



**WHITESTONE**  
solar farm

# WHITESTONE SOLAR FARM

## Volume 6: Environmental Statement

### 6.20 Appendix 10.1: Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Application Document ref. EN0110020/APP/6.20

Revision 01

June 2026

Planning Act (2008)  
Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed  
Forms and Procedure)  
Regulations 2009  
Regulations 5(2)(a)

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## ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

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Document Status					
Version	Purpose of Document	Authored by	Reviewed by	Approved by	Review Date
Rev01	DCO Submission	ERM	TLT, Pershing, DWD, Whitestone Net Zero Ltd	Whitestone Net Zero Ltd	01/06/20 26

Approval for Issue		
Whitestone Net Zero Ltd		1 June 2026

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**Prepared by:**

**ERM**

**Prepared for:**

**Whitestone Net Zero Ltd.**

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## Contents

10.1 Legislation, Policy and Guidance ..... 1

### 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 Energy Security and Net Zero for a Development Consent Order.
<i>The Proposed Development</i>	The proposed Whitestone Solar Farm.

### Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
<i>CEMP</i>	Construction Environmental Management Plan
<i>CIRIA</i>	Construction Industry Research and Information Association
<i>DEFRA</i>	Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs
<i>EA</i>	Environment Agency
<i>ES</i>	Environmental Statement
<i>EU</i>	European Union
<i>FRA</i>	Flood Risk Assessment
<i>FRAP</i>	Flood Risk Activity Permits
<i>LLFA</i>	Lead Local Flood Authority
<i>NPPF</i>	National Planning Policy Framework
<i>NPS</i>	National Planning Statement
<i>OEP</i>	Office for Environmental Protection
<i>PPG</i>	Planning Practice Guidance
<i>PV</i>	Photovoltaic
<i>SFRA</i>	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
<i>SPZ</i>	Source Protection Zone
<i>SuDS</i>	Sustainable Drainage System
<i>WFD</i>	Water Framework Directive

## 10.1 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

- 10.1.1 This Appendix sets out the legislation, policy and guidance for, and should be read in conjunction with, **Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 2, Chapter 10: Water Resources and Flood Risk [EN0110020/APP/6.10]**.
- 10.1.2 The details of the legislation, policy, and guidance related to Water Resources and Flood Risk are outlined below.

### Legislation

#### **The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive (WFD)) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017**

- 10.1.3 The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017<sup>1</sup> is a retained EU law that is a domestic legislation derived from the overarching Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). It establishes a framework to protect the UK's water environments by preventing their deterioration and improving their quality. This is achieved through setting ecological targets and environmental objectives to ensure the protection, improvement, and sustainable use of all water environments. The legislation establishes a legal framework to protect and improve the quality of water bodies by requiring the implementation of River Basin Management Plans. These regulations enforce strict standards to prevent deterioration of water status, promote sustainable water use, and ensure that all water bodies meet high ecological and chemical standards.

#### **The Flood Directive 2007**

- 10.1.4 The Flood Directive 2007/60/EC<sup>2</sup> was transposed into English and Welsh legislation by the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 (revoked by the Retained European Union (EU) Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023), which set out the requirement for the Environment Agency (EA) and Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) to produce hazard maps and flood risk management for plans areas at significant potential risk of flooding. Although the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 were revoked by the Retained EU Law, flood risk management plans prepared under those Regulations remain in force and continue to inform strategic flood risk planning.

#### **Environmental Protection Act 1990**

- 10.1.5 The Environment Protection Act 1990<sup>3</sup> is a foundational UK law designed to create a comprehensive framework for controlling pollution, managing waste, and addressing statutory nuisances. Its primary purpose is to protect human health and the environment (including surface waters) by imposing strict duties on individuals and businesses regarding waste disposal, emissions, and environmental care.

### **The Water Resources Act 1991 (as Amended by the Water Act 2003)**

- 10.1.6 The Act provides a legal framework for regulating water resources in England and Wales. It governs water abstraction and impoundment through licensing, sets standards for water quality and establishes controls on discharges to controlled waters. The Act empowers the EA to enforce pollution prevention measures, designate Water Protection Zones and manage flood defence infrastructure. It underpins sustainable water management and supports the protection of aquatic environments. The Water Act 2003<sup>4</sup> introduced the Water Services Regulation Authority and the Consumer Council for Water and made provision in connection with land drainage and flood defence.

### **The Water Act 2014**

- 10.1.7 The Water Act 2014<sup>5</sup> is in place to introduce innovation and reform to the water industry to increase the resilience of water supply and restore sustainable water abstraction. It also promotes the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

### **The Environment Act 2021**

- 10.1.8 The Environment Act 2021<sup>6</sup> establishes a statutory framework for environmental governance in the UK, introducing legally binding targets for air quality, water, biodiversity and waste. It creates the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) to oversee compliance and enforcement, mandates biodiversity net gain for development and strengthens controls on pollution and resource efficiency. The Act embeds core environmental principles into UK law and supports long-term nature recovery through integrated policy.
- 10.1.9 Moreover, the Environment Act 2021 strengthens water management in England by introducing legally binding water quality targets, enhanced monitoring of storm overflows, effluent discharges and mandatory public reporting. It requires water companies to develop strategic plans to improve supply resilience and environmental outcomes and obliges the government to maintain a long-term plan to reduce the impact of sewage discharges. These measures align with the WFD and aim to improve ecological status and transparency in water governance.

### **The Environmental Targets (Water) (England) Regulations 2023**

- 10.1.10 The Environmental Targets (Water) (England) Regulations 2023<sup>7</sup> set out long term targets concerning four aspects within the water priority domain outlined in section 1 of the Environment Act 2021. These regulations outline the specific targets to be attained for each aspect and stipulate the deadline for achieving each target. The regulations include provisions to reduce:
- The levels of total nitrogen, total phosphorus and sediment entering freshwaters and coastal waters around England from agricultural land;
  - The levels of total phosphorus discharged into freshwaters from relevant discharges from sewerage systems of sewerage undertakers;
  - The length of waters polluted by arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, nickel and zinc from abandoned metal mines; and
  - The amount of potable water supplied by water undertakers.

### **Flood and Water Management Act 2010**

- 10.1.11 The objective of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010<sup>8</sup> is to enhance flood risk management and safeguard water supplies in England and Wales. It created the role of Lead Local Flood Authority as well as revising existing laws to provide improved protection against floods, promote sustainable water management, enhance public services, and secure water resources, especially in times of drought.

### **The Land Drainage Act 1991**

- 10.1.12 The Land Drainage Act 1991<sup>9</sup> assigns the responsibility of preserving watercourse flows to landowners and empowers Local Authorities to issue notices to ensure that necessary actions are taken for maintaining watercourse flow. Additionally, it serves as the legal framework granting Land Drainage Consenting powers to local authorities (now Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs)) and Internal Drainage Boards for any activities that might impact flows in Ordinary Watercourses.

### **The Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) (England) Regulations 2015**

- 10.1.13 The Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) (England) Regulations 2015<sup>10</sup> impose obligations on operators to prevent and remedy significant environmental damage, particularly to biodiversity, water and land. It emphasises proactive measures in environmental planning to prevent damage and address remediation.
- 10.1.14 The 2019 Amendment Regulations<sup>11</sup> update the Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) (England) Regulations 2015 to align with EU reporting requirements. They introduce a duty for enforcing authorities to notify the Secretary of State of incidents of environmental damage, including details of the damage, responsible activity and date of occurrence or discovery. This enhances transparency and supports the implementation of the Environmental Liability Directive.

### **The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016**

- 10.1.15 The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016<sup>12</sup> replace the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations of 2000 and 2010. The main focus of these regulations is the quality of water provided in England by water undertakers and licensed water suppliers for domestic or food production purposes. They also address the disclosure of information concerning water quality.

### **The Private Water Supplies (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2018**

- 10.1.16 The Private Water Supplies (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2018<sup>13</sup> impose an obligation on local authorities to oversee private water supplies in their jurisdiction and conduct monitoring to assess compliance with drinking water standards. A private water supply refers to any water source that serves one or more properties and is not provided by a water company.

### **The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 (as amended 2018)**

10.1.17 The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016<sup>14</sup> stipulate the necessity of acquiring Flood Risk Activity Permits (FRAP) for activities carried out on or in close proximity to Main Rivers, flood defence structures, sea defences, or within a flood plain. Additionally, they mandate a specific substances assessment for any release of hazardous chemicals and elements into surface water.

### **The Groundwater (Water Framework Directive) (England) Direction 2016**

10.1.18 The Groundwater (Water Framework Directive) (England) Direction 2016<sup>15</sup> sets out requirements for the monitoring and protection of groundwater in England. It directs the EA to establish threshold values for pollutants, assess chemical status and identify and reverse significant upward pollution trends. The Direction also requires the inclusion of groundwater data in strategic water management plans, supporting the long-term protection and sustainable use of groundwater resources.

### **The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001**

10.1.19 The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001<sup>16</sup> establish statutory requirements for the secure storage of oil in above-ground containers exceeding 200 litres, with the objective of minimising risk of environmental contamination. The regulations mandate the use of secondary containment systems, such as bunds or drip trays, capable of retaining 110% volume of the largest container. Compliance with the regulations is overseen by the EA, with phased implementation deadlines determined by site type and installation date. Secondary containment systems are subject to routine inspection and maintenance to ensure continued effectiveness. Failure to comply may result in enforcement action, including formal notices or prosecution.

## **National Policy**

### **Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy EN-1 (2025)<sup>17</sup>**

10.1.20 National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 sets out that the Water Resources and Flood Risk chapter should highlight water quality, water resources and physical characteristics of the water environment, and how this might change due to the impact of climate change on rainfall patterns and consequently water availability across the water environment, as part of the ES or equivalent as set out by NPS EN-1.

10.1.21 NPS EN-1 requires the Water Resources and Flood Risk chapter to include the following:

- *“The existing quality of waters affected by the proposed project and the impacts of the proposed project on water quality, noting any relevant existing discharges, proposed new discharges and proposed changes to discharges;*
- *Existing water resources affected by the proposed project and the impacts of the proposed project on water resources, noting any relevant existing*

*abstraction rates, proposed new abstraction rates and proposed changes to abstraction rates (including any impact on or use of mains supplies and reference to Abstraction Licensing Strategies) and also demonstrate how proposals minimise the use of water resources and water consumption in the first instance;*

- *Existing physical characteristics of the water environment (including quantity and dynamics of flow) affected by the proposed project and any impact of physical modifications to these characteristics;*
- *Any impacts of the proposed project on water bodies or protected areas (including shellfish protected areas) under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 and source protection zones (SPZs) around potable groundwater abstractions;*
- *How climate change could impact any of the above in the future; and*
- *Any cumulative effects”.*

### **National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure EN-3 (2025)**<sup>18</sup>

10.1.22 NPS EN-3 requires the Water Resources and Flood Risk chapter to include the following:

- *“Where a Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out this must be submitted alongside the applicant’s ES. This will need to consider the impact of drainage. As solar photovoltaic (PV) panels will drain to the existing ground, the impact will not, in general, be significant.*
- *Where access tracks need to be provided, permeable tracks should be used, and localised Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), such as swales and infiltration trenches, should be used to control any run-off where recommended.*
- *Given the temporary nature of solar PV farms, sites should be configured or selected to avoid the need to impact on existing drainage systems and watercourses.*
- *Culverting existing watercourses/drainage ditches should be avoided.*
- *Where culverting for access is unavoidable, applicants should demonstrate that no reasonable alternatives exist and where necessary it will only be in place temporarily for the construction period.”*

10.1.23 NPS EN-3 also sets out that solar PV sites may also be proposed in low lying exposed sites. For these proposals, applicants should consider how plant will be resilient to increased risk of flooding and impacts of higher temperatures.

### **National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure EN-5 (2025)**<sup>19</sup>

10.1.24 NPS EN-5 highlights that applicants should consider the protection of surface and groundwater sources, demonstrate resilience of the Proposed Development to flooding and changes to groundwater levels and highlight how climate change may impact the future baseline for flood risk, especially flood risk from groundwater.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Updated February 2025)<sup>20</sup>.**

- 10.1.25 The primary objectives of the NPPF in relation to flood risk are to incorporate considerations of flood risk throughout the planning process, preventing unsuitable development in flood-prone zones and guiding development away from high-risk areas. Section 165 to 179 details the key consideration of flood risk and coastal change within the NPPF. Where development in flood-prone areas is unavoidable, the NPPF aims to guarantee safety measures, preventing the increase of flood risk elsewhere and minimizing the overall risk of flooding.
- 10.1.26 NPPF requires a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) for all developments situated in Flood Zones 2 or 3, as well as for sites exceeding 1 hectare, having critical drainage problems, identified as being at increased flood risk in the future or subject to other source of flooding where its development would introduce a more vulnerable use. The purpose of the FRA is to evaluate the potential impact of flooding on Application Proposals and to gauge the flood risk to third parties associated with these proposals.
- 10.1.27 The NPPF requires the application of a risk-based flood risk sequential test to guide new developments towards areas with the lowest probability of flooding. Additionally, it aligns the flood risk vulnerability of a development proposal with the appropriate Flood Zones.

### **Planning Practice Guidance**

- 10.1.28 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Water Supply, Wastewater and Water Quality<sup>21</sup> provides guidance for local planning authorities on assessing the Significance of water environment effects of proposed developments. The guidance highlights that adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is needed to support sustainable development.
- 10.1.29 The Flood Risk and Coastal Change PPG<sup>22</sup> recommends that Local Plans should be supported by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and should develop policies to manage flood risk from all sources taking account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management bodies, such as LLFAs and Internal Drainage Boards. Local Plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid, where possible, flood risk to public and property and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change.

### **Local Planning Policy**

- 10.1.30 The local plans for all of the relevant council areas are detailed below. Derbyshire County Council do not have a standalone local plan, and instead revert to the local plan adopted by North East Derbyshire district council which is set out below.

## **The City of Doncaster Local Plan ('Doncaster Local Plan 2015 - 2035') (Adopted September 2021)<sup>23</sup>**

### **Policy 54: Pollution**

- 10.1.31 *"When determining planning applications, the agent of change principle will be applied, and particular consideration will be given to: ... any adverse effects on the quantity, quality and ecology features of water bodies and groundwater resources, including contamination to Source Protection Zones."*

### **Policy 56: Drainage**

- 10.1.32 *"Development sites must incorporate satisfactory measures for dealing with their drainage impacts to ensure waste water and surface water run-off are managed appropriately and to reduce flood risk to existing communities."*

### **Policy 57: Flood Risk Management**

- 10.1.33 *"All development proposals will be considered against the NPPF, including application of the sequential test and, if necessary, the exception test."*

### **Policy 60: Protecting and Enhancing Doncaster's Soil and Water Resources**

- 10.1.34 *"Proposals will not be supported which would:*
- 1. Have an adverse impact on the ecological status or recreational value of rivers and other water bodies such as flood storage areas;*
  - 2. Lead to the deterioration in the quality of surface and ground waters; and*
  - 3. Lead to a reduction in ground water levels (or reduced flows in water courses)."*

## **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Local Plan, Core Strategy 2013 - 2028 (September 2014)<sup>24</sup>**

### **Policy CS 19: Green Infrastructure**

- 10.1.35 *"...provision of new open space to remedy the need for natural and semi natural flood storage and managing surface water to ensure landscape change impacted by climate change has long term benefits.*
- 10.1.36 *Promoting design which replicates or incorporates natural processes for river morphology and water storage along the regionally important rivers Don, Rother and Dearne.*
- 10.1.37 *Promoting innovative development which manages quantifiable risks such as flooding."*

### **Policy CS 24: Conserving and Enhancing the Water Environment**

*"Proposals will be supported which:*

- Do not result in the deterioration of water courses and which conserve and enhance:*

- *The natural geomorphology of watercourses,*
- *Water quality; and*
- *The ecological value of the water environment, including watercourse corridors;*
- *Contribute towards achieving ‘good status’ under the Water Framework Directive in the borough’s surface and groundwater bodies*
- *Manage water demand and improve water efficiency through appropriate water conservation techniques including rainwater harvesting and grey-water recycling;*
- *Improve water quality through the incorporation of appropriately constructed and maintained Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems or sustainable drainage techniques as set out in Policy CS25 Dealing with Flood Risk,*
- *Dispose of surface water appropriately according to the following networks in order of preference:*
  - *to an infiltration-based system wherever possible (such as soakaways)*
  - *discharge into a watercourse with the prior approval of the landowner and navigation authority (to comply with part a. this must be following treatment where necessary or where no treatment is required to prevent pollution of the receiving watercourse.)*
  - *discharge to a public sewer.”*

### **Policy CS 25: Dealing with Flood Risk**

- 10.1.38 *“Proposals will be supported which ensure that new development is not subject to unacceptable levels of flood risk, does not result in increased flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, achieves reductions in flood risk overall”*

### **Wickersley Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – 2028<sup>25</sup> (Adopted May 2022).**

#### **Policy GS 1: Biodiversity & Green infrastructure**

- 10.1.39 *“The provision of green infrastructure, and where possible, connect with the existing Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridor and/or Local Wildlife Sites and linkages...”*

### **Dinnington Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2028<sup>26</sup> (Adopted May 2021).**

- 10.1.40 Whilst the Dinnington Neighbourhood Plan does not include any specific policies directly relating to water resources and flood risk, Policy NE1: Biodiversity sets out that development proposals which conserve, enhance and incorporate biodiversity will be supported. Water resources and flood risk directly and indirectly contribute to the natural environment, and therefore the neighbour plan is considered applicable.

### **Maltby Neighbourhood Plan 2017 – 2028<sup>27</sup> (Adopted February 2024)**

- 10.1.41 Whilst the Maltby Neighbourhood Plan does not include any specific policies directly relating to water resources and flood risk, Policy M9: Nature Conservation sets out that the wildlife sites within the area should be protected. Water resources and flood risk directly and indirectly contribute to the natural environment, and therefore the neighbour plan is considered applicable.

### **North East Derbyshire Local Plan 2014-2034<sup>28</sup> (Adopted November 2021)**

#### **Policy SDC11: Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 10.1.42 Development must assess and manage flood risk appropriately, with proposals in Flood Zones 2, 3a, and 3b meeting national policy tests. A FRA is required where relevant, demonstrating safety and no increased flood risk. Surface water runoff must not increase and should be managed at source, preferably avoiding combined sewers. SuDS are expected unless unsuitable, with long-term maintenance in place. Adequate foul drainage must exist or be deliverable and developer contributions may be required for infrastructure upgrades. The Council will also seek opportunities to improve drainage and floodplain capacity through development.

#### **Policy ID9: Chesterfield Canal**

- 10.1.43 Development that could hinder the restoration or recreational value of the Chesterfield Canal will be resisted. The canal's route is safeguarded and proposals that support its restoration, enhance its leisure, ecological, heritage functions, and / or improve public access are encouraged.

## **Guidance**

- 10.1.44 In addition to specific legislative and planning policy requirements, a range of guidance documents have been published to provide information on statutory responsibilities and good environmental practices. These have informed this assessment and will be taken into consideration during production of the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

- **Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA):**
  - Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites (C532)<sup>29</sup>;
  - Development and flood risk: guidance to the construction industry, (C624D)<sup>30</sup>;
  - The SuDS Manual (C753)<sup>31</sup>;
  - Environmental Good Practice on Site (C741)<sup>32</sup>; and
  - Culvert, Screen and Outfall Manual (C786F)<sup>33</sup>.
- **Environment Agency (EA) Guidance:**
  - Flood risk activities: environmental permits<sup>34</sup>;
  - Peak River flow climate change allowances by management catchment<sup>35</sup>;

- Peak rainfall climate change allowances by management catchment<sup>36</sup>;
  - Applying for a Water Abstraction or Impounding License<sup>37</sup>;
  - Oil storage regulations for businesses<sup>38</sup>;
  - Manage water on land: guidance for land managers<sup>39</sup>;
  - Discharges to surface water and groundwater: environment permits<sup>40</sup>;
  - National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy<sup>41</sup>;
  - Approach to Groundwater Protection<sup>42</sup>;
  - Groundwater Source Protection Zones<sup>43</sup>;
  - Protect Groundwater and Prevent Groundwater Pollution<sup>44</sup>;
  - Manage water on land: guidance for land managers<sup>45</sup>; and
  - Humber River Basin District River Management Plan 2024<sup>46</sup>.
- **Other Guidance:**
    - Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and EA Pollution Prevention for Businesses<sup>47</sup>;
    - DEFRA National standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)<sup>48</sup>;
    - DEFRA Oil Storage Regulations for Businesses<sup>49</sup>;
    - Code of Practice for Works Affecting the Canal & River Trust Part 1: General Information<sup>50</sup>;
    - Code of Practice for Works Affecting the Canal & River Trust Part 2: Detailed Information<sup>51</sup>;
    - Code of Practice for Works Affecting the Canal & River Trust Part 3: Forms<sup>52</sup>;
    - British Standard Code of Practice for Earthworks BS 6031 2009<sup>53</sup>;
    - Department of Communities and Local Government Planning practice guidance: flood risk and coastal change<sup>54</sup>;
    - National Highways' Design Manual for Roads and Bridges LA 113 – Road drainage and the water environment, formerly HD45/09, Revision 1<sup>55</sup>; and
    - Planning Inspectorate's Technical Advice Page for Scoping Solar Development<sup>56</sup>.

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**WHITESTONE**  
solar farm

## Contact

Whitestone Net Zero Ltd

[info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk](mailto:info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk)

0800 688 9936