



WHITESTONE
solar farm

WHITESTONE SOLAR FARM

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ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
<i>Environmental Statement (ES)</i>	The Environmental Statement which presents the environmental information relating to the Proposed Development. The ES has been prepared to present information for formal consultation in accordance with current EIA regulation.
<i>The Applicant</i>	Whitestone Net Zero Ltd.
<i>The Application</i>	The Application submitted to the Secretary of State for a Development Consent Order.
<i>The Proposed Development</i>	The proposed Whitestone Solar Farm.

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
<i>AQMA</i>	Air Quality Management Area
<i>DEFRA</i>	Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs
<i>DESNZ</i>	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
<i>DMRB</i>	Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
<i>ES</i>	Environmental Statement
<i>EU</i>	European Union
<i>IAQM</i>	Institute of Air Quality Management
<i>LAQM</i>	Local Air Quality Management
<i>NPPF</i>	National Planning Policy Framework
<i>NPS</i>	National Policy Statements
<i>PM</i>	Particulate Matter
<i>RMBC</i>	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

12.1 Legislation, Policy, and Guidance

- 12.1.1 This technical Appendix sets out the legislation, policy and guidance for, and should be read in conjunction with, **Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 2, Chapter 12: Air Quality Assessment [EN0110020/APP/6.12]**.

Legislation

The Environment Act 1995¹ and 2021²

- 12.1.2 The Environment Act 1995 is “*an Act to provide for the establishment of a body corporate to be known as the Environment Agency...to make further provision for the control of pollution, the conservation of natural resources and the conservation or enhancement of the environment.*” The Environment Act 2021 sets out legislation surrounding environmental targets, environmental improvement plans, and environmental monitoring. Environmental targets relating to particulate matter are included within Section 2. Air quality is also considered as one of four “*priority areas*”.

The Environment Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023³

- 12.1.3 The Environment Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023 set out the annual mean concentration target for PM_{2.5}, the population exposure reduction target for PM_{2.5}, and the monitoring and assessment requirements. The Regulations specify, in respect of both targets, the target to be achieved and the date by which it is to be achieved.

The Air Quality Standards (Amendment) Regulations 2016⁴

- 12.1.4 The Air Quality Standards Regulations, implemented in the UK in 2010⁵, and amended in 2016, were designed to comply with European Union (EU) directives (EU Directive 2008/50/EC) aimed at improving air quality across Europe. These regulations set legally binding limits for various pollutants, such as nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, and sulphur dioxide, in ambient air. These regulations prescribe the ‘relevant period’ (referred to in Part IV of the Environment Act 1995) that local authorities must consider in their review of the future quality of air within their jurisdiction. The regulations also set out the air quality objectives to be achieved by the end of the ‘relevant period’.

National Policy

- 12.1.5 National policy had long embedded the principles of clean air as a national ambition for protection of human health and habitats. The latest iteration of such policy is the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (2019) Clean Air Strategy⁶, which recommits to protection of air quality in principle.

National Policy Statements (December 2025)

- 12.1.6 The UK Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) has published National Policy Statements (NPS) related to the energy sector, including an

overarching policy for energy (EN-1)⁷ and a statement specifically related to renewables (EN-3)⁸. These NPSs outline the aspects of an air quality assessment required for large energy schemes including for the construction, operation and decommissioning stages. These NPSs were used to inform the air quality impact assessment methodology for the Proposed Development etc.

12.1.7 Section 5.2 in EN-1 discusses the aspects that should be considered when assessing air quality for energy projects including reference to the relevant legal limits and potential impacts.

12.1.8 Paragraph 5.2.3 of EN-1 states that:

“...It is important that energy infrastructure schemes consider not just how a scheme may impact statutory air quality limits, objectives or targets but also measures to mitigate all emissions in order to minimise human exposure to air pollution, especially for those who are more susceptible to the impacts of poor air quality.”

12.1.9 Paragraph 5.2.9 of EN-1 indicates that the Environmental Statement accompanying applications should describe:

- a. *“Existing air quality concentrations and the relative change in air quality from existing levels;*
- b. *Any significant air quality effects, mitigation action taken and any residual effects, distinguishing between the project stages and taking account of any significant emissions from any road traffic generated by the project...”*

12.1.10 In EN-3, air quality impacts and assessment relating to solar photovoltaic installations are not mentioned explicitly. However, reference is made to EN-1 and Section 3 indicates that impacts from construction, including traffic and transport, should be considered during assessment.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF)⁹

12.1.11 Chapter 15 Paragraph 187.e of the NPPF notes that planning decisions should be made with consideration of:

“Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans ...”

12.1.12 In dealing specifically with air quality the NPPF Chapter 15, Paragraph 199 states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.”

Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland¹⁰

12.1.13 The government's policy on air quality within the UK is set out in the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland published in July 2007 ('the Strategy'), pursuant to the requirements of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. The Strategy sets out a framework for reducing hazards to health from air pollution and ensuring that international commitments are met in the UK. The Strategy is designed to be an evolving process that is monitored and regularly reviewed. The Strategy sets standards and objectives for ten main air pollutants to protect health, vegetation and ecosystems.

Local Air Quality Management (LAQM)

12.1.14 Part IV of the Environment Act 1995¹¹ also requires local authorities to periodically 'Review and Assess' the quality of air within their administrative area. The reviews must consider the present and future of air quality and whether any air quality objectives prescribed in regulations are being achieved or are likely to be achieved in the future.

12.1.15 Where any of the prescribed air quality objectives are not likely to be achieved the authority concerned must designate that part an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

12.1.16 For each AQMA, the local authority has a duty to draw up an Air Quality Action Plan setting out the measures the authority intends to introduce to deliver improvements in local air quality in pursuit of the air quality objectives. Local authorities are not statutorily obliged to meet the objectives; however, they must show that they are working towards them.

12.1.17 DEFRA has published technical guidance for use by local authorities in their Review and Assessment work. This guidance (known as LAQM TG(22)vi)¹² was used where appropriate in this assessment.

Local Policy

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC)¹³, City of Doncaster Council¹⁴ and North East Derbyshire¹⁵ Local Plans and Policies

12.1.18 The three local authorities have developed local policy that incorporates protection and management of air quality to protect human health and ecology. In terms of the project, the principle consideration is the potential for impacts upon AQMAs, several of which have been declared in locations relevant to the project.

Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction, Version 2.2¹⁶

12.1.19 This guidance outlines the procedures for assessing and mitigating dust impacts from demolition and construction activities. It includes steps for screening the need for detailed assessments, evaluating the risk of dust impacts, and implementing site-specific mitigation measures.

IAQM Land-Use Planning and Development Control: Planning for Air Quality¹⁷

- 12.1.20 This guidance, developed in collaboration with Environmental Protection UK, offers a framework for considering air quality within land-use planning and development control processes. It covers the role of the planning regime, the links between air quality and health, and the procedures for undertaking air quality assessments.

Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) LA 105 Air Quality (Vertical Barriers)¹⁸

- 12.1.21 This guidance, developed by National Highways and other UK transport authorities offers a framework for assessing air quality impacts related to road projects. It includes steps for screening potential impacts on sensitive ecological receptors

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