; low speed plant operations and automatic low speed idling; electrically-driven, hydraulic powered plants, and wheeled vehicles; maintained equipment for optimum performance; temporary screening or enclosures for static noisy plants; plants meeting standards; and awareness training for contractors.</p> <p>The Scheme layout has been designed to maximise the distance between key noise-generating activities and noise sensitive receptors and will include: localised screenings of plants; acoustic fences; cooling fans orientation; silencers; and operating hours set to reduce noise during night time hours.</p> <p>This impact has been assessed as <b>Neutral (post mitigation)</b>. It is expected that any differential or disproportional impacts will be managed through the best practice mitigation as laid out above. No significant adverse construction effects have been identified by the those more vulnerable to noise and heightened vibrations. Embedded mitigations are also per the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 12 – Noise and Vibration [EN011001/APP/6.1.12]</b>.</p>		
<p>Elevated dust levels and air pollutants</p>	<p>PCG's including such as older people, young children, disabled people, and those who are pregnant may be more sensitive to fine particulate matter from construction dust or exhaust emissions from increased construction traffic and larger vehicles. This includes people with asthma, respiratory illness, or underlying health conditions that heighten susceptibility to airborne pollutants. Low levels of dust could contribute to discomfort, increased fatigue, or reluctance to spend time outdoors in gardens, out in nature, and on PRoW near to the Scheme.</p> <p>The presence of dust in the atmosphere could impact sleep patterns, increase and accelerate respiratory conditions, visual impairments, and neurological sensitivities.</p> <p>Properties and villages within closer proximity to the Order Limits, haul routes and construction access points may be more exposed. In rural areas, where people spend time in private gardens, pedestrian and cycle ways or exercise routes, changes in air quality and elevated dust and air</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>There are no proposed mitigations in addition to the mitigation measures set out in the assessed evidence column.</p>

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	<p>pollutants could influence their behaviour, leading them to avoid certain routes, restrict time spent outdoors, or change their schedules.</p> <p>Construction dust and trackout will be managed via the <b>Outline CEMP [EN011001/APP/7.1]</b>, to reduce dust impacts potentially on small children and those with respiratory and health conditions. Mitigations include use of water to dust sweeping, wheel washing systems, and avoidance of burning any waste on the sites. During construction, waste will be removed daily, and this removal has been accounted for in the estimated HGV deliveries a day.</p> <p>Construction workers will be encouraged to use electric vehicles where practicable, which will reduce emissions and air pollutants from transport. A Framework Construction Worker Travel Plan, provided in the <b>Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.6]</b>, aims to promote sustainable transport for workers such as staff minibus services, Travel Plan coordinator and provision of bicycle parking facilities.</p> <p>As set out in the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 13 - Air Quality [EN0110014/APP/6.1.13]</b> it is anticipated that there will be reduction in pollutant concentrations overtime in the future, due to reduction in background pollutant concentrations and vehicle emissions as a result of replacement of older vehicles in the vehicle fleet with newer vehicles (zero tailpipe emission and Euro 6/IV engine emission standards). The Scheme will not include a centralised combustion-based energy centre, and the BESS location will be more than 100m from the nearest residential receptor location. This measure is part of a suite of mitigations in the event of a BESS fire to reduce exposure to smoke, as well as notifications to move to cleaner air locations and cancellation of outdoor events.</p> <p>As set out in the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 11 - Transport and Access [EN0110014/APP/6.1.11]</b>, three internal haul routes have been incorporated to connect Sub-Site groups 7A-F, 7G-L and 8A-Bv and minimise the use of public roads for material and equipment movements during construction. This approach reduces the number of vehicle trips and corresponding air pollutants and emissions on the road network.</p> <p>Through the <b>Outline LEMP [EN0110014/APP/7.4]</b>, additional planting will include new woodland belts, native tree planting and restoration of key hedgerows which will trap and absorb key air pollutants, during construction and long into the operation and maintenance phases.</p> <p>This impact has been assessed as <b>Neutral (post mitigation)</b>. It is expected that any differential or disproportional impacts will be managed through the best practice mitigation as laid out above. As per the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 13 - Air Quality [EN0110014/APP/6.1.13]</b>, the air quality effect as</p>		

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	<p>a result of road traffic emissions associated with the Scheme alone on all sensitive ecological receptors will be not significant in EIA terms.</p>		
<p>Employment, skills, and training opportunities</p>	<p>The <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 14 - Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]</b> sets out industries of employment, and that agriculture, forestry and fishing account for 5.0% of employment in the Local Area. As per the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 15 – Soils and Agricultural Land [EN0110014/APP/6.1.15]</b> there will be adverse impacts on the seven agricultural businesses and enterprises in the Order Limits, all of which are arable enterprises. All the impacts are primarily related to a reduction in land available for the operation of the farming enterprises, however the farms involved will benefit from the guaranteed income from the diversification of the enterprise base. None of the farms will experience a significant effect.</p> <p>The Scheme construction could have potential impacts on temporary visitors. There are a number of tourist attractions located near to the Order Limits, and 350 establishments in South Norfolk in the accommodation and food services industry. Construction will include multiple road closures, and diversions over 2 years. These could impact tourists navigating road networks to visit the region as well as employees of the tourist attractions, accommodation and food services establishments.</p> <p>The <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 14 - Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]</b> sets out that during the construction phase, the Applicant will implement employment and skills measures designed to maximise local benefits from the Scheme.</p> <p>The Scheme construction is anticipated to span a 2-year period. It is currently estimated that the Scheme would generate a peak of 720 construction workers and 604 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs during the construction phase.</p> <p>There will be approximately 360 net direct jobs created during the construction phase, with 684 net indirect and induced jobs supported which will not be confined to the construction sector but a diverse and multi-faceted supply chain across a range of industrial sectors.</p> <p>The Scheme will include the creation of apprenticeship and trainee opportunities, targeted engagement with local education providers and STEM organisations, and collaboration with council initiatives. The Applicant will seek opportunities to collaborate with local further and higher education providers, as well as alongside established initiatives such as Apprenticeships Norfolk, College of West Anglia, City College Norwich, East Coast College and UEA to support the programme and delivery of apprenticeships.</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Opportunities are aimed at maximising local labour forces, supply chains which could support equality groups, such as young people, people with disabilities, women, ethnic marginalised groups and older workers. These would be implemented through diversity, inclusion and equity policies, supply chain charters, and processes to ensure equitable opportunities.</p>

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	<p>The Applicant will seek to source services from local contractors and sub-contractors where feasible, advertise jobs through local channels, and deliver skills workshops for residents. These measures were set out in the <b>Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Strategy [EN0110014/APP/7.10]</b>.</p> <p>The <b>Outline CEMP [EN0110014/APP/7.1]</b> and associated Works Plans for each site set out the phased approach across the construction phase. The <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 11 - Transport and Access [EN0110014/APP/6.1.11]</b> sets out that there are 11 bus services operating within the Order Limits, which could be impacted by construction traffic and vehicles on the road network. Construction vehicle routes have been selected with the principal aim of avoiding routeing vehicles through local villages wherever possible.</p> <p>This will be important for local businesses to communicate to employees, and local attractions to visitors, through a variety of methods such as online, newsletters, email, and physical notices. Communications should be shared in respective languages, as well as updated on Google Maps navigation, tourist information centres, and hotels.</p> <p>This topic is assessed as having a <b>positive</b> equalities impact primarily impacting the working age population, supported by the mitigation measures outlined above through increased opportunities for employment and training. It is acknowledged that this will require further collaboration with the local and regional supply chain to achieve.</p>		
Mental health related equality effects	<p>The Mental Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (MWHIA) four-factor framework has been used to assess the construction of the Scheme (Ref 36).</p> <p><i>Enhancing control</i></p> <p>This factor within the MWHIA refers to the extent to which individuals feel like they have control over their lives via material resources, psycho-social factors and political voice.</p> <p>It is noted in this sphere that comments raised by local residents during scoping and consultation via statutory and non-statutory consultation methods demonstrate concern regarding mental health effects of the scheme, including: the impact of the Scheme on access to nature; visual amenity &amp; attachment to place; fears or concerns regarding community safety regarding fire risks; the cumulative impacts of con-current schemes and; fears or concerns regarding housing and business values.</p> <p>These impacts will differentially effect individuals regardless of PCG status. However, groups which may have increased, or disproportionate impacts during construction include the elderly</p>	Negative	<p>Community impacts are related to the mental health effects of the scheme include: the impact of the Scheme on access to nature; visual amenity &amp; attachment to place; fears or concerns regarding community safety regarding fire risks; the cumulative impacts of con-current schemes and; fears or concerns regarding housing and business values.</p> <p>Continued engagement and monitoring regarding these community impacts should be pursued throughout the</p>

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	<p>population, those on fixed or limited incomes; children and young people and those with disabilities or pre-existing health conditions due to a real or perceived inability to respond to change, as well as impact during a formative period of the lifecycle.</p> <p>In relation to construction there are limited concerns raised during this project phase, notwithstanding impact on access to community resources and assets (discussed below). The majority of impacts relate to the operation of the Scheme.</p> <p>It is noted that as part of this EQUIA, a summary of all statutory and non-statutory consultation has been included. This has enabled the local community to voice concerns regarding the project, aligning with the MWHIA model. Whilst these concerns may persist, not all of these concerns are likely to be fully mitigated by the Scheme (particularly regarding opposition to the principle of the scheme itself), and the Applicant has provided opportunity to local residents to have political voice.</p> <p><i>Increasing resilience and community assets</i></p> <p>This factor within the MWHIA framework refers to how people relate to place and enabling social participation within these places. For example, understanding how attached to place communities are and if there is access to strong social networks. This factor also refers to elements including individual cognitive and social functioning, this is considered outside the scope of this EQUIA due to both the nature of the project.</p> <p>Factors affecting resilience and community assets include access to employment and educational attainment. In relation to construction, protected characteristics groups that are less resilient to change in relation to skills and employment may include those furthest away from the labour market (such as NEETs, defined as those aged 16-25 not in employment, education or training), as well as those who may require re-training or upskilling (such as mid or late career professionals). As noted, the Applicant will seek to engage with a range of education and professional training to support these groups, which will likely benefit those within the Local Authority area and wider region.</p> <p>Additionally, changes to access to social infrastructure, particularly for those without access to private vehicles or those who may face mobility challenges (e.g. elderly residents, carers, children and those without access to a private vehicle) may experience an adverse impact in relation to accessing areas of open space and social infrastructure during the construction period, due to fewer alternatives being available to them within a reasonable journey time. These impact types have been raised during scoping and consultation.</p>		<p>construction phase, such as engagement with community leaders, active travel groups such as cyclists, horse riders and walkers, local businesses, schools and attractions. Dedicated communications lines will remain open, via registration, email, or phone, which are monitored by stakeholder correspondence teams.</p>

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	<p>It is expected that links to highway access will be impacted by the Scheme and are covered by the Order Limits. Access points to each sub-Site Area have been set out in <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 11 - Transport and Access [EN0110014/APP/6.1.11]</b>. Three main links (A140; B1332; B1527) comprise the key arterial connectors for construction traffic, with the remaining links being more rural roads with intermittent markings and varying widths. Eleven bus services could be impacted by construction activities on the road network. A total of 84 PRoW are located within the Order Limits. The only section of the Boudicca Way that directly crosses the Order Limits is within CRC4.</p> <p>No PRoW are expected to require long-term closures. Medium-term closures will be for a month or longer, while short-term closures are for less than a day to a few weeks. Construction vehicle routes have been selected with the principal aim of avoiding routeing vehicles through local villages wherever possible, especially Great Moulton, Long Stratton, Hempnall, Saxlingham Nethergate and Brooke.</p> <p><i>Facilitating participation</i>                      Within the MWHIA framework participation is the extent to which people are involved and engaged in activities outside their immediate household, and includes cultural and leisure activities, as well as volunteering, membership of clubs and groups, as well as participation in local decision-making, collective action, voting and other forms of civic engagement.</p> <p>The above section explores the impacts of the scheme during construction on social infrastructure. However, it is acknowledged that this factor is also linked to concerns regarding social isolation and integration it the impacts of these factors on mental health and not just severance impacting the character of the neighbourhood. This could impact those with PCG such as disability and elderly residents more acutely.</p> <p>In order to address this the <b>Outline Operation Traffic Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.7]</b> will include commitments such as use of a Delivery Management System, and to avoid network peak hours where possible, as well as avoiding school pick up and drop off times. This will aim to reduce the likelihood of local residents avoiding travelling during construction to employment, leisure, social and retail locations.</p> <p><i>Promoting social inclusion</i>                      Within the MWHIA framework social inclusion is the extent to which people are able to access opportunities, for example employment, education, leisure, credit. It is often measured in terms of factors that exclude certain groups, e.g. poverty, disability, physical ill-health, unemployment, old age, poor mental health.</p>		

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	<p>In regard to the above the following construction effects could disproportionately impact those with PCGs such as disability or pre-existing conditions. This is in regard in particular to construction impacts such as noise and dust could impact people, such as impacting their sleep patterns, respiratory conditions, visual impairments, and neurological sensitivities. Those with mental health conditions could be negatively impacted by noise disturbances, particularly when it affects their quiet spaces such as green spaces, private gardens, or within their homes resulting in lack of appetite to participate in usual social activities.</p> <p>Furthermore, the use of HGVs travelling across roads, pedestrian pathways, PRoW and agricultural land could disrupt the quality of the soil and land, for accessibility reasons and disruption to routes. The <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 15 – Soils and Agricultural Land [EN0110014/APP/6.1.15]</b> sets out mitigations for the construction phase including: minimising or avoiding vehicle movement over soils (trafficking) when soils are wet (in a plastic state); only moving soils such as to build tracks, the BESS and substation areas when soils are dry; storing soils in storage bunds when they are dry; and minimising trench widths, replacing soils in the reverse order and preventing any adverse long-term effects on land quality.</p> <p>The <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 14 – Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]</b> sets out industries of employment, and that agriculture, forestry and fishing account for 5.0% of employment in the Local Area. As per the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 15 – Soils and Agricultural Land [EN0110014/APP/6.1.15]</b> there will be adverse impacts on the seven agricultural businesses and enterprises in the Order Limits, all of which are arable enterprises. All the impacts are primarily related to a reduction in land available for the operation of the farming enterprises, however the farms involved will benefit from the guaranteed income from the diversification of the enterprise base. None of the farms will experience a significant effect.</p> <p>Additionally, the presence of construction workers may have an impact on people’s feelings of personal safety and security. Residents living close to construction compounds may feel particularly concerned about the influx of construction workers to the area and potential impacts relating to the perception of anti-social behaviour/perceptions of community safety. It is expected that travel to and from Site, where existing residents may interact with the workforce will be managed within the <b>Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.6]</b> with consideration for need of any specific transport for the construction workforce and where this is located. Within the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 14 - Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]</b> it is noted that a non-significant impact is expected regarding construction workers regarding housing impact suggesting that the concentration of new workers will be dispersed.</p>		

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	<p>In response, mitigations set out in the <b>Outline CEMP [EN011001/APP/7.1]</b> such as dust and noise reduction measures will address these concerns and align with best practice measures for reducing environmental impacts.</p> <p>Overall, it is acknowledged that a Scheme of the size and scale of the proposals is likely to raise individual mental health and wellbeing concerns of local residents. The assessment of these effects must be made at a population level as it would not be appropriate for the project to assess individual mental health needs. There are limited peer-review articles or studies regarding the mental health impacts of solar farms in the UK in the long-term. However, it is recognised that the immediate potential mental health impacts on local communities, including uncertainty, changes to access to nature, changes to the character of a community and environmental construction impacts need to be balanced alongside the positive impacts at a wider scale of improving access and availability of renewable energy and the consequent national health and economic benefits that come with this.</p> <p>Therefore, despite mitigation, during construction this impact has been assessed as <b>negative</b>, to recognise these concerns and need for ongoing engagement and potential additional mitigations that may be necessary to reduce mental health impacts.</p>		
<b>OPERATIONAL PHASE</b>			
<p>Changes and connectivity to Public Rights of Way and recreational access</p>	<p>During the Scheme's operation and maintenance phase, vehicular movements are likely to be by small van or 4x4 type vehicle. Visits to the Sites would be for maintenance and monitoring purposes. There could also be access by HGV for operations such as equipment replacement, particularly during the panel replacement phase.</p> <p>The Scheme includes the creation of three permissive paths, creating more routes for exercise and access to green spaces. The paths are anticipated to enhance connectivity within the local area by providing improved access to the countryside and wider PRoW network. In addition, they will provide alternative access routes to the local highway network. This could provide recreational benefits for local users which could lead to positive health and wellbeing impacts through increased active travel. There is also the provision of community accessible space in Sub-Sites 4B and 7F, further details of which are provided in the <b>Outline LEMP [EN0110014/APP/7.4]</b>. These areas provide opportunities for walking, amenity and education use.</p> <p>The creation of new permissive paths will impact particular PCG's namely: Age, Sex, Disability, Race, Religion, and Pregnancy and Maternity. The pathways will grant people more access to</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Any maintenance works during the Scheme operations could impact road networks such as large maintenance vehicles. These should be communicated to local areas, such as tourist information centres and visitors' sites.</p>

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	<p>countryside routes, active travel, and transport connections to communities. They will reduce the risk of community severance.</p> <p>During times of maintenance, people of all genders could be impacted by road closures, diversions and transport alterations. Pregnant people and young families could be impacted by road closures, diversions and transport alterations to be able to travel to and access education and healthcare facilities.</p> <p>An <b>Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Management Plan [EN011001/APP/7.8]</b> is proposed as embedded mitigation to maintain connectivity and set out the three new permissive pathways for greater access to green spaces. These are located:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Within sub-Site 7F following an existing informal track through the field, creating a continuous link between Saxlingham Nethergate FP27 and Saxlingham Nethergate FP9.</li> <li>2) Within sub-Site 8B connecting to Shotesham FP22, which crosses the central part of sub-Site 8B, and creating a pedestrian link through the site, providing access to FP22 from Shotesham FP19 to the south.</li> <li>3) Within sub-Site 10B, running parallel to Seething Road while remaining entirely within the site extents and connecting to Hedenham RB9 at the northern end.</li> </ol> <p>For any maintenance or replacement activities, access to Sites will be via the access routes defined for construction. If any abnormal loads are required, consultation will be carried out, and approvals will be sought from the relevant local planning and highway authorities. Users of PRoW will be informed through various communications and safety measures.</p> <p>Day-to-day operational and maintenance vehicles may cross PRoW during visits infrequently likely less than one visit per week per Site and this is likely to be comparable or less than existing agricultural movements crossing PRoW.</p> <p>This topic has been assessed as having a <b>positive impact</b> within the EQUIA due to the provision of permissive paths, community accessible space and the limited impact of operational and maintenance vehicles on the use of these. Where closure of PRoW is required, this will be temporary, with communications shared with users and residents.</p>		
Changes in views and landscape character	Some locations could be impacted by significant operational visual effects, primarily those who use the PRoW with close-range views and access to the sight of the solar parks. All PRoW will have a buffer of at least 15m on either side to any infrastructure associated with the Scheme including	Neutral	No further recommendations.

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	<p>fencing. Therefore, PRow will be located within an open corridor, however users will have views of security fencing.</p> <p>Assessment results from the 13267A Solar Photovoltaic Glint and Glare Study (Pager Power) showed the potential of reflections from the proposed solar panels. These have been summarised:</p> <p>Solar reflections from the Scheme are geometrically capable of affecting 4.2km of the A140 and 7.9km of the B1527. <b>Section 5.3 of ES: Appendix 18.1 Glint and Glare Assessment [EN0110014/APP/6.3.18.1]</b> identifies the specific locations of the roads affected. The sensitivity of these receptors are considered to be Medium as they are roads of Regional and National importance.</p> <p>However, when considering the baseline conditions, screening in the form of existing vegetation, buildings and intervening terrain is predicted to significantly obstruct views of reflecting panels for the entire 4.2km of the A140 and 5.8km of the B1527. The resulting impact is considered to be Negligible and resulting effect significance is considered Not Significant.</p> <p>For remaining sections of road totalling 1.3km of the B1527, solar reflections may occur within a road user's primary horizontal field-of-view. With the implementation of the embedded landscape mitigation measures, the resulting impact is considered to be Negligible and the resulting effect significance is considered Not Significant.</p> <p><b>For dwellings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solar reflections are geometrically capable of affecting 482 dwellings. The sensitivity of these receptors are considered to be Low as they are tolerant of change without detriment and of local importance.</li> <li>When considering the baseline conditions, screening in the form of existing vegetation, buildings and intervening terrain is predicted to significantly obstruct views of reflecting panels for residents at 414 of these dwellings. The impact is therefore considered to be Negligible and the resulting significance of effect is Not Significant.</li> <li>For the remaining 68 dwellings, solar reflections may occur for more than three months per year but less than sixty minutes on any given day. With the screening in the form of existing vegetation, buildings and intervening terrain, and implementation of the embedded landscape mitigation measures, views are considered to be limited marginal from above ground level, and the duration of effects are predicted to be reduced to less than three months per year and</li> </ul>		

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	<p>less than 60 minutes on any given day. The impact is considered to be Low and the resulting significance of effect is Not Significant.</p> <p>The <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 7 – Landscape &amp; Visual [EN0110014/APP/6.1.7]</b> sets out specific measures such as restriction of development in environmentally sensitive locations, and development offsets and buffers. Offsets of solar PV development have been identified in 6 locations; exclusion of solar PV development have been identified in 9 areas; and reinforcement of existing field boundaries and new soft landscape planting will occur across the Scheme.</p> <p>For the majority of residents, road users and visitors and tourists to the region, major impacts will not be experienced. This will be due to extensive planting, landscape buffers, appropriate screening, re-routing or creation of new pathways, edge planting, tree or hedgerow reinforcement.</p> <p>For older people, and those who are neurodivergent or with sensory conditions, the change or view of the solar panels could impact their feelings of security, comfort, and acceptance of their altered surroundings.</p> <p>The <b>Outline LEMP [EN011001/APP/7.4]</b> sets out mitigations to manage landscape plans such as planting. Landscape buffers should be provided for visual and noise improvements.</p> <p>As covered in the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 15 – Soils and Agricultural Land [EN0110014/APP/6.1.15]</b>, the majority of land within the Order Limits is currently arable land fertilised with inorganic fertiliser, as well as spread with farmyard manure and liquid slurry. The land will be sown to grassland and managed, including potentially by being grazed with sheep, for the duration of the operation and maintenance phase. This is expected to have a positive benefit for the soils.</p> <p>This impact has been assessed in this EQUIA as <b>neutral (post mitigation)</b> due to reduced impact as a result of screening and landscaping mitigation.</p>		
<p>Employment, skills, and training opportunities</p>	<p>For local businesses, any maintenance works during the Scheme operations could impact road networks such as large maintenance vehicles. These should be communicated to local areas, such as tourist information centres and visitors' sites.</p> <p>The <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 14 – Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]</b> sets out that the Scheme is expected to generate 15 full time employees per year – including remote monitoring, maintenance, and administration.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Opportunities are aimed at maximising local labour forces, supply chains which could support equality groups, such as young people, people with disabilities, women, ethnic marginalised groups and older workers. These</p>

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	<p>During the operation and maintenance phase, the Applicant will embed initiatives to sustain long-term skills development and community benefits. This will include offering site tours for schools and colleges, delivering educational outreach on solar energy, and supporting summer internship and research programmes.</p> <p>The Applicant will explore opportunities to work with schools, colleges, and local authorities to deliver targeted outreach activities focused on renewable energy and STEM careers. This may include school talks, curriculum-linked workshops, and participation in established initiatives such as the local schools and Norfolk &amp; Suffolk Careers Hub.</p> <p>These measures are set out in the <b>Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Strategy [EN0110014/APP/7.10]</b>.</p> <p>It is anticipated that after 40 years, the solar PV panels will need replacing. The panel replacement period is anticipated to take place over a 12–24-month period and support an average of 129 workers with a peak of 240 workers.</p> <p>This impact has been assessed as <b>neutral (post mitigation)</b> within this EQUIA. This is due to the limited number of overall employment opportunities as part of the overall operation of the Scheme.</p>		<p>would be implemented through diversity, inclusion and equity policies, supply chain charters, and processes to ensure equitable opportunities.</p>
<p>Mental health related equality effects</p>	<p>The Mental Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (MWHIA) four-factor framework has been used to assess operational elements of the Scheme.</p> <p><i>Enhancing control</i>                      This factor within the MWHIA refers to the extent to which individuals feel like they have control over their lives via material resources, psycho-social factors and political voice.</p> <p>It is noted in this sphere that comments raised by local residents during scoping and consultation via statutory and non-statutory consultation methods demonstrate concern regarding mental health effects of the scheme, these have been summarised as: the impact of the Scheme on access to nature; visual amenity &amp; attachment to place; fears or concerns regarding community safety regarding fire risks; the cumulative impacts of con-current schemes; fears or concerns regarding housing and business values.</p> <p>These impacts will differentially effect individuals regardless of PCG status. However, groups which may have increased, or disproportionate impacts during operation and maintenance may</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>No further recommendations.</p>

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	<p>include the elderly population; children and young people; those with disabilities or pre-existing health conditions due to impacts on neighbourhood characteristics.</p> <p>The majority of concerns regarding mental health impacts listed above relate to the long-term impacts of the operation and maintenance of the scheme and its relation to the character of local villages and rural settings. These are addressed individually below:</p> <p>Impact on Access to Nature: With the provision of three new permissive paths and community accessible space, residents and visitors will have more access to nature and connected pathways to community infrastructure and village centres. The <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 15 – Soils and Agricultural Land [EN0110014/APP/6.1.15]</b> sets out mitigations for operation and maintenance including the minimisation of travel over land in vehicles in wet ground conditions to reduce the spreading of mud on roads and any deep tracks from being created across pathways. No PRoW are expected to require long-term closures and will remain open during the operation and maintenance phase. Any temporary closures will be communicated with users.</p> <p>Impact on Visual Amenity &amp; Attachment to Place: As noted above, for the majority of residents, road users and visitors and tourists to the region, major impacts will not be experienced. This will be due to extensive planting, landscape buffers, appropriate screening, re-routing or creation of new pathways, edge planting, tree or hedgerow reinforcement. For older people, and those who are neurodivergent or with sensory conditions, the change or view of the solar panels could impact their feelings of security, comfort, and acceptance of their altered surroundings.</p> <p>Fears or Concerns Regarding Community Safety regarding fire risks; An <b>Outline Battery Safety Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.5]</b> will be provided outlining how these risks will be managed in operation.</p> <p>Fears or Concerns Regarding Housing and Business Values: concerns regarding this impact relate to both impact on housing prices, as well as impact on revenue particularly regarding tourism related businesses (e.g. BnBs or other tourist accommodation) due to visual impacts of the solar panels. The stress and anxiety caused by this may impact the mental health of individuals effected. Regarding house prices, there is mixed and limited peer-reviewed evidence regarding impacts on house prices of large-scale solar farms, in particular regarding longitudinal impacts within the UK. However, it is acknowledged that there are some studies (including the 2023 study referenced in the scoping opinion (Ref 37) which suggest that there are some significant impacts on house prices in specific orientation and distance circumstances. Whilst this may cause individual impacts on households it is acknowledged above that only a limited number of houses</p>		

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	<p>will be affected by glint and glare. In regard to business impacts, the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 14 - Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]</b> identifies tourism receptors, including the above as medium sensitivity within the South Norfolk area resulting in an expected minor adverse (non-significant impact) on receptors. However, it is noted that this may be felt more or less severely depending on proximity to the Site and business type.</p> <p>It is expected that ongoing community engagement will be undertaken periodically throughout the operation and maintenance of the project, including communication from the Applicant regarding key updates to the community.</p> <p><i>Increasing resilience and community assets</i></p> <p>This factor within the MWHIA framework refers to how people relate to place and enabling social participation within these places. For example, understanding how attached to place communities are and if there is access to strong social networks. This factor also refers to elements including individual cognitive and social functioning which is outside the scope of this EQUIA due to both the nature of the project and its function as a desk top assessment.</p> <p>Factors affecting resilience and community assets include access to employment and educational attainment. Approximately 120 net direct jobs are estimated during the operational phase based on the peak replacement scenario. To maximise these opportunities the Applicant will endeavour to create partnerships between local suppliers and manufactures (such as for landscaping and repair) during this stage, including when the panels are due for replacement (anticipated at 40 years).</p> <p>As mentioned above there may be increased access between social infrastructure due to the creation of three permissive pathways which could increase viability of social infrastructure. No PRoW are expected to require long-term closures. Medium-term closures will be for a month or longer, while short-term closures are for less than a day to a few weeks, and all users of PRoW will be informed through various communications and safety measures. Construction phases will impact 11 bus services, providing access to community assets, employment, leisure and health facilities. As such, construction vehicle routes have been selected with the principal aim of avoiding routeing vehicles through local villages wherever possible, especially Great Moulton, Long Stratton, Hempnall, Saxlingham Nethergate and Brooke.</p> <p><i>Facilitating participation</i></p> <p>Within the MWHIA framework participation is the extent to which people are involved and engaged in activities outside their immediate household, and includes cultural and leisure activities, as well</p>		

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	<p>as volunteering, membership of clubs and groups, as well as participation in local decision-making, collective action, voting and other forms of civic engagement.</p> <p>It is expected that the Scheme would have limited impact in operation on this factor and that new or diverted routes to social infrastructure would be used, such as the three new permissive paths. No PRoW are expected to require long-term closures during operation, and during any maintenance periods, users of PRoW will be informed of any potential temporary closures.</p> <p><i>Promoting social inclusion</i></p> <p>Within the MWHIA framework social inclusion is the extent to which people are able to access opportunities, for example employment, education, leisure, credit. It is often measured in terms of factors that exclude certain groups, e.g. poverty, disability, physical ill-health, unemployment, old age, poor mental health.</p> <p>It is expected that the Scheme would have limited impact in operation on this factor aside from new permissive path for access and connections already mentioned. There will be no requirement for heavy machinery to traffic soils during the operation and maintenance phase, and thus no significant disturbance of soils affecting land quality and therefore, access,</p> <p>Furthermore, <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 14 - Socio-Economics [EN0110014/APP/6.1.14]</b> sets out industries of employment, and that agriculture, forestry and fishing account for 8.0% of employment in the Local Area. As per the <b>ES Volume 1, Chapter 15 – Soils and Agricultural Land [EN0110014/APP/6.1.15]</b> there will be adverse impacts on the seven agricultural businesses and enterprises in the Order Limits, all of which are arable enterprises. All the impacts are primarily related to a reduction in land available for the operation of the farming enterprises, however the farms involved will benefit from the guaranteed income from the diversification of the enterprise base. None of the farms will experience a significant effect in this regard, and therefore there is deemed to be a limited impact within this EQUIA regarding changes to access to employment as a result of the operation of the scheme on baseline jobs.</p> <p>Overall, it is acknowledged that a Scheme of the size and scale of the proposals is likely to raise individual mental health and wellbeing concerns of local residents. The assessment of these effects must be made at a population level as it would not be appropriate for the project to assess individual mental health needs. There are limited peer-review articles or studies regarding the mental health impacts of solar farms in the UK in the long-term. However, in relation to operation it is acknowledged that despite extensive mitigation regarding visual impacts there may be the perception of impact on neighbourhood character during operation and specific impacts on individual homes or businesses that may affect mental health. These impacts could be temporary,</p>		

Type of Impact	Assessment Evidenced	Impact	Proposed Recommendations
	and over time of operation, could be accepted by local residents as part of the landscape infrastructure and character. In light of the above the mental health impacts of the scheme in operation have been assessed as <b>neutral</b> on a population level.		

## 9 Conclusion

### 9.1 Concluding assessment and recommendations

- 9.1.1 This EQUIA has considered how the Scheme may affect people with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. It supports the Secretary of State in determining the Applicant's application for development consent by demonstrating that due regard has been given to the aims of the PSED. The EQUIA has been informed by a review of relevant legislation and policy, demographic data, **ES Volumes 1 and 2** and the **Consultation Report [EN0110014/APP/5.1]**, and the design and delivery proposals for the Scheme.
- 9.1.2 The assessment has identified both potential benefits and adverse equality impacts associated with the consultation, construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the Scheme. It has considered differential and disproportionate impacts in line with recognised good practice and guidance, drawing on demographic evidence from the baseline Study Area and Local Areas to assess where groups may be more sensitive to change or unevenly affected.
- 9.1.3 The Applicant has taken steps to support inclusive and accessible consultation and engagement, including through a multi-channel approach that combined in-person and digital methods, the use of accessible venues, and the provision of materials in alternative formats. These actions are judged to have had a positive equality impact by reducing barriers to participation for older people, disabled people, carers, and those without access to private transport.
- 9.1.4 The construction phase of the Scheme will generate short term employment and supply chain benefits. These impacts are supplemented by the Applicant's commitment to an **Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Strategy [EN0110014/APP/7.10]** will help to maximise these benefits. This includes the specific identification of target groups to support during recruitment and employment, this includes workers under-represented by gender, ethnicity and age, as well disadvantaged groups such as the long term unemployed, ex-offenders and disabled people during recruitment.
- 9.1.5 Several potential temporary negative equality impacts have been identified during the construction phase. These include impacts related to PRow diversions and changes to journey lengths or routes; elevated levels of traffic, noise, and air pollutants; changes to pedestrian amenity, fear and intimidation; and accessibility and severance. All of which are also relevant to mental health impacts, alongside the real or perceived feeling of lack of voice or control that major projects may cause for nearby communities. These may have differential impacts on older people, disabled people, and pregnant people, who may be more sensitive to disruption or access

- changes. In some cases, there may also be a risk of disproportionate impacts, particularly in rural areas where alternative options are limited or baseline health vulnerabilities are higher than average.
- 9.1.6 These impacts are expected to be limited in duration, and the Applicant has proposed embedded and additional mitigation measures to reduce or manage their effects. These include the implementation of an **Outline CEMP [EN0110014/APP/7.1]**, **Outline PRow and Permissive Paths Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.8]**, **Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN0110014/APP/7.6]** and adherence to good practice air quality and noise control measures, as well as the need for clear and consistent communication throughout this process. The assessment has concluded that, with mitigation in place, most equality impacts are not likely to be substantial and are regarded as neutral.
- 9.1.7 Equality impacts during operation and maintenance are expected to be minimal. The Scheme may result in changes to views and landscape character, but these impacts are expected to be limited to a small number of receptors and equality effects at a population level therefore will likely be reduced. A small number of direct longer-term roles will be supported, with the potential for extra employment through indirect and induced opportunities. These may deliver equality benefits where supported by inclusive recruitment practices. In addition, landscape enhancements and improved PRow connectivity are assessed to have positive impacts for residents and visitors and may have wider health and wellbeing benefits. This may be particularly beneficial for people with mobility impairments.
- 9.1.8 It is noted that there is concern regarding the long-term potential mental health impacts of the scheme, particularly regarding elderly and more vulnerable populations (including those of limited economic means). Whilst this is acknowledged within the assessment, the majority of these impacts will be reduced through embedded mitigation of Scheme design (e.g. screening, the provision of permissive paths and community accessible space) and individual mental health impacts lay outside the control of the Applicant.
- 9.1.9 In conclusion, this assessment has demonstrated that the Applicant has given due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the PSED. With mitigation measures and inclusive practices in place, the potential for significant negative equality impacts is unlikely. The Scheme presents opportunities to generate positive outcomes, particularly in relation to employment and inclusive engagement, and is not expected to cause major equality effects to people with protected characteristics.

## 9.2 References

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## 9.3 Abbreviations

Abbreviation/Term in Order of Occurrence	Definition
DESNZ	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
DCO	Development Consent Order
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
NCC	Norfolk County Council
EQUIA	Equalities Impact Assessment
solar PV	solar photovoltaic
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
MW	megawatts
CRC	Cable Route Corridor
GW	gigawatts
ha	hectares
IGP	Island Green Power
SoS	Secretary of State
ES	Environmental Statement
ONS	Office of National Statistics
APS	Annual Population Survey
NOMIS	official census and labour market statistics
BRES	Business Register and Employment Survey
LSOA	Lower Layer Super Output Areas
MS	multiple sclerosis
PCGs	Protected characteristics groups
PCG	Protected characteristics group
PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty
EFLG	Equality Framework for Local Government
GNLP	Greater Norwich Local Plan
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Abbreviation/Term in Order of Occurrence	Definition
PRoW	Public Rights of Way
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
kWh	kilowatt-hour
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation
AIL	Abnormal Indivisible Loads
WCH	walkers, cyclists and horse riders
HGV	heavy goods vehicles
HDD	Horizontal Directional Drilling
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area(s)
NO2 AQO	nitrogen dioxide Air Quality Objective
BMV	Best and Most Versatile