Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

SCOPING OPINION:

Proposed Sedgeby Solar Farm

Case Reference: EN0110026

Adopted by the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) pursuant to Regulation 10 of The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

02 March 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.0.1 On 21 January 2026, the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) received an application for a Scoping Opinion from Sedgeby Solar Limited (the applicant) under regulation 10 of The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (The EIA Regulations) for the proposed Sedgeby Solar Farm (the proposed development). The applicant notified the Secretary of State (SoS) under regulation 8(1)(b) of those regulations that they propose to provide an Environmental Statement (ES) in respect of the proposed development and by virtue of regulation 6(2)(a), the proposed development is 'EIA development'.

1.0.2 The applicant provided the necessary information to inform a request under EIA regulation 10(3) in the form of a Scoping Report, available from:

https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0110026/documents

1.0.3 This document is the Scoping Opinion (the Opinion) adopted by the Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS. This Opinion is made on the basis of the information provided in the Scoping Report, reflecting the proposed development as currently described by the applicant. This Opinion should be read in conjunction with the applicant's Scoping Report.

1.0.4 The Inspectorate has set out in the following sections of this Opinion where it has / has not agreed to scope out certain aspects / matters on the basis of the information provided as part of the Scoping Report. The Inspectorate is content that the receipt of this Scoping Opinion should not prevent the applicant from subsequently agreeing with the relevant consultation bodies to scope such aspects / matters out of the ES, where further evidence has been provided to justify this approach. However, in order to demonstrate that the aspects / matters have been appropriately addressed, the ES should explain the reasoning for scoping them out and justify the approach taken.

1.0.5 Before adopting this Opinion, the Inspectorate has consulted the 'consultation bodies' listed in appendix 1 in accordance with EIA regulation 10(6). A list of those consultation bodies who replied within the statutory timeframe (along with copies of their comments) is provided in appendix 2. These comments have been taken into account in the preparation of this Opinion.

1.0.6 The Inspectorate has published a series of advice pages, including 'Advice Note 7: *Environmental Impact Assessment: Preliminary Environmental Information, Screening and Scoping* (AN7)'. AN7 and its annexes provide guidance on EIA processes during the pre-application stages and advice to support applicants in the preparation of their ES.

1.0.7 Applicants should have particular regard to the standing advice in AN7, alongside other advice notes on the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) process, available from:

'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice pages'

1.0.8 This Opinion should not be construed as implying that the Inspectorate agrees with the information or comments provided by the applicant in their request for an opinion from the Inspectorate. In particular, comments from the Inspectorate in this Opinion are without prejudice to any later decisions taken (e.g. on formal submission of the application) that any development identified by the applicant is necessarily to be treated as part of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) or associated development or development that does not require development consent.

2. OVERARCHING COMMENTS

2.1 Description of the Proposed Development

(Scoping Report Chapters 1 and 2)

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
2.1.1	Paragraph 2.1.3	Access routes	The ES should describe the proposed site entrance(s) and the routes to be used for all vehicular access during construction and operation of the proposed development and this information should be clearly presented on supporting plans within the ES. The ES should describe and assess the potential effects, where they are likely to be significant, associated with any improvements/ changes to the access routes which are either required to facilitate construction of the proposed development or are required for restoration purposes on completion of the works. For the assessment of effects during construction, the ES should explain how the proposed access route(s) relate to sensitive receptors.
2.1.2	Paragraphs 2.1.9 to 2.1.13	Off-site grid connection	The Scoping Report states that the proposed development needs to connect to a new 400kV substation of National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) to be located within the Thormanby area which is outside the scoping boundary presented. Whilst the Inspectorate notes that the offsite NGET point of connection or the grid connection route are not yet known and this would be reviewed throughout the pre-application phase, the ES should clearly describe the relationship between the proposed development and connected projects. This should include the extent to which the proposed development is dependent on their delivery and the development timeline and anticipated consenting routes of the other projects, with an explanation of how these will be coordinated. The ES should describe how the NGET substation is either proposed to be constructed in a way to facilitate the connection from the proposed development, or whether if constructed first, any additional works are then required to enable connection. If there is a requirement to accommodate flexibility within the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) in order to facilitate connection of the proposed development to the national grid, the ES

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			should confirm how this flexibility been considered and assessed in the relevant assessments.
2.1.3	Paragraphs 2.1.15 to 2.1.19	Flexibility	The Inspectorate notes the applicant's intention to apply a 'Rochdale Envelope' approach to maintain flexibility within the design of the proposed development. The Inspectorate expects that at the point an application is made, the description of the proposed development will be sufficiently detailed to include the design, size, capacity, technology, and locations of the different elements of the proposed development, supported by figures, or where details are not yet known, will set out the assumptions applied to the assessment in relation to these aspects. This should include the footprint and heights of the structures (relevant to existing ground levels), as well as land-use requirements for all elements and phases of the development. The description should be supported (as necessary) by figures, cross sections, and drawings which should be clearly and appropriately referenced. Where flexibility is sought, the ES should clearly set out and justify the maximum design parameters that would apply for each option assessed and how these have been used to inform an adequate assessment in the ES.
2.1.4	Table 2.1	Cable trenches, Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) and foundations	The width and depth of cable trenches required for the cabling between the transformers to the on-site substation and the two parcels are not described in the Scoping Report. Additionally, the proposed depth for piling for the foundations of the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and the depths of the HDD are not described. The ES should include a complete description of the proposed development including proposed excavation methods and final easements for all cabling required, the maximum depth and width of all cable trenching, HDD and piling for foundations, and use this to inform a worst-case scenario in the assessments, where relevant.
2.1.5	Paragraph 2.1.26	Operational activities	The ES should describe the potential scope and duration of the operation and maintenance activities of the proposed development, including predicted vehicle movements and staffing numbers. The proposals for ongoing management and maintenance of the land around and under the solar array should be confirmed in the ES, including any vegetation management and animal grazing. Any potential adverse effects of

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			operation and maintenance activities should also be assessed in the ES where they are likely to be significant. Proposals for maintaining vegetation around easements and the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the application site should also be described. Replacement of broken or faulty equipment is referred in paragraph 2.1.26. The anticipated replacement rate is not discussed in the Scoping Report. The ES should include parameters for the extent and allowance for replacement of infrastructure and assess any associated likely significant effects (LSE), for example LSE from waste and traffic movements.
2.1.6	Paragraph 2.1.29 and 4.6.34	Cable removal at decommissioning	Scoping Report paragraphs 2.1.29 and 4.6.34 are somewhat contradictory whereby cables are both proposed to potentially be removed at decommissioning but then it is proposed that shallow cables will be removed. The ES should be clear and consistent in the description of the approach to cable removal/retention at decommissioning.
2.1.7	n/a	Site boundary	The Scoping Report states that the site boundary is likely to be refined as the proposed development progresses. The ES should describe any alterations to the final boundary for the DCO, including an explanation of the reasons for the changes. The applicant should ensure that the ES reflects the total area of the proposed development and the maximum extent of likely significant effects.
2.1.8	n/a	Cable route search area	The Inspectorate notes that the Scoping Report does not provide an overview of the key environmental constraints related to the cable route search area. The ES should appropriately characterise the baseline environment of the cable search area and their associated study areas and identify sensitive receptors, providing any agreement on the scope of surveys with consultees where relevant. An assessment of LSE from construction, operation and decommissioning of the cable routes should be provided for the relevant aspect chapters in the ES, accompanied by appropriate figures. For clarity, unless otherwise stated, the matters in this Scoping Opinion that are agreed to be scoped out only relate to the two development parcels i.e. Briar Hill and Sessay Park presented in figure 1.2 and not the cable route search area.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
2.1.9	n/a	Construction and decommissioning lighting	The Inspectorate notes that only approach to operational lighting is described in table 2.1 of the Scoping Report. The ES should describe the lighting requirements for all elements and phases of the proposed development. It should be explained what measures are proposed to minimise light spill on human and ecological receptors.

2.2 EIA Methodology and Scope of Assessment

(Scoping Report Chapter 3)

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
2.2.1	Section 4.11	Alternatives	The Scoping Report states that alternatives and design constraints will be described within a separate chapter of the ES to demonstrate how environmental considerations have been taken into account in the proposed development design. No further information on the content of this chapter is provided within the Scoping Report. The ES should explain the factors which have influenced site selection and design. For example, the ES should explain how the design evolution of the proposed development has ensured that preference has been given to avoiding the use of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land and areas with high flood risk.
2.2.2	n/a	Professional judgement	The ES should provide evidence to support conclusions or clearly identify where professional judgement has been relied upon to determine the level of significance of effects. Any use of professional judgement to assess significance should be fully justified within the ES.
2.2.3	n/a	Environment Agency data	The Environment Agency (EA) has published new flood and coastal erosion risk data in 2025 following the release of its "National assessment of flood and coastal erosion risk in England 2024". Further updates are also expected to follow. The applicant should ensure that assessments take account of updated data sets as these become available through Defra's Data Services Platform. Where relevant, the applicant is encouraged to liaise with the EA to determine the implications for project design and the scope of assessments.
2.2.4	n/a	Significance of effect	Section 3.2 of the Scoping Report outlines the approach to assigning significance and paragraph 3.2.5 states that detailed methodologies are discussed in relevant aspect chapters. The Inspectorate notes that some

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
			of the aspect chapters do not clearly define what level of effect is considered significant in EIA terms for example in the Agricultural Land and Soil chapter. The ES should clearly identify the criteria used to determine if effects of the proposed development are significant.
2.2.5	n/a	Baseline conditions	The Inspectorates notes that a number of surveys and reports attached within the appendices to provide baseline information of the site do not cover the entire red line boundary. Baselines presented in the ES should be characterised for the entirety of the proposed development and red line boundary. The methodology for characterising the baseline should be explained, and agreement should be sought on the approach with the relevant consultation bodies.
2.2.6	n/a	Future baseline	The ES should set out the assessment year of the future baseline and detail how the future baseline conditions are established. The Inspectorate notes that some assessments may require projections to account for future change. The ES should detail the methodology used for the projections, including the relevant data sources used.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT COMMENTS

3.1 Traffic and Transport

(Scoping Report Section 4.2)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.1.1	Paragraph 4.2.57	Alternative modes of construction access	The Scoping Report proposes to scope out the assessment on alternative modes of transport to the site for construction materials on the basis that road access is the only available option there is no viable alternative such as means of rail or river access. The Inspectorate is in agreement that alternative modes of construction access can be scoped out of further assessment. Please see ID 2.1.1 regarding access routes.
3.1.2	Paragraph 4.2.58 and table 4.4	Operational phase assessment	The Scoping Report proposed to scope out operational phase assessment on the basis that the volume of traffic during operation of the proposed development are expected to be minimal. Paragraph 4.2.44 states that the anticipated traffic during the operational phase is approximately one Light Goods Vehicle (LGV) per week to each parcel of the site. The Inspectorate agrees that this matter can be scoped out subject to confirmation that the frequency and type of trips and vehicles during operational phase would not trigger the thresholds for LSE within guidance from the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP). The applicant should also refer to the total change threshold to support that changes would not be significant.
3.1.3	Paragraph 4.2.59 and table 4.4	Decommissioning phase assessment	The Scoping Report proposes to scope this matter out on the basis that traffic and transport effects generated during decommissioning phase would result in much the same as construction phase. Therefore, the impacts due to the decommissioning phase are considered to be adequately covered by the construction phase assessment. Paragraph 4.2.47 states that mitigation for the construction and decommissioning phases

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			would be secured in the outline construction traffic management plan (OCTMP) included in the outline construction environmental management plan (OCEMP) and outline decommissioning environmental management plan (ODEMP). The Inspectorate is content to scope this matter out of further assessment on the provision that the ES provide information on the likely trip generation during decommissioning and details on the specific mitigation measures required to avoid likely significant effects to justify this position.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.1.4	Paragraphs 4.2.52 and 4.2.53	Study area	The Scoping Report states that the extent of the study area was not confirmed yet. The ES should confirm the final study area and key roads included in the assessment and explain how they have been identified. In addition to agreement with the local highway authority, consideration should also be given to industry guidance and the extent of the potential impacts and likely receptors, both human and ecological. A plan illustrating the extent of the study area, the expected route(s) of construction traffic and the anticipated numbers of vehicle movements should be included in the ES, showing vehicle type, peak hour and daily movements.

3.2 Noise and Vibration

(Scoping Report Section 4.3)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.2.1	Paragraph 4.3.23 and table 4.11	Construction traffic vibration	The Scoping Report considers that construction traffic generation associated with the proposed development may cause vibration. Construction access routes are not confirmed, and it is proposed that these will be produced as part of OCTMP. It is not clear which receptors have been considered for potential vibration impacts. As such, the Inspectorate considers not enough information has been provided to scope this matter out of the assessment at this stage. The ES should clarify the routing of traffic and identify any human and ecological sensitive receptors along those routes and assess significant effects where they are likely to occur. The ES should clarify what constitutes a good state of maintenance and demonstrates which roads meet these criteria.
3.2.2	Paragraph 4.3.26 and table 4.11	Operational traffic noise and vibration	The Scoping Report proposes to scope out an assessment of noise and vibration associated with operational traffic on the basis that the traffic movements would be limited to occasional maintenance (approximately one LGV per week, to each parcel of the site). Considering the characteristics of the proposed development, the Inspectorate is content that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment. However, the ES project description should confirm the anticipated trip generation (including number and type of vehicles) required for all operation and maintenance activities during operation to justify this, as the number and/ or type of vehicle required for replacement of broken or faulty equipment is not specified within the Scoping Report.
3.2.3	Paragraph 4.3.27 and table 4.11	Operational equipment vibration	The Scoping Report proposes to scope this matter out of further assessment on the basis that the levels of vibration generated by operational equipment associated with the

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
			proposed development would be negligible. The Inspectorate is in agreement that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment.
3.2.4	Paragraph 4.3.28 and table 4.11	Decommissioning noise and vibration	The Scoping Report states that decommissioning noise effects are expected to be the same or less than construction noise effects. The Scoping Report proposes to scope this matter out on the basis that the assessment of noise and vibration effects as part of the construction is representative of both construction and decommissioning activities, and necessary mitigation measures would be set out in the ODEMP. Whilst the Inspectorate is broadly content that decommissioning phase effects would be unlikely to be more significant that construction phase effects, details of the number and type of traffic movements anticipated for decommissioning and activities during decommissioning are not provided within the Scoping Report. The ES should include an assessment of this matter or provide further justification for the assumption that decommissioning noise and vibration would be less than that during the construction phase, such as clarification of the likely duration of decommissioning phase and the likely traffic movements associated with this phase.
3.2.5	Paragraph 4.3.47	Noise and vibration effects on PRoW for all phases	The Scoping Report proposes to scope out PRoW as Noise Sensitive Receptors (NSRs) on the basis that their use by the public is highly temporary and transitory. On this basis, the Inspectorate agrees to scope this matter out of further assessment. However, the ES should consider the potential for in-combination effects to users of PRoWs and the potential for non-significant individual effects to combine and lead to potential LSE (for example noise, vibration, dust and visual impacts).

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.2.6	Paragraphs 4.3.10 to 4.3.11	Study area	Paragraphs 4.3.10 and 4.3.11 of the Scoping Report define the study area for the construction, operational and decommissioning noise and vibration assessment. Figure 4.3 only shows the site boundary, noise sensitive receptors and proposed assessment locations. The ES should explain how the study area and sensitive receptors have been selected with reference to the extent of the likely impacts. The Inspectorate notes that the construction access routes are not covered in figure 4.3, although noise and vibration from construction related vehicle movements is scoped in. The ES should provide a plan showing the location of all sensitive receptors identified for assessment. Effort should be made to agree the study area and approach to the assessment with relevant consultation bodies.
3.2.7	Paragraph 4.3.39	Background noise monitoring	The Scoping Report states that the background noise monitoring would be used to determine the background noise levels at the assessment receptors. Figure 4.3 shows the monitoring locations. The ES should explain how the baseline monitoring locations were chosen and how they are deemed to be representative of nearby receptors. The applicant should seek agreement from relevant consultation bodies regarding the number and location of monitoring locations to ensure that a robust baseline assessment has been undertaken.
3.2.8	Table 4.9	Sensitive receptors	The Scoping Report states that the existing sensitive receptors comprise residential, commercial and community receptors. The ES should also consider if there are any ecological receptors that require consideration in respect of noise and vibration related impacts. The applicant should seek agreement on any ecological receptors from relevant consultation bodies and cross-reference to the relevant chapters within the ES where relevant.

3.3 Climate Change

(Scoping Report Section 4.4)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.3.1	Table 4.12	Cumulative effects	The Inspectorate does not agree to scope this matter out. The ES should consider how other developments cumulatively may affect the vulnerability of the proposed development to climate change for example any changes in flood flows. However, the Inspectorate agree that cumulative effects from greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions/ savings is unlikely to be significant and can therefore be scoped out. If any climate change impacts relevant to the proposed development are covered within other aspect chapters of the ES (for example, within the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)), the Inspectorate is content for the climate change chapter to signpost where these cumulative climate change considerations have been assessed. The applicant should seek to agree the approach to the climate change cumulative effects assessment with relevant consultation bodies.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.3.2	n/a	Assessment methodology – climate change resilience assessment and in combination impact assessment	The Scoping Report does not provide a description of the methodology to be used in the climate change resilience assessment and in combination impact assessment. The ES should explain how the climate change resilience and in combination impacts have been identified and the methodology that will be used to determine the significance of effects.

3.4 Socio-Economics and Human Health

(Scoping Report Section 4.5)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.4.1	Paragraphs 4.5.12 and 4.5.24 and table 4.18	Health and wellbeing for all phases	The Scoping Report proposes to scope this matter out on the basis that the baseline Indices of Deprivation do not indicate exceptional vulnerability, that solar farms do not typically give rise to complex pathways for human health effects, and effects on human health are considered within other aspect chapters where relevant. The Inspectorate agrees with this approach, provided that effects on human health are considered within other aspect chapters where relevant. The EIA methodology chapter should provide clear cross-referencing to where the relevant direct and indirect impacts on human health receptors are considered in the ES. Where human health impacts have been assessed in the ES, consideration should be given to relevant guidance such as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) 2022 guidance 'Determining Significance for Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment'.
3.4.2	Paragraph 4.5.24 and table 4.18	Wider tourism effect for all phases	Scoping Report paragraph 4.5.24 states that the proposed development is not expected to have any significant effects on tourism however no further justification is provided. Given the North York Moors National Park is located proximity to the site and in the absence of information such as tourism baseline, the Inspectorate does not agree that this matter can be scoped out. The ES should describe the existing baseline environment with regards to tourism and leisure and provide an assessment of this matter including any potential cumulative impact where significant effects are likely to occur.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.4.3	n/a	Impacts to users of PRoW	The proposed development site will affect a number of PRoW but no surveys are proposed to understand the baseline use of these PRoWs. It is therefore unclear of the usage of these routes. The ES should assess impacts to PRoW from the proposed development where significant effects are likely to occur and clearly signpost where this has been assessed in the ES.

3.5 Agricultural Land and Soils

(Scoping Report Section 4.6)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.5.1	n/a	n/a	No matters have been proposed to be scoped out of assessment.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.5.2	Appendix II	Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey	The Scoping Report includes an ALC survey to inform the baseline; however, the survey area does not cover the full red line boundary of the proposed development. To ensure an accurate assessment of potential impacts on agricultural land resources, the ES should include an updated and comprehensive ALC survey covering the entire project boundary. This will allow the ES to robustly identify the quality and extent of agricultural land affected and to assess the significance of associated impacts. The ES should contain a clear tabulation of the areas of land in each BMV classification to be temporarily or permanently lost as a result of the proposed development, with reference to accompanying map(s) depicting the grades. Specific justification for the use of the land by grade should be provided. Consideration should be given to the use of BMV land in the applicant's discussion of alternatives.

3.6 Ecology

(Scoping Report Section 4.7)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.6.1	Table 4.24	BoCC5 Green-listed bird species	Considering the level of legislative protection and conservation concern and given the Amber and Red listed bird species in BoCC5 would be considered in the ecological assessment. The Inspectorate agrees that BoCC5 Green-listed bird species can be scoped out of further assessment.
3.6.2	Table 4.24	North York Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) – effects on ornithological receptors	Table 1.6 states that the North York Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) is located approximately 12km north of the proposed site. The Scoping Report states that there is no expected pathway for effect between the proposed development and any European site. The Inspectorate agrees that this matter can be scoped out of the ES.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.6.3	Paragraphs 4.7.12 and 4.7.13	Study area	The Scoping Report states that a maximum 10 km buffer for European designated sites; a 5 km buffer for statutory national and non-statutory designated sites; a 5 km protected species buffer for bats; and 2 km for any other protected and notable species records; 20km for statutory sites for wintering geese and/or swans; and 10km for statutory sites designated for other ornithological features would be applied. The ES should ensure the study area reflects the project's Zone of Influence (ZoI) rather than being based on a fixed distance. The ES should consider the potential for effects to occur beyond the proposed buffers, particularly where designated sites are designated for mobile species such as birds and bats. Effort should be made to agree the study area(s) with relevant consultation bodies.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.6.4	Paragraphs 4.7.18 and 4.7.19	Likely significant effects	The ES should clearly define what effects are deemed significant and explain how those conclusions have been reached. The applicant's attention is drawn to ID 2.2.2 in relation to the application of professional judgement.
3.6.5	Paragraphs 4.7.35 and 4.7.36	Great crested newts (GCN)	The Inspectorate notes that GCN District Level Licensing (DLL) is currently being pursued as a mitigation option for the proposed development. The Inspectorate understands that the DLL approach includes strategic area assessment and the identification of risk zones and strategic opportunity area maps. The ES should include information to demonstrate whether the proposed development is located within a risk zone for GCN. If the applicant enters into the DLL scheme, NE will undertake an impact assessment and inform the applicant whether their scheme is within one of the amber risk zones and therefore whether the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on GCN. The outcome of this assessment will be documented on an Impact Assessment and Conservation Payment Certificate (IACPC). The IACPC can be used to provide additional detail to inform the findings in the ES, including information on the proposed development's impact on GCN and the appropriate compensation required.
3.6.6	Paragraphs 4.7.38 and 4.7.55	Impacts to fish species	Scoping Report paragraph 4.7.38 states that the requirement of full aquatic surveys will be determined on the basis of any protected species present. However, this does not align with Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidance or with the approach set out in Scoping Report paragraph 4.7.55 which states that the importance and sensitivity of a receptor will inform the assessment rather than if it is protected or not. The ES should determine what impact pathways could lead to a LSE for which species based on their sensitivity in line with relevant guidance. The applicant should seek to agree the approach with the relevant consultation bodies.
3.6.7	Paragraph 4.7.58	Effects on Pilmoor Stie of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) from	The Inspectorate notes that Scoping Report paragraph 5.1.19 that the development is not expected to have an effect on groundwater levels and quality in the SSSI on the basis the site is topographically lower than Pilmoor SSSI. However, topography does not always directly dictate groundwater levels and the Inspectorate notes that the EA dispute the

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
		hydrology during all phases	description of the topography of the site relative to the SSSI. Figure 5.1 also identifies that the proposed development is directly adjacent to the SSSI with a proposed cable route interacting with the SSSI and therefore there is potential for direct effects. Furthermore, water demands for the proposed development are not discussed in the Scoping Report (see ID 3.12.7 below). Effects on groundwater levels and quality should be assessed within the Ecology Chapter of the ES and evidence should be provided to justify the description of the baseline topography and how this influences any assessment of LSE on the Pilmoor SSSI.
3.6.8	Paragraphs 4.7.69 to 4.7.72	Skylark Mitigation Strategy (SMS)	Scoping Report paragraph 4.7.69 states that number of skylarks are recorded breeding during the Breeding Bird Surveys undertaken in 2024, an SMS is proposed as a mitigation measure. Paragraph 4.7.71 states that skylark plots will be established to compensate for the loss of skylark habitat. The location and area of this mitigation land have not been defined at this stage. The ES should explain the location of such areas and how compensation areas will be secured, delivered and managed/ maintained to be effective. Species already using the proposed mitigation sites should be identified and any impacts such as displacement should be assessed where significant effects are likely to occur.
3.6.9	n/a	Baseline ecological surveys	The Inspectorate notes that the baseline findings of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and birds' surveys in the Scoping Report does not cover the cable route search area and additional surveys will be undertaken to complete the assessment of baseline conditions. Full ecological surveys should be undertaken at locations where LSE could arise. The scope of the ecological surveys for the entire site, including the Cable Corridor, should be agreed with Natural England and other key consultees, such as the relevant Councils, where possible, and the level of agreement should be evidenced in the ES.
3.6.10	n/a	Invasive non-native species (INNS) management plan	The Scoping Report does not discuss a potential INNS management plan should INNS be identified on site. The ES should describe and secure measures to manage INNS species should they be present on site.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.6.11	n/a	Sensitive environmental information	Under Regulation 12(5)(g) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), public bodies have a responsibility to avoid releasing sensitive environmental information that could bring about harm to sensitive or vulnerable ecological features. Sections of the ES containing specific survey and assessment data relating to the location of sensitive species (such as badgers, rare birds, and plants) or other vulnerable environmental features should be provided in separate annexes by the applicant. This approach reduces the sensitive ecological feature's risk of disturbance, damage, persecution, or commercial exploitation arising from publication. The applicant's approach should be proportionate and only use these separate annexes for species where there is a genuine risk of harm. All other assessment information should be included in an ES chapter, as normal, with a placeholder providing a justification as to why annexes have been withheld and that a full version of the ES has been submitted to the Inspectorate.

3.7 Landscape and Visual Impact

(Scoping Report Section 4.8)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.7.1	Table 4.26 and paragraph 4.8.17	Direct effects upon the Sessay Wood ancient woodland during all phases	Direct landscape effects on Sessay Wood are proposed to be scoped out on the basis a 15m buffer would be employed from the Wood's edge. However, regardless of the buffer, the Inspectorate considers that landscape effects may remain given the visual change in proximity to the Wood; Scoping Report paragraph 4.8.17 identifies that the wood lies between the two parcels that make up the proposed development. In the absence of evidence such as agreement with the relevant consultees, the Inspectorate does not agree to scope this matter out. The ES should assess direct landscape and visual effects to and from Sessay Wood during all phases of the proposed development, where they are likely to occur.
3.7.2	Table 4.26	Effects on National and local landscape character beyond 3km of the proposed development during all phases	The Inspectorate considers that there is potential for the proposed development to have LSE on the Howardian Hills National Landscape and North York Moors National Landscape on the basis that these are proposed to be assessed outside of the 3km study area. This suggests there would be potential for LSE on landscape character beyond the 3km and no further evidence is provided. In the absence of information such as evidence demonstrating clear agreement with relevant statutory bodies, the Inspectorate is not in a position to agree to scope these matters from the assessment. Accordingly, the ES should include an assessment of these matters or the information referred to demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of a LSE.
3.7.3	Table 4.26	Effects on visual receptors with no theoretical visibility	On the basis the ES can demonstrate there would be no visibility to sensitive receptors from the proposed development during all phases, the Inspectorate agrees that this matter can be scoped out.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
		within 3km of the proposed development during all phases	
3.7.4	Table 4.26 and paragraph 4.8.41	Effects on visual receptors beyond 3km of the proposed development during all phases	Scoping Report paragraph 4.8.41 states that impacts beyond 3km are not likely to result in effects greater than minor on the basis that the proposed development would not alter the overall view when considering the local topography. It is also proposed that impacts to the Howardian Hills National Landscape and North York Moors National Landscape would still be assessed outside of the 3km. On this basis, the Inspectorate agrees that this matter can be scoped out, however, potential impacts to National Landscapes should be considered and scoped in for further assessment where significant effects are likely to occur. Please see related ID 3.7.8.
3.7.5	Table 4.26	Effects on the settlements of Raskelf, Dalton, Cundall and Husthwaite within 3km of the proposed development during all phases	Whilst these settlements are acknowledged to be located within 3km of the proposed development, the Scoping Report states that they are sufficient distance from the proposed development and would have limited or no visibility to the site due to intervening screening. However, figures 4.7 and 4.8 do not identify the locations of these settlements in the context of the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) therefore the potential impact on these locations is unclear. On this basis, the Inspectorate does not agree to scope this matter out. The ES should either assess LSE on settlements within the study area or else provide evidence that there would be no potential for LSE based on the ZTV and relevant guidance.
3.7.6	Table 4.26	Cumulative effects with other consented or proposed development greater	The Inspectorate does not agree that this matter can be scoped out on the basis that impacts from long distance and/or elevated views have not been considered and could occur beyond the 5km study area.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
		than 5km from the red line boundary during all phases	The ES should identify whether there are sensitive receptor locations which could be impacted as a result of potential effects on long distance views and assess any significant effects where they are likely to occur. An appropriate study area for long distance views should be defined and justified and inform which potential cumulative developments should be included for assessment.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.7.7	Paragraph 4.8.26	Worst case scenario – heights	Scoping Report paragraph 4.8.26 states that the ZTV has been based on an average height of 3.5m across the proposed development elements. The ZTV used to inform the ES assessment should account for the worst case scenario including the tallest elements of the proposed development.
3.7.8	Paragraph 4.8.34 and Table 4.25	List of viewpoints and visualisations	The applicant should seek to agree the list of viewpoints and appropriate visualisations with the relevant local planning authorities and statutory consultees.
3.7.9	Paragraph 4.8.60	Cumulative development types	The Inspectorate notes that Scoping Report paragraph 4.8.60 identifies that an assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects would be undertaken for all consented or proposed energy-based schemes. The ES should assess cumulative effects where they are likely to be significant from all types of schemes and not restrict the criteria to energy-based schemes.

3.8 Glint and Glare

(Scoping Report Section 4.9)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.8.1	Paragraph 4.9.37	Impacts to ground-based receptors located to the north (behind) the solar panels during all phases	The Inspectorate agrees that where ground based receptors are located behind the solar panels, glint and glare cannot cause impact and that these receptors can be scoped out of further assessment.
3.8.2	Paragraph 4.9.52	Cumulative effects of ocular impact	The Inspectorate agrees that this would be unlikely to occur and that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment.
3.8.3	Table 4.27 and paragraph 4.9.32	Effects on minor / local roads during all phases	These roads are scoped out on account of their low traffic densities and speeds reducing potential impact to low. On this basis the Inspectorate agrees that LSE are unlikely and that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment.
3.8.4	Table 4.27	Effects on safeguarded or military aerodromes and approach paths more than 10km from the proposed development during all phases	A study area of 10km has been applied to safeguarded military aerodromes and approach paths in line with Civil Aviation Authority guidance note published in July 2023. The Inspectorate agrees that LSE to these receptors are unlikely beyond this distance and that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment.

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.8.5	Table 4.27	Effects on non-safeguarded or military aerodromes and approach paths more than 5km from the proposed development during all phases	A study area of 5km has been applied to non-safeguarded military aerodromes and approach paths in line with Civil Aviation Authority guidance note published in July 2023. The Inspectorate agrees that LSE to these receptors are unlikely beyond this distance and that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment.
3.8.6	Table 4.27	Effects on roads more than 1km and rail lines more than 500m from the proposed development during all phases	A 1km study area is applied to road receptors and a 500m study area is applied to rail receptors on the basis that modelling has found that glare affecting road and rail receptors is unlikely to occur beyond approximately 375m. However, it is unclear from the Scoping Report why two different study areas have been applied. The Inspectorate agrees that significant effects are unlikely beyond these study areas and agrees that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.8.7	Paragraph 4.9.3	Technical assessment	Scoping Report paragraph 4.9.3 states that a glint and glare technical assessment will be provided with the ES rather than a standalone chapter, but the assessment conclusions will be provided within the summary chapter of the ES. It is unclear what is meant by the summary chapter. The applicant should ensure that there is clarity around where LSE are reported in the ES. Should the technical assessment identify any potential LSE, this should be assessed in full in the relevant chapter of the ES.

3.9 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

(Scoping Report Section 4.10)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.9.1	Table 4.33	Effects on historic landscape during construction, operation and decommissioning	Scoping Report paragraphs 4.10.28 and 4.10.29 states that historic landscape is scoped out on the basis that the majority of historic hedgerows within the site will be retained. Scoping Report paragraph 4.10.15 identifies that the historic landscape characterisation of the site as modern improved fields. On the basis the design and layout of the proposed development in the ES reflects that there would be minimal alteration of the existing important hedgerows, the Inspectorate considers that this matter can be scoped out.
3.9.2	Paragraphs 4.10.24, 4.10.48 and Table 4.33	Effects upon built heritage during construction and decommissioning	The Scoping Report states that effects on built heritage are considered to occur during operation and effects during construction and decommissioning would be limited and temporary. However, the Inspectorate considers there would be a continual effect across construction, operation and decommissioning and this should be taken account of in the assessment of LSE. This also does not take account of potential impacts from changes in drainage patterns to archaeology such as those resulting from piling or introduction of hardstanding. In the absence of information demonstrating that risks are minimal, the Inspectorate is not in a position to agree to scope these matters from the assessment. Accordingly, the ES should include an assessment of these matters or the information referred to demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of a LSE

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.9.3	Paragraph 4.10.17	Study area	The Scoping Report does not justify the 1km study area applied and as a result, the Inspectorate considers that a number of receptors could have been omitted from consideration in the Scoping Report. The ES should identify an appropriate study area based on the ZoI. The applicant should seek agreement with the relevant consultees on an appropriate study area.
3.9.4	Paragraph 4.10.40	Duration of effects	Scoping Report paragraph 4.10.40 identifies that effects may be temporary or permanent and reversible or irreversible. Consideration of the duration of effects in long, medium and shore terms should be accounted for in the assessment of LSE; the ES should define the durations and explain how they influence the significance of effect.
3.9.5	Paragraph 4.10.43	Locations and extents of trial trenching	It is proposed that trial trenching may be required and undertaken following the results of the geophysical survey. The applicant should seek to agree the methodology and locations of further trial trenching with the local planning authority.

3.10 Cumulative Effects

(Scoping Report Section 4.12)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.10.1	n/a	n/a	No matters have been proposed to be scoped out of the assessment

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.10.2	Paragraph 4.12.6	Sub-zones	Sub-zones are proposed to capture 'relevant' developments and provide arbitrary threshold criteria to identify development. However, the Inspectorate is unclear what deems a development relevant or not given that any type of development has potential to influence cumulative effects. The ES should explain why there would be no potential for LSE for developments outside of these defined criteria or else provide a comprehensive assessment including all types of development. Agreement on an appropriate approach should be sought with the relevant consultees.
3.10.3	Paragraph 4.12.12	Short list of cumulative developments	The Scoping Report states that the short list of cumulative developments will be consulted on at the statutory consultation stage. For clarity the applicant should also seek to agree the short list of cumulative developments with the local planning authority.

3.11 Ground conditions

(Scoping Report Section 4.13)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.11.1	Paragraph 4.13	Ground conditions – land contamination during all phases	The Scoping Report proposes to scope out ground conditions from the ES on the basis that the potential for land contamination on the site is generally very low, further targeted intrusive ground investigations are proposed and standard practice relating to ground conditions are to be included within the OCEMP and ODEMP. The Inspectorate does not agree that this aspect can be scoped out prior to the results of the Phase 1 ground contamination assessment being known. The ES should provide justification of the approach being taken and if the technical assessment identifies any potential LSE, this should be assessed in full in the relevant chapter of the ES.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.11.2	n/a	n/a	n/a

3.12 Water Environment

(Scoping Report Section 5.1)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed aspect to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.12.1	Paragraph 5.1.25	Effects on Pilmoor SSSI from all viable pathways during all phases	The Inspectorate agrees that this matter can be scoped out of the water environment chapter on the basis that the effects from all viable pathways will be assessed in the Ecology Chapter in the ES. Please see related ID 3.6.7.
3.12.2	Table 5.2	Effects to surface water and fluvial water quality during all phases	This is scoped out on the basis that a surface water drainage strategy (SWDS), an OCEMP and an ODEMP would be submitted at application. Scoping Report paragraph 5.1.26 lists some of the expected measures including: • maintenance of existing surface water flow paths and runoff rates • heights of the solar panels would be elevated so as not to impede flows • panels located within flood risk zone 2 would be a minimum of 600mm above the flood level • minimising impermeable surfaces • proposed 10m buffer to all watercourses • silt management (without further detail) However, there is no detail provided on what measures would be anticipated and whether this would be achievable. Additionally, potential impacts from unexpected contamination and battery contamination (please see IDs 3.12.14 and 3.12.15 below) could lead to potential effects and there are a number of omissions identified in the FRA (see ID 3.12.5 below).

			On this basis, the Inspectorate does not agree to scope these matters out. The ES should provide an assessment of significant effects where they are likely to occur or else demonstrate the absence of a LSE. The application should seek agreement with the relevant consultees.
3.12.3	Table 5.2 and paragraph 4.13.11	Effects on groundwater quality and levels during all phases	The Scoping Report does not identify or anticipate groundwater levels beneath the site therefore there are 'gaps' in the baseline characterisation. The Ground Contamination section of the Scoping Report states in paragraph 4.13.11 that it may be likely that contamination exists on site and the EA identify in their consultation response a historical hydrocarbon well situated between the Sessay Park site and East Moor Wood. It is not evident from the Scoping Report that effects to groundwater have been considered comprehensively based on the description of the proposed development. For example, effects from HDD, piling, contamination from the BESS among other potential impacts and effects. The Inspectorate considers there is inadequate evidence provided in the Scoping Report and does not agree to scope this matter out. The ES should characterise the baseline groundwater environment through appropriate surveys and seek to agree the approach with the relevant consultees. The ES should assess significant effects to groundwater where they are likely to occur and describe and secured any relevant mitigation measures.
3.12.4	Tables 2.1 and 5.2 and paragraph 5.1.26	Effects on ordinary watercourses during all phases	Scoping Report table 2.1 states that five existing watercourse crossings will be utilised and may require upgrading. Paragraph 5.1.26 also identifies that one temporary crossing would be required for the construction phase. The Scoping Report proposed mitigation in the form of management plans, maintaining runoff rates and managing silt but provides no details on the sorts of measures that would be implemented to control these and therefore, it is unknown whether this would be possible or effective. The Inspectorate considers there is inadequate evidence provided in the Scoping Report and does not agree to scope this matter out. The ES should include an assessment of these matters or the information referred to demonstrating the absence of a LSE.

3.12.5	Table 5.2	Effects to and from flood risk during all phases	The Inspectorate does not agree to scope this matter out on the basis that there are a number of discrepancies / omissions in the provided appendix III FRA. These discrepancies / omissions include: • There is no identification of flood risk zones 3a and 3b. • There is no assessment of fluvial floodplain storage or consideration for floodplain storage compensation which could potentially lead to flood risk elsewhere. • The FRA has applied the central allowance for climate change for peak river flow. This does not align with government guidance on 'Flood Risk Assessments: Climate Change Allowances' where solar development is classed as essential infrastructure and therefore the higher central allowance should be applied. Therefore the worst case scenario has not been considered. The Inspectorate considers that the above omissions could mean there are potential LSE that have not been considered in the Scoping Report. The ES should provide an assessment of significant effects where they are likely to occur or provide appropriate demonstrate of the absence of LSE.
3.12.6	Table 5.2 and paragraph 5.1.26	Effects on surface water drainage patterns during all phases	Scoping Report paragraph 5.1.26 states that surface water flow paths would not change as a result of the proposed development as there would be no major changes in ground levels. However, the Inspectorate considers that piling and solar panels can channel flows of water and this has not been considered in the Scoping Report. Additionally, the FRA has a number of omissions that relate to flooding which could have implications for the surface water drainage patterns on site. On this basis, the Inspectorate does not agree to scope this matter out. The ES should identify all potential impact pathways to surface water drainage patterns and assess significant effects where they are likely to occur.
3.12.7	n/a	Consumptive water demands	These are not discussed in the Scoping Report and it is currently unknown what the consumptive water demands would be, during which phases and in what quantities. The ES should describe the consumptive water demands for the proposed development and identify appropriate supply resources. Where water demands are identified, the ES

			should assess any associated significant effects where they are likely to occur, including where these might cross reference to other chapters for example if water requires to be tankered in, this would have implications for the traffic and transport chapter.
3.12.8	n/a	Abstractions and water supplies	The Scoping Report does not propose to assess LSE to abstractions and water supplies, however, the EA identify a number of abstraction and water supply licences in proximity to the site. The ES should identify any abstractions and water supplies that are likely to be affected by the proposed development and assess potential significant effects to abstractions where they are likely to occur.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.12.9	Appendix III paragraph 5.1	Transformer elevation mitigation	The Inspectorate notes that the proposed elevation for transformers is the same height as the maximum identified flood depth at 0.6m. The Inspectorate would expect the height of infrastructure to be above the maximum flood depth with a precautionary buffer. The ES should explain why the mitigation is appropriate in terms of clearance from the worst case scenario flood event and seek agreement on the proposed measures with the relevant consultees.
3.12.10	Appendix III paragraph 6.17	Vegetation management beneath the panels	The Scoping Report identified that vegetation management beneath the solar panels would be required to mitigate any residual exceedance flows. The ES should describe how vegetation would be managed and how this would be secured for the lifetime of the proposed development.
3.12.11	Table 4.1 and paragraph 5.1 of Appendix III	Locating infrastructure outside of flood risk zones	CO09 of Scoping Report table 4.1 and paragraph 5.1 of appendix III identifies that the design will seek to locate vulnerable infrastructure outside of flood risk zones 2 and 3. The Inspectorate considers that the design should demonstrate that the mitigation hierarchy has been applied to the entirety of the development rather than just vulnerable infrastructure, seeking to locate as much of the development outside flood risk zones 2 and 3 taking climate change projections into account where practicable.
3.12.12	Paragraphs 1.5.20 and	Dewatering activities	Scoping Report paragraph 1.5.20 and table 2.1 identify HDD may be required during construction. As groundwater levels have not been determined, the Inspectorate

	5.1.17 to 5.1.19 and table 2.1		considers that HDD has potential to interact with groundwater which may require dewatering activities. The ES should either confirm that there would be no possibility of interaction with groundwater levels or else describe and secure appropriate measures to conduct dewatering assessing any significant effects where they are likely to occur.
3.12.13	Table 5.3	Receptor sensitivity	The Inspectorate notes that in the Environment Agency's consultation response, it disagrees with the receptor sensitivity classifications in table 5.3. The ES should explain how professional judgement has determined the receptor sensitivity in line with relevant guidance.
3.12.14	Table 4.1	Unexpected contamination	Scoping Report table 4.1 sets out the measures to be included in the OCEMP but does not include a commitment to protocol should unexpected contamination be encountered on site. The ES should identify and secure appropriate mitigation measures to manage unexpected contamination and assess any significant effects where they are likely to occur.
3.12.15	Paragraph 5.5.6	Battery waste and contaminants	Scoping Report paragraph 5.5.6 identifies that waste may include failing or broken equipment which could include batteries based on the description of the proposed development. The Outline Battery Storage Management Plan (OBSMP) should account for potential contamination to the water environment from failing or broken batteries and assess any significant effects on the environment where they are likely to occur.
3.12.16	n/a	Per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS)	The ES should identify if PFAS chemicals would be present in elements such as cleaning agents, drilling methods or solar panel treatment. If so, or else on a precautionary basis if this is unknown at the time of submission, the ES should assess potential significant effects where they are likely to occur. Any mitigation measures should be described and appropriately secured.
3.12.17	n/a	Flood risk zone 3b	The Scoping Report does not separate flood risk zone locations of 3a and 3b. The ES should determine the locations of both flood risk zones 3a and 3b and use the definitions to inform the assessment of likely significant effects.

3.12.18	n/a	Thermal impacts to groundwater	Thermal impacts to groundwater are not discussed in the Scoping Report. On the basis groundwater levels are not defined in the Scoping Report, the Inspectorate considers there is potential for cables heating groundwater, particularly adjacent to Pilmoor SSSI which is a Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem (GWDTE). The ES should identify if there is an impact pathway of thermal pollution to groundwater and where a pathway is identified, assess significant effects where they are likely to occur. Any proposed mitigation should be described and secured.

3.13 Arboriculture

(Scoping Report Section 5.2)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.13.1	Paragraph 5.2.8 and table 5.7	Arboriculture	Paragraph 5.2.6 states that the baseline survey identified the location of the relevant arboricultural features and mitigation measures are proposed including a minimum 15m buffer to all Ancient Woodland, removal of hedgerows and trees will be avoided as far as possible, retention of all Tree Protection Orders tress and avoidance of all Root Protection Areas as far as possible. Paragraph 5.2.9 states that arboricultural matters will be assessed in detail within a standalone Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA). The Inspectorate agrees with this approach provided that any likely significant effects are reported in the ES. The applicant's attention is drawn to responses from Forestry Commission, in relation to mitigation measures provided in appendix 2 of this Opinion.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.13.2	n/a	n/a	n/a

3.14 Air Quality

(Scoping Report Section 5.3)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.14.1	Paragraph 5.3.1	Dust generation during operation	The Inspectorate notes that the dust generation during operation is not identified as a potential air quality impact in the Scoping Report. Given the nature of the proposed development, the Inspectorate agrees that significant effects from dust and particulate matter from the operational phase of the proposed development are unlikely and that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment.
3.14.2	Paragraph 5.3.11 and table 5.7	Road traffic vehicle emissions during construction, operation and decommissioning	The Scoping Report proposes to scope out road traffic vehicle emissions during construction and decommissioning on the basis that the site is not located in proximity to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and traffic flows during construction are anticipated to fall below the relevant criteria as set out in the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) guidance, a total of 35 Light Duty Vehicles movement and 29 Heavy Duty Vehicles movements annual average daily traffic. Paragraph 5.3.11 states that vehicle movements during decommissioning will be equal to or less than construction. Providing that the ES can demonstrate that the traffic flows during construction and decommissioning will be beneath the IAQM thresholds for further assessment, this matter can be scoped out of the ES for human receptors. The Inspectorate considers that air pollution impacts on ecological receptors from construction and decommissioning traffic should be scoped into the assessment. The Inspectorate agrees that vehicle movements during operation are unlikely to give rise to significant effects and is content to scope this matter out of further assessment.
3.14.3	Paragraph 5.3.12 and table 5.7	Dust generation during construction and decommissioning	The Scoping Report proposes to scope out dust emissions on the basis that significant effects are not considered likely as the construction and decommissioning phases would be subject to air quality mitigation measures associated with dust control which would be

			incorporated into the OCEMP and ODEMP. Paragraph 5.3.13 proposes a risk assessment to submit with the ES and to identify relevant mitigation measures, which would feed into the OCEMP and ODEMP. The Inspectorate agrees that this matter can be scoped out, subject to the provision of a risk assessment undertaken in line with relevant guidance and confirming that there is no potential for significant effects. Due consideration should be given within the assessment to Pilmoor SSSI, which is located within the red line boundary. The applicant's attention is drawn to responses from Natural England provided in appendix 2 of this Opinion in relation to the air quality assessment which should be reflected in the Ecological assessment.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.14.4	Paragraph 4.13.1	Emissions to air from BESS fire event	The Inspectorate notes that a OBSMP would be produced and submitted with the DCO application to set out the mitigation to the risk of battery fire. The OBSMP should account for potential air quality impacts from a fire at the BESS and assess any significant effects on the environment where they are likely to occur. The applicant's attention is drawn to responses from UK Health Security Agency provided in appendix 2 of this Opinion in relation to the air quality assessment.

3.15 Lighting

(Scoping Report Section 5.4)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.15.1	Section 5.4 and table 5.7	Lighting	An assessment of lighting is proposed to be scoped out on the basis that lighting during operation is to be motion based and not continuous. The Inspectorate does not consider that a sufficient amount of detail has been provided to scope an assessment of lighting out of the ES. The ES should describe the light levels likely to be generated during construction, operation and decommissioning. The ES should provide an assessment of any LSE resulting from lighting for all phases of the development, including a night-time assessment. Where mitigation is being relied on to avoid LSE this should be described, including any embedded mitigation such as the design of the lighting or layout.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.15.2	n/a	n/a	n/a

3.16 Waste

(Scoping Report Section 5.5)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.16.1	Section 5.5 and table 5.7	Waste	The Scoping Report proposes to scope out this matter on the basis that the proposed development will generate minimal amounts of waste during all phases and the best practices measures and principles of the waste hierarchy is to be applied to the proposed development and a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is to be implemented. However, the Scoping Report does not mention the anticipated quantities of waste, and the Inspectorate considers that significant amounts of waste may arise during construction, operation (such as infrastructure replacement due to the 40-year operational phase) and decommissioning (such as disposal of infrastructure) and further information is required to demonstrate that this would not lead to a LSE. On this basis, the Inspectorate does not agree to scope this matter out. The ES should include estimates, by type and quantity, of expected quantities and types of waste produced during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases and assess any subsequent potential LSE arising from the transportation and disposal of waste (including but not limited to air quality, traffic and noise).

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.16.2	Paragraph 5.5.1 and 5.5.2	Waste from earthworks	Earthworks are acknowledged in Scoping Report paragraph 5.5.2 however, it is not listed in paragraph 5.5.1. The ES should assess any likely significant effects from all waste sources including any proposed earthworks.

3.17 Minerals

(Scoping Report Section 5.6)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.17.1	Section 5.6 and table 5.7	Minerals	The Scoping Report identifies that the site is located within a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA) for sand and gravel designated in the North Yorkshire County Council Minerals and Waste Joint Plan 2022. The Scoping Report proposes to scope this matter out on the basis that the proposed development would not sterilise the mineral resource as minerals could be extracted, if required, following decommissioning. The Inspectorate agrees that assessment of this matter can be scoped out of the ES. However, the applicant should, either within the ES or as a part of the wider application, demonstrate that the Minerals Planning Authority has been consulted in respect of the proposals and that the proposed development does not impact on future ambitions for minerals extraction within the region.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.17.2	n/a	n/a	n/a

3.18 Telecommunications and Utilities

(Scoping Report Section 5.7)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.18.1	Section 5.7 and table 5.7	Telecommunications and utilities	The Scoping Report proposes to scope out these aspects as a standalone chapter on the basis that a full utilities assessment will be undertaken and submitted alongside the ES. The Inspectorate is content to scope out these aspects as a standalone chapter provided that the ES sets out the findings of the utility search and relevant consultation and how this information has been taken into account in the design of the proposed development to mitigate potential impacts.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.18.2	n/a	n/a	n/a

3.19 Electromagnetic Fields

(Scoping Report Section 5.8)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.19.1	Section 5.8 and table 5.7	Electromagnetic fields (EMF)	The Scoping Report proposes to scope out this matter on the basis that the voltage of electrical cables proposed does not exceed 132 kV within the proposed Order Limits. Paragraph 5.8.3 states that EMF assessment will be procured and appended to the ES if electrical cable with a voltage greater than 132kV are required as the project progresses. The Inspectorate agrees with this approach, should the design of the proposed development be altered to include electrical cables with a voltage greater than 132kV, an EMF assessment should be provided in an appendix to the ES. The assessment should include the location, routing, and voltages of any cables over 132kV and a risk assessment to any human and ecological sensitive receptors within an established ZoI.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.19.2	n/a	n/a	n/a

3.20 Major Accidents and Disasters

(Scoping Report Section 5.9)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.20.1	Section 5.9 and table 5.7	Major accidents and disasters	The Scoping Report proposes to scope this matter out on the basis that the proposed development is not considered to be vulnerable or give rise to significant impacts in relation to major accidents and disasters. However, other than potential risk from BESS the Scoping Report does not refer to any risk or potential impacts of chemical fuel spillage/leaks, road/rail accidents, utilities failure, criminal activities or fire. In the absence of information demonstrating that risks are minimal, the Inspectorate is not in a position to agree to scope these matters from the assessment. Accordingly, the ES should include an assessment of these matters or the information referred to demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies and the absence of a LSE.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.20.2	n/a	n/a	n/a

3.21 Transboundary Effects

(Scoping Report Section 5.10)

ID	Ref	Applicant's proposed matters to scope out	Inspectorate's comments
3.21.1	Section 5.10 and table 5.7	Transboundary effects	The Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS has considered the proposed development and concludes that the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or cumulatively on the environment in a European Economic Area State. In reaching this conclusion the Inspectorate has identified and considered the proposed development's likely impacts including consideration of potential pathways and the extent, magnitude, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impacts. The Inspectorate considers that the likelihood of transboundary effects resulting from the proposed development is so low that it does not warrant the issue of a detailed transboundary screening. However, this position will remain under review and will have regard to any new or materially different information coming to light which may alter that decision. Note: The SoS' duty under regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process. The Inspectorate's screening of transboundary issues is based on the relevant considerations specified in the annex to its Advice Page 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Transboundary Impacts and Process', links for which can be found in paragraph 1.0.7 above.

ID	Ref	Description	Inspectorate's comments
3.21.2	n/a	n/a	n/a

APPENDIX 1: CONSULTATION BODIES FORMALLY CONSULTED

TABLE A1: PRESCRIBED CONSULTATION BODIES

Bodies prescribed in schedule 1 of The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (as amended) (the 'APFP Regulations (as amended)')

SCHEDULE 1 DESCRIPTION	ORGANISATION
The Secretary of State for Defence	Ministry of Defence
The relevant parish council or, where the application relates to land in Wales or Scotland, the relevant community council	Kirby Hill and District Parish Council
	Easingwold Town Council
	Brafferton and Helperby Parish Council
	Raskelf Parish Council
	Husthwaite Parish Council
	Sessay Parish Council
	Dalton Parish Council
	Thirkleby High and Low with Osgodby Parish Council
	Cundall with Leckby and Norton le Clay Parish Council
The Environment Agency	Environment Agency
Natural England	Natural England
The Forestry Commission	Forestry Commission
The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as Historic England)	Historic England
The relevant internal drainage board	Kyle and Upper Ouse Internal Drainage Board
	Swale & Ure Drainage Board

SCHEDULE 1 DESCRIPTION	ORGANISATION
The relevant Highways Authority	North Yorkshire Council Highways Department
	National Highways
The Civil Aviation Authority	Civil Aviation Authority
The Health and Safety Executive	Health and Safety Executive
United Kingdom Health Securityb Agency, an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care	United Kingdom Health Security Agency
NHS England	NHS England
The Crown Estate Commissioners	The Crown Estate
The relevant police authority	York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority
The relevant ambulance service	Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust
The relevant fire and rescue authority	North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority

TABLE A2: RELEVANT STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS

'Statutory undertaker' is defined in The APFP Regulations (as amended) as having the same meaning as in section 127 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008)

STATUTORY UNDERTAKER	ORGANISATION
The relevant Integrated Care Board	NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
NHS England	NHS England
The relevant NHS Trust	Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust

STATUTORY UNDERTAKER	ORGANISATION
Railways	Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd
	National Highways Historical Railways Estate
Civil Aviation Authority	Civil Aviation Authority
Licence Holder (Chapter 1 Of Part 1 Of Transport Act 2000)	NATS En-Route Safeguarding
Universal Service Provider	Royal Mail Group
Homes and Communities Agency	Homes England
The relevant Environment Agency	Environment Agency
The relevant water and sewage undertaker	Yorkshire Water
The relevant public gas transporter	Cadent Gas Limited
	Northern Gas Networks Limited
	Scotland Gas Networks Plc
	Southern Gas Networks Plc
	CNG Services Ltd
	Energy Assets Pipelines Limited
	ES Pipelines Ltd
	Fulcrum Pipelines Limited
	GTC Pipelines Limited
	Harlaxton Gas Networks Limited
	Independent Pipelines Limited
	Indigo Pipelines Limited
	Inovyn Enterprises Ltd
	Last Mile Gas Ltd

STATUTORY UNDERTAKER	ORGANISATION
	Leep Gas Networks Limited
	Mua Gas Limited
	Quadrant Pipelines Limited
	Stark Infra-Gas Limited
	National Gas
The relevant electricity generator with CPO Powers	Lightsource SPV 204 Limited
The relevant electricity distributor with CPO Powers	Northern Powergrid (Northeast) Limited
	Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) plc
	Advanced Electricity Networks Ltd
	AGR Networks Ltd
	Aidien Ltd
	Aurora Utilities Ltd
	Eclipse Power Network Limited
	Energy Assets Networks Limited
	ESP Electricity Limited
	Fulcrum Electricity Assets Limited
	Green Generation Energy Networks Cymru Ltd
	Harlaxton Energy Networks Limited
	Independent Distribution Connection Specialists Ltd
	Independent Power Networks Limited
	Indigo Power Limited
	Last Mile Electricity Ltd
	Leep Electricity Networks Limited

STATUTORY UNDERTAKER	ORGANISATION
	Mua Electricity Limited
	Optimal Power Networks Limited
	Stark Infra-Electricity Ltd
	The Electricity Network Company Limited
	UK Power Distribution Limited
	Utility Assets Limited
	Vattenfall Networks Limited
The relevant electricity transmitter with CPO Powers	National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc
	National Energy System Operator (NESO)

TABLE A3: LOCAL AUTHORITIES AS DEFINED IN SECTION 43(3) OF THE PA2008

LOCAL AUTHORITY
North Yorkshire Council
Pendle Borough Council
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Lancaster City Council
City of Doncaster Council
City of York Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Durham County Council
Westmorland and Furness Council
Leeds City Council
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Bradford Metropolitan District Council

LOCAL AUTHORITY
Darlington Borough Council
Middlesbrough Borough Council
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Lancashire County Council
Yorkshire Dales National Park
North York Moors National Park

APPENDIX 2: RESPONDENTS TO CONSULTATION AND COPIES OF REPLIES

CONSULTATION BODIES WHO REPLIED BY THE STATUTORY DEADLINE:
Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Durham County Council
Easingwold Town Council
Environment Agency
Forestry Commission
Health and Safety Executive
Historic England
Leeds City Council
National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc
NATS En-Route Safeguarding
Natural England
North York Moors National Park
North Yorkshire Council
North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Sessay Parish Council
United Kingdom Health Security Agency

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Application No: 26/00282/NSIP

CONNO

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT, 1990 (AS AMENDED)
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015

Sedgeby Solar Ltd
C/O Emily Park
The Planning Inspectorate
C/O QUADIENT
69 Buckingham Avenue
Slough
SL1 4PN

Consultation Response

Proposal: Consultation with other authority for an order granting development consent for the Sedgeby Solar Farm
Location: Sedgeby Solar Farm Near Little Sessay North Yorkshire
Applicant: Sedgeby Solar Ltd

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council has the following comments to make.

1. Bradford Council Local Planning Authority have no comments to make.

Date of Issue:
17 February
2026
APO

[redacted]
Richard Hollinson, Assistant Director
(Planning, Transportation and Highways)
Department Of Growth

Contact: Claire Teasdale
Direct Tel: [redacted]
email: [redacted]@durham.gov.uk
Our ref: AACON/26/00207

Planning Inspectorate
Sedgeby Solar

29 January 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

Proposed Planning Act 2006 (as amended) and The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regualtins 2017 (The EIA Regulations) - Regulations 10 and 11

Application by Sedgeby Solar Limited (the applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for the Sedgeby Solar Far (the proposed development)

Scoping consultation and notification of the applicant's contact details and duty to make available information to the applicant if necessary

At Sedgeby Solar Farm

For Planning Inspectorate

I write in response to your letter dated 21 January 2026 regarding the above.

Given the location of the site I can advise that we do not have any comments to make.

Yours faithfully

Claire Teasdale

Claire Teasdale
Principal Planning Officer

Regeneration, Economy and Growth
Durham County Council, Planning Development (Strategic), PO BOX 274, Stanley, Co. Durham, DH8 1HG
Main Telephone: 03000 262 830

From: Jane Bentley <clerk@easingwold.gov.uk>
Sent: 18 February 2026 14:19
To: Sedgeby Solar Farm <sedgebysolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: Jean Fairbrother <assistant.clerk@easingwold.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: EN0110026 - Sedgeby Solar Farm - EIA Scoping and Consultation and Regulation 11 Notification

Hello

Further to your email below I confirm that Easingwold Town Council is not a relevant planning consultee as the proposed development falls outside of our parish.

With best wishes

Jane

Jane Bentley

Town Clerk

Easingwold Town Council

Easingwold Library, Market Place, Easingwold, York YO61 3AN

T: 01347 822422

E: clerk@easingwold.gov.uk

Planning Inspectorate	**Our ref:**	XA/2026/100542
By email	**Your ref:**	EN0110026
sedgebysolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk	**Date:**	17 February 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

EIA SCOING OPINION: application by SEDGEBY SOLAR LTD (the applicant) for an order granting consent for the Sedgeby Solar Farm (the proposed project).-

We have reviewed the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report dated January 2026, and associated appendices, insofar as they relate to our remit, and would like to make the following comments.

We disagree with the conclusion set out in Chapter 5.3 to scope out the Water Environment, including hydrology, hydrogeology, flood risk, and water quality. We consider that insufficient information has been provided regarding identification of receptors, and anticipated impact pathways.

Key points are summarised below, and our detailed comments are provided in Appendix 1.

1. **Water Environment -Flood Risk**

We agree that flood Risk can be scoped out of the EIA. We are satisfied that flood risk can be identified and mitigated through the Flood Risk Assessment, and specific comments have been provided in Appendix 1.

2. **Water Environment – scoped out**

We do not agree the Water Environment can be scoped out (with the exception of Flood Risk).

Paragraph 5.1.5 of the Scoping Report refers to the EA meeting on 19 November 2025 and states "Prior to the meeting the EA were provided with the FRA in Appendix III and it was agreed that significant effects on the Water Environment were unlikely to result from the Proposed Development and this topic could be scoped out of the EIA".

This statement is misleading. The minutes from the meeting state that it is proposed to scope out *flood risk* from the Environmental Statement. This approach was agreed with the Environment Agency. However this position is regarding flood risk only and not other aspects of the water environment, as is currently suggested by Paragraph 5.1.5. With regards to other effects on the water environment, the Environment Agency confirmed that a Water Framework Directive (WFD) screening assessment could be used, and that water quality impacts would need to be considered.

3. **Water Environment - Water Resources**

We do not agree that Groundwater Quality and Level can be scoped out. The Water Environment chapter does not consider consumptive water demands, dewatering requirements, and impacts on existing abstraction licences. The Environment agency seeks assurance that a sustainable and practical water supply has been evaluated by the applicant to meet consumptive water demands, particularly during construction.

4. **Water Environment – Water Framework Directive Assessment (WFD)**

We look forward to reviewing the WFD screening report and WFD Assessment. Where existing watercourse crossings are found to require upgrading then the full impact of such works should be considered.

5. **Ecology and Fisheries**

We broadly agree with the surveys and assessments proposed to inform the Environmental Statement. We have no comment regarding the scoped-out impact pathways or the receptors scoped out of the assessment

6. **Supporting Technical Assessments**

We agree that battery safety can be addressed in a standalone report. We request that the Environment Agency be listed as a named consultee on the Requirement for this document.

We do not agree that ground contamination can be scoped out and addressed in a standalone report (see detailed comment GWCL01).

The detailed CEMP, OEMP and DEMP will be submitted to the planning authority. We request that the Environment Agency be listed as a named consultee on the Requirements for these documents.

Yours faithfully

Liz Locke

Planning Specialist – National Infrastructure Team

Direct dial [redacted]

Direct e-mail [redacted]@environment-agency.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Detailed comments

Appendix 2 – Informatives

Appendix 1 – Detailed comments

1. **Water Environment - Flood Risk**

FR01 – Commitments Register C09

Scoped In or Out	Out	
Chapters: **Scoping Report (Main Report)** Section 5	**Issue**	Commitment C09 states that vulnerable infrastructure will be located outside Flood Zone 2 and 3 where possible, but it does not fully reflect the broader expectation that all development should avoid areas at flood risk wherever possible. It also limits consideration to Flood Zones 2 and 3, rather than the full 1 in 100yr + climate change flood extent.
Section/ pages/ table reference: 5.1.5 Commitments Register, C09	**Impact**	The current commitment may lead to insufficient layout decisions being made and development being placed within areas at higher future flood risk.
	Solution	C09 should be revised to apply to all development, not just vulnerable infrastructure, and consider the full 1 in 100yr + climate change flood extent over the lifetime of the project.

FR02 – Commitments Register C012

Scoped In or Out	Out	
Chapters: **Scoping Report (Main Report)**	**Issue**	Commitment C012 states that transformer heights will be raised to avoid pluvial flood risk, but it does not require them to be set above the fluvial design flood level.
Section/ pages/ table reference:	**Impact**	Failure to raise transformers above the design fluvial flood level could make them vulnerable to fluvial flood events.
5.1.5 Commitments Register, C012	**Solution**	C012 should be amended to require transformers to be set 300mm above the design flood level (1 in 100yr + climate change) to ensure adequate flood protection.

FR03 – Commitments Register C013

Scoped In or Out	Out	
Chapters: **Scoping Report (Main Report)**	**Issue**	Commitment C013 states a minimum height for solar panels within Flood Zones 2 and 3, but this does not reflect the EA's expectation for panels to be raised 300mm

Section 5		above the 1 in 100yr + climate change flood level, which will be determined by the detailed hydraulic modelling.
Section/ pages/ table reference: 5.1.5 Commitments Register, C013	**Impact**	Without setting panels an appropriate freeboard above the design flood level, the design will not have accounted for any potential model uncertainty, and the panels could also remain at risk during more extreme flood events, reducing their resilience.
	Solution	C013 should be amended to require solar panels to be raised 300mm above the 1 in 100yr + climate change flood level, to be informed by detailed hydraulic modelling.

FR04 – Flood Risk Assessment further information required

Scoped In or Out	Out	
Flood Risk Assessment	**Issue**	The FRA does not include all the information required.
Section/ pages/ table reference:	**Impact**	The FRA does not fully reflect the flood risks associated with the proposed development, leading to incomplete conclusions and inadequate mitigation measures.
	Solution	The FRA should be updated to include: 1. The latest Flood Maps for Planning with climate change extent 2. Mapped extent of Flood Zone 3b areas (as identified in the Local Authority's SFRA) 3. Detailed hydraulic modelling, used to inform layout, design and mitigation measures.

FR05 – Flood Risk Assessment consideration of climate change

Scoped In or Out	Out	
Flood Risk Assessment	**Issue**	The FRA correctly identifies the correct management catchment and epoch (2080s) for the assessment of climate change in relation to peak river flow, but it proposes using the 25% (central) allowance, which does not comply with government guidance requiring the higher central (34%) allowance to be designed to, with the upper end (53%) allowance being used for sensitivity testing.
Section/ pages/ table reference:	**Impact**	Using the lower 25% allowance would underestimate future peak river flows, leading to insufficient design levels and flood risk mitigation.

	Solution	The FRA should be amended to use the higher central (34%) allowance as part of the design flood event.
Additional Comments: Our earlier acceptance of the 25% climate change allowance during the meeting on 19th November was based on a misunderstanding that it represented the higher central allowance.		

FR06 – Flood Risk Assessment consideration of mitigation

Scoped In or Out	Out	
Flood Risk Assessment	**Issue**	The FRA does not include any assessment of fluvial floodplain storage or consider the need for floodplain storage compensation.
Section/ pages/ table reference:	**Impact**	Without considering floodplain storage, the development may result in a loss of available flood storage, increasing flood risk elsewhere and failing to meet national flood-risk policy expectations.
	Solution	Update the FRA to assess impacts on fluvial floodplain storage and identify any required floodplain storage compensation to ensure no net loss of floodplain capacity.
Scoping Report (Main Report) Page 163 Section 5.1.27 Table 5.2	**Comment:** We are satisfied that flood risk in the construction phase can be scoped out and will be considered in the SWDS and OCEMP. The OCEMP should also address any temporary works within the 1 in 100 year fluvial floodplain and include any required temporary flood storage compensation.	

2. Water Environment – Water resources

WR01 – Consumptive water demands

Document Reference(s): Chapter 5 – Water Environment	
Issue	Consumptive water demands have not been evaluated in the Water Environment chapter. A sustainable and practical water supply should be identified and evaluated by the applicant to meet consumptive water demands particularly during construction. These can include (but are not limited to: • Potable supply to welfare stations; • Dust suppression; • Wheel/concrete wash; • Concrete batching; • Drilling fluids for Horizontal directional drilling methods.
Impact	Sources of water supply available to the project cannot be appraised without estimating potential demands:

	• Water company supply is not confirmed. Rural locations can be hard to supply; • 3rd party tankering should be factored into the evaluation of vehicle numbers which is referenced in chapter 4.2 Traffic and Transport; • Surface water or Groundwater abstraction will mean that the project will be subject to the licensing restrictions relevant to the policy for the catchment;
Solution	The Water Environment chapter should provide a strategy for water supply which includes estimates of water demands, an options appraisal of sources of supply and demonstrate awareness of the limitations and potential obstacles associated with each.
Additional narrative/ explanation (if necessary) Operational water demand is expected to be negligible and water supply during construction is understood to be considered by contractors at detailed design stages. The Environment agency wishes to avoid projects underestimating water availability posing problems with viability post DCO. NPS EN-1 (Energy infrastructure) section 5.16.7 states: "The Environmental statement should in particular describe 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." The project is also adjacent to Pilmoor SSSI which as identified by the report is a water dependent site. Any proposed abstraction may require a Habitats Risk Assessment (HRA) to be undertaken as part of the determination of the licence required.	

WR02- Dewatering

Document Reference(s): General	
Issue	There is no reference to dewatering requirements in the scoping report. If dewatering is required, it will require an abstraction licence if it doesn't meet the criteria for exemption in *The Water Abstraction and Impounding (Exemptions) Regulations 2017 Section 5: Small scale dewatering in the course of building or engineering works*. It may also require a discharge permit if it falls outside of the *regulatory position statement for de-watering discharges*.
Impact	Consumptive abstraction from Groundwater may not be available or shallow abstraction from superficial geology in level dependent IDB areas or in proximity to water dependent features may be subject to surface water flow or level restrictions. More details can be found in the Abstraction Licensing Strategy for the catchment.

Solution	If the dewatering activity can be demonstrated to be discharged to the same source of supply without intervening use (i.e. non-consumptive), this will increase the likelihood of a licence being granted.
Additional narrative/ explanation (if necessary) The project is adjacent to Pilmoor SSSI which as identified by the report is a water dependent site. Any proposed abstraction may require a Habitats Risk Assessment (HRA) to be undertaken as part of the determination of the licence required.	

WR03 – Impacts to existing abstractions

Document Reference(s): Chapter 5 – Water Environment	
Issue	A number of abstraction licences are in proximity to the site and there is a surface water abstraction licence within the red line boundary. Potential impacts and pathways to these receptors have not been evaluated.
Impact	The project should not derogate lawful water users and should consider suitable mitigations to address any risk. Private water abstraction (outside of regulation) can also include potable water supply posing risks to health.
Solution	The Water Environment chapter should appraise any risks posed by the scheme to existing lawful water users including both licensed abstractions and unlicensed private water abstractions. Water quality and water quantity impacts should be evaluated.
Additional narrative/ explanation (if necessary) Licensed water abstraction data can be obtained from the Environment agency and private water supply data can be requested to the local authority.	

3. Ecology

Ecol01 - Off-site Grid connection

Document Reference: EIA Scoping Report, Chapter 2 Nature and Purposed of the Development.		
Section Reference: Section 2.1.11		
Chapters: 2	**Issue**	The off-site cable route corridor to the point of grid connection is not discussed in this Scoping Report, and therefore potential impacts eg. watercourse cable crossings are not considered.
	Impact	Cables crossing main watercourses can lead to impacts on aquatic habitat and fish during construction and

Section/ pages/ table reference: paragraph 2.1.11 and 2.1.12		operation, such as habitat fragmentation, habitat loss and fish disturbance.
	Solution	The PEIR should provide assessment of the likely impacts of the cable corridor, which should be designed to avoid crossing watercourses wherever possible.

Ecol02 - Watercourse crossings

Document Reference: EIA Scoping Report, Chapter 4 Ecology		
Section Reference: Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1		
Chapters: 2	**Issue**	Lack of clarity regarding the nature of temporary watercourse crossings. Table 2.1 states that 5 existing watercourse crossings will be utilised and *may require upgrading*.
Section/ pages/ table reference: Figure 2.1	**Impact**	The impact to watercourses from upgrading watercourse crossings may be underestimated.
	Solution	Provide clarity regarding the nature of all watercourse crossings.
Additional comment: Figure 2.1: The subtle choice of colours to distinguish between the existing watercourse crossings and new watercourse crossings is difficult to interpret. In future versions of this plan should clearly distinguish between new and existing watercourse crossings, and those that may require upgrading.		

Ecol03 - Fish species

Document Reference: EIA Scoping Report, Chapter 2 Nature and Purpose of the Development.		
Section Reference: Page 99 4.7.38		
Chapters: 4	**Issue**	The requirement for a full aquatic ecology survey will be determined based on potential impacts, waterbody sensitivity, and any *protected* species present.
Section/ pages/ table reference: 4.7.38	**Impact**	Certain fish species may not be considered in any subsequent mitigation proposals.
	Solution	Ensure any aquatic ecology / fisheries surveys take all fish species into account.

Ecol04 - Definition of watercourse buffer

Document Reference: EIA Scoping Report, Chapter 2 Nature and Purposed of the Development.	
Section Reference: Section 2.1.8	
Issue	The proposed 10m buffer around all watercourses has not been clearly defined.
Impact	Risk of an inadequate buffer to protect the watercourse from sediments, enable bank stabilisation through vegetation establishment and allow space for movement of mammals.
Solution	The 10m buffer strips should be measured from the bank-top of a watercourse Amend Commitment CO18 in the Draft Commitments Register to state this. During the construction phase, temporary construction compounds within 15m of watercourses could be screened with fencing on sides adjacent to the watercourse, and working lighting could be positioned to avoid light-spill onto sections of the watercourse. Both measures would lower the risk of disturbance to riparian mammals occupying the watercourse.

Ecol05 - Ecology Commitments

Document Reference: EIA Scoping Report, Chapter 2 Nature and Purposed of the Development, Section 2.1 – The Proposed Development	
Section Reference: Draft Commitments Register	
Issue	The Draft Commitments Register lacks detail regarding biodiversity mitigation and enhancement during construction, operation and decommissioning.
Impact	Ecology mitigation and enhancements are not secured in the DCO.
Solution	The proposed mitigation and enhancements are still being developed and more detail should be provided in the Commitments Register in the PEIR. Examples include: • commitment to halt construction should a protected species be identified and to seek a protected species licence (if applicable), • Produce and adhere to an INNS Management Plan for construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the scheme. • Cover-open trenches to prevent entrapment of mammals and place a ramp to enable escape. Securely fence compounds and trenches during construction.

Ecol06 - Core legislation

Document Reference: EIA Scoping Report, Proposed Scope of the EIA, 4.7 - Ecology	
Section Reference: Section 4.7.6	
Issue	There are key omissions from list of core environmental legislation
Impact	• Risk of not considering environmental definitions in legislation in respect of BNG, such as 'irreplaceable habitat'. • Risk that the impacts on fish from the construction, operation and decommissioning have not been fully considered.
Solution	Include the following legislation: • Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024 • The Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975

Ecol07 - Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) target

Document Reference: EIA Scoping Report, Proposed Scope of the EIA, 4.7 - Ecology	
Section Reference: 4.7.73	
Issue	Lack of detail regarding the intended BNG target for the scheme. BNG is expected to become mandatory for NSIPs in May 2026. This will likely require NSIPs to deliver a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity, post-development.
Impact	Risk of insufficient BNG
Solution	Commit to delivering a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain during the delivery of the scheme. This should also include a consideration of watercourse, and the completion of a river condition assessment. We advise that you also outline the BNG commitment in the Draft Commitments Register. For potential biodiversity net gain opportunities, we recommend the applicant refers to both the mitigation measures within the Water Framework Directive and opportunities identified within any Local Nature Recovery Strategies. The EA may be able to advise on potential watercourse enhancement projects, if off-site units are required.

4. Groundwater and Contaminated Land

GWCL01 – Groundwater scoped out

Document Reference: Chapter 4, paragraphs 4.13.2 to 4.13.11 and Chapter 5, paragraphs 5.1.26 and 5.1.27	
Issue	Effects on groundwater scoped out without sufficient consideration of potential impacts (construction, operation and decommissioning). Justifications are not currently sufficient.
Impact	Potential risks to groundwater if risks not adequately assessed.
Solution	Consider scoping in groundwater (construction, operation and decommissioning) or provide more robust justification and proposed mitigation for its omission.

Additional commentary:

The applicant states in 4.13.11 "In the *likely event*, that significant/ extensive/ complicated contamination exists within the Site, an appropriate chapter in the ES can be included." Given the anticipated likelihood of contamination, it is not justifiable to scope out this topic at this stage.

In the justification in Chapter 5, there is no mention of:

- BESS operation, fire risk, and firewater management
- Risks of using HDD in relation to groundwater (only flood risk)
- Piled foundations for BESS, including anticipated depth and any risks
- Anticipated groundwater levels across the sites
- Consideration of whether dewatering may be necessary
- Aquifer designations (principal, secondary, etc.) – distinct from aquifer classifications given in the report

Further work is needed. We are not satisfied the applicant sufficiently understands the geological and hydrogeological setting of the site to justify scoping it out of further assessment. Some of the proposed further works and mitigation are likely to be sufficient, but they do not cover all aspects of the proposed development. Higher risk elements, such as the BESS, have not been adequately considered.

We agree with the proposal in 4.13.5 that "a programme of intrusive targeted site investigation may be required". However, the applicant appears to only propose completing soil sampling, laboratory analysis and assessment "should made ground be identified". We consider that, as a minimum, this should be completed if there is any visual or olfactory evidence of contamination in anthropogenic or natural soils. We would suggest some baseline soil chemical testing (and groundwater chemical testing, if encountered) be done even where no visual or olfactory evidence is identified.

The applicant does not appear to have reviewed historical borehole records in the region (freely available from the BGS). These provide baseline information about geological conditions and groundwater levels and behaviour. This review can be included in the proposed Phase I ground contamination assessment. While the bedrock underlying much of the site is Mercia Mudstone Group, the deeper Sherwood Sandstone Group (principal aquifer) could be encountered during HDD works.

On the BGS GeoIndex, the applicant can also identify an historical hydrocarbon well situated between the southern boundary of the Sessay Park site and East Moor Wood. This is not mentioned in the scoping report. Significant contamination can be associated with hydrocarbon wells, and we expect the applicant to provide further information about this.

GWCL02 - Thermal pollution

Document & chapter: N/A	
Issue	The thermal impact of buried high voltage cables has not been mentioned.
Impact	Risk of heat pollution in groundwater, especially where cables pass through or near Pilmoor SSSI (East Moor Wood).
Solution	Include consideration of thermal impacts of buried HV cables on hydrogeology, especially if cables pass through or near East Moor Wood.

Additional commentary:
Heat as a groundwater pollutant was introduced in 2023 via the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 SI No.2023/651. As such, discharges that might lead to an input of heat into groundwater are groundwater activities. We aim to be proportionate and pragmatic in our application of the principles of the Environmental Permitting Regulations and requiring a permit would feel disproportionate for many activities at or near the ground surface.

At this stage we require the potential thermal implications of buried high voltage cables, in relation to risks to groundwater, to be considered via desk-based assessment. In those rare

instances where we are concerned that there are risks which require ongoing control or management, we may opt to regulate it as a groundwater activity under schedule 22 of the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) 2016.

The EA currently has no specific guidance relating to the potential thermal implications of buried infrastructure including cables. We suggest that our guidance for ground source heating and cooling systems should be used as a guide. The following link contains relevant information, including thermal plume modelling and an interactive system map and spreadsheet: Environmental impacts of temperature changes from ground source heating and cooling systems - GOV.UK.

GWCL03 - Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem

Document & chapter: Chapter 1, Table 1.5, and Chapter 5, paragraph 5.1.10 and 5.1.19	
Issue	Pilmoor SSSI is also designated as a Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem (GWDTE). This is not stated here. We disagree with the justification of ruling out risks to Pilmoor SSSI based on topography. See Additional narrative.
Impact	If an environmental designation is not noted, specific risks may not be adequately considered.
Solution	For completeness, ensure all relevant designations are recorded and considered. Consider potential impacts on groundwater from dewatering and construction of the cable route through the SSSI (if completed)

Additional commentary:

As a Pilmoor SSSI is a GWDTE, it is likely to be affected by local changes in hydrogeology, not just surface water. There are surface water features shown on the OS 1:25,000 map, which could be groundwater-fed as there are no watercourses flowing from the Site into the Pilmoor SSSI (see 5.1.10). In Chapter 5, paragraph 5.1.19 it states: "The Pilmoor SSSI … is partially designated as a Lowland Fen Priority Habitat, which is a groundwater and/or rainwater fed ecosystem. The development is not expected to have an effect on the groundwater level or quality in the SSSI." See also our comments on dewatering and groundwater levels.

The applicant states that Pilmoor SSSI is topographically higher than the Sessay Park site. We consider that the region is broadly level, and OS mapping indicates some areas of The Site are topographically higher than Pilmoor SSSI. Furthermore, topography is not a direct indicator of groundwater levels.

In 5.1.39 it states: "The topographical evaluation is based upon the provided Unmanned Arial Vehicle survey, as opposed to traditional topographical survey techniques, and the accuracy of the survey should be treated accordingly." The applicant should also consider this when making statements about site and regional topography. We note that the topographic survey appended to Appendix III (FRA) does not extend into the Pilmoor woodland.

One of the proposed cable routes comes through the middle of the SSSI, under the existing road through East Moor Wood. This would require excavation and disturbance within the SSSI.

GWCL04 - Unknown depths of foundations and cabling

Document & chapter: Chapter 2, paragraphs 2.1.19 (Table 2.1) and 2.1.24	
Issue	The proposed depth range for BESS foundations, and any other foundations other than solar array are not given. Proposed buried cable depths, including HDD, are not given.
Impact	Impacts on ground conditions and potential for interaction with groundwater, cannot be fully considered if depths are not known.
Solution	In subsequent reports, provide indicative maximum and minimum depths for foundations and cables. Consider how these may be affected by ground conditions and groundwater. If foundations have the potential to impact sensitive receptors, a foundation works risk assessment may be necessary. Where HDD is used, we expect a drilling fluid breakout plan (or equivalent) to be in place. This plan could be included within, or appended, to the CEMP, or another appropriate document.
Additional commentary: It states that BESS might sit on concrete piles, but the depth of piles is unknown. We note in paragraph 2.1.24 that panel array foundations will be driven up to 2m deep.	

GWCL05 - BESS fire risk

Document & chapter: Chapter 2, paragraph 2.1.24	
Issue	The proposed construction process at the BESS and substation appears to suggest that batteries or components will be installed prior to fencing and water storage tanks and associated fire-fighting infrastructure. There will therefore be no protection in place if a fire occurs between installation of equipment and installation of fire-fighting infrastructure.
Impact	Unacceptable risk to controlled waters from fire water runoff. Unacceptable risk of unauthorised access to site and tampering with equipment, which could cause leakages and spillages.
Solution	Batteries and BESS and substation components must only be installed after fire-fighting infrastructure, drainage and security is installed.

GWCL06 - Cable decommissioning

Document & chapter: Chapter 2, paragraph 2.1.29 and Chapter 4, paragraph 4.6.34

Issue	Inconsistent information about fate of cables at decommissioning (see Additional dialogue).
Impact	The current intention for removal of cables is unclear.
Solution	Ensure consistent information in future reports (see further notes in Additional dialogue).

Additional dialogue / commentary:

In 2.1.29 it states: "All cables will also be removed except where the impact of removal is deemed to outweigh the benefit of the cables remaining in situ at the time of decommissioning."

In 4.6.34 it states: "Decommissioning works are anticipated to include removing … shallow (< 1 metre) cabling … however, will be tailored to best practice at the time of decommissioning."

We do not currently have specific guidance or a regulatory position about this in the context of groundwater and land contamination. However, we recommend that cables are removed entirely at the end of the project's functional lifespan. Further, we ask the applicant to consider the potential effects of cables being left in situ, such as deterioration of plastic and metal over extended time periods, and the release of these materials into soil and groundwater.

The applicant should refer to regulatory guidance and general best practice at the time of decommissioning. We strongly recommend that the applicant considers full cable removal in their designs. Allowance should be made at this stage for cable removal should it be later deemed necessary, so that the method of installation does not mean this cannot be reasonably achieved.

It is important to consider that use of plastic ducting to facilitate easy removal of cables may have its own impacts. This ducting could degrade over time in a similar manner to plastic cable housing, with some residual risk to sensitive receptors.

GWCL07 – Inconsistencies in site model

Document & chapter: Chapter 4, paragraphs 4.13.2 and Chapter 5, paragraphs 5.1.18 and 5.1.25	
Issue	The applicant notes an off-site Source Protection Zone in 5.1.25 (Pilmoor Grange), but this is not also mentioned in previous relevant sections (4.13.2 and 5.1.18).
Impact	Inconsistencies in site model may mean receptors are overlooked.
Solution	Review if other receptors are omitted from key sections of the site model. Ensure all receptors are adequately assessed in all relevant locations.

GWCL08 - Dewatering

Document & chapter: Chapter 5, paragraph 5.1.27

Issue	The applicant has ruled out groundwater abstraction during the construction and decommissioning phases but has given no indication of anticipated groundwater levels across the sites. The potential need, or not, for dewatering, is not mentioned anywhere in the report.
Impact	If shallow groundwater is present, temporary dewatering may be required during works. This is especially relevant where HDD is used, as it will penetrate deeper strata where groundwater is more likely. Potential adverse impacts on GWDTE if dewatering is required within influencing distance.
Solution	Consider groundwater levels and if dewatering may be required. Make allowance for dewatering and ensure any permitting requirements are fully understood prior to commencement of works.
Additional dialogue / commentary: See Informatives for general notes on dewatering and water abstraction.	

GWCL09 - Sensitivity classification of receptors

Document & chapter: Chapter 5, paragraph 5.1.29 (Table 5.3)	
Issue	We disagree with some of the sensitivity classifications the applicant proposes to use (see Additional narrative).
Impact	Potential for sensitive receptors to not be adequately considered.
Solution	Review our notes and update the table for subsequent works as necessary.
Additional dialogue / commentary: - Any potable water supply (including small private) should be at least High sensitivity. Private groundwater abstractions for potable use or food production are afforded a default 50m radius SPZ1, which is a classification stated in the same table to be High sensitivity, so this would apply. - SPZ3 should be at least Medium, given that Low is the lowest sensitivity. An SPZ3 is within the catchment for a potable water abstraction, so should be afforded greater protection than aquifers not used for this purpose. - "Low productivity aquifer" should be Low, not Negligible. We consider that only Unproductive aquifer is Negligible sensitivity. Therefore, "Moderately productive aquifer" should become Medium. As noted previously, it would be advantageous if the applicant uses our aquifer designation terminology (principal, secondary, etc.).	

5. Waste

Wa01 – Waste from earthworks

Document & chapter: Chapter 5, paragraphs 5.5.1 and 5.5.2	
Issue	Earthworks for BESS are acknowledged in 5.5.2, but this potential waste product is not listed in 5.5.1. Consider also earthworks for roads and drainage.

Impact	Waste assessment might be incomplete.
Solution	Ensure all waste types are considered and planned for.
Additional dialogue / commentary: See Informatives for further notes on waste.	

Wa02 - Unexpected contamination

Document & chapter: Chapter 4, paragraphs 4.13.12 to 4.13.19	
Issue	The possibility of encountering unexpected contamination during and beyond the construction of the scheme has not been mentioned within the report. Management of this should be detailed in the CEMP, OEMP and DEMP.
Impact	If a protocol for how to manage unexpected contamination in accordance with Land Contamination Risk Management guidance is not proposed risks to controlled waters may not be adequately assessed mitigated.
Solution	Ensure that a commitment to managing unexpected contamination is included in the OCEMP, OOEMP and ODEMP.

Additional commentary:

Our suggested process is:

(1) In the event that contaminated land, including groundwater, is found at any time when carrying out the authorised development, which was not previously identified in the environmental statement, then no further development (unless otherwise approved in writing by the relevant authorities) shall be carried out within the identifiable perimeters of the area in which the suspected contamination is located. It must be reported as soon as reasonably practicable to the local planning authority, and where necessary, the Environment Agency, and the undertaker must complete a risk assessment of the contamination in consultation with the local planning authority, and where necessary, the Environment Agency.

(2) Where the undertaker determines that remediation of the contaminated land is necessary, a written scheme and programme for the remedial measures to be taken to render the land fit for its intended purpose must be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, following consultation with the Environment Agency.

(3) Remediation must be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme under sub paragraph (2).

(4) Following the implementation of the remediation strategy approved under sub-paragraph (2), a verification report, based on the data collected as part of the remediation strategy and demonstrating the completion of the remediation measures must be produced and supplied to the relevant planning authority and the Environment Agency.

Wa03 – Waste batteries

Document & chapter: Chapter 4, paragraph 4.13.1 and Chapter 5, paragraphs 5.5.6 and 5.5.8	
Issue	Potential for contaminant leakage from waste batteries stored on site prior to disposal.
Impact	Risk to land and controlled waters. For example, this could be due to chemical leakage, or fire water runoff in the event of extinguishing a waste battery fire.
Solution	The Applicant should ensure that waste and/or damaged BESS batteries are stored and managed such that they do not pose a contamination risk. Detail can be given in the OBSMP (Commitment CO24).
Additional dialogue / commentary: Any temporary holding area for batteries awaiting loading for removal should be suitable to avoid presenting a contamination risk. The applicant should also note that stored damaged batteries are susceptible to spontaneous combustion. A fire watch may be necessary.	

Appendix 2 – Informatives

Use of PFAS

We strongly recommend that all solar panels are Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) free. Some solar panels are treated with a PFAS coating. PFAS is not mentioned in the EIA Scoping report. If panels containing PFAS are used, we suggest that there is consideration of this in the Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) and Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP). For example, if PFAS coating is damaged there is a risk of persistent chemicals entering the natural environment during heavy rainfall, washing, maintenance, and removal. The OEMP should also incorporate measures to minimise the risk of panel coatings becoming damaged via 'thermal shock' such as if cleaned whilst at a high temperature due to prolonged exposure to sunlight.

The applicant should ensure that any bentonite used for trenchless drilling, or elsewhere in the scheme, has not been treated with chemicals containing PFAS. Fuel, oils and other chemicals, such as cleaning agents and decontaminants, should be PFAS-free wherever possible.

Environmental permits

If dewatering is required, it will require an abstraction licence if it doesn't meet the criteria for exemption in *The Water Abstraction and Impounding (Exemptions) Regulations 2017 Section 5: Small scale dewatering in the course of building or engineering works*. It may also require a discharge permit if it falls outside of our regulatory position statement for de-watering discharges.

If the applicant does not meet the exemption and requires a full abstraction licence, applicants should be aware that some aquifer units may be closed for new consumptive abstractions in this area. More information can be found on GOV.UK: Abstraction licensing strategies (CAMS process) and Apply for a water abstraction or impounding licence.

If the dewatering activity can be demonstrated to be discharged to the same source of supply without intervening use (i.e. non-consumptive), this will increase the likelihood of a licence being granted.

Please note that the typical timescale to process a licence application is 9-12 months. The applicant may wish to consider whether a scheme-wide dewatering application rather than individual applications would be beneficial. We suggest talking to our National Permitting Service early in the project planning.

Temporary dewatering of wholly or mainly rainwater that has accumulated in an excavation may be exempt from an Environmental Permit for a Water Discharge Activity. More information can be found on our website: Temporary dewatering from excavations to surface water: RPS 261. Note that this does not permit discharge of groundwater from a passive or active dewatering activity or permit the abstraction of groundwater.

The applicant may also need to consider discharge of groundwater, especially if it is contaminated. More information can be found on our website: Discharges to surface water and groundwater: environmental permits.

The use of drilling muds for the directional drilling may require a groundwater activity permit unless the 'de minimis' exemption applies. Early discussion about this is also recommended.

Waste on site

Excavated materials that are recovered via a treatment operation can be re-used on-site under the CL:AIRE Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice. This voluntary Code of Practice provides a framework for determining whether excavated material arising from site during remediation or land development works are waste.

Developers should ensure that all contaminated materials are adequately characterised both chemically and physically, and that the permitting status of any proposed on-site operations are clear. If in doubt, the Environment Agency should be contacted for advice at an early stage to avoid any delays.

The Environment Agency recommends that developers should refer to:

- CL:AIRE Definition of Waste: Code of Practice
- EA Regulatory Position Statement 215: Treating small volumes of contaminated soil and groundwater

Waste to be taken off site

Contaminated soil that is, or must be, disposed of, is waste. Therefore, its handling, transport, treatment and disposal is subject to waste management legislation, which includes:

- Duty of Care Regulations 1991
- Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005
- Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010
- The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011

Developers should ensure that all contaminated materials are adequately characterised both chemically and physically in line with British Standards BS EN 14899:2005 'Characterisation of Waste - Sampling of Waste Materials - Framework for the Preparation and Application of a Sampling Plan'. The permitting status of any proposed treatment or disposal activity should be clear. If in doubt, the Environment Agency should be contacted for advice at an early stage to avoid any delays.

If the total quantity of waste material to be produced at or taken off site is hazardous waste and is 500kg or greater in any 12-month period, the developer will need to register with us as a hazardous waste producer. Refer to our website for more information.

Sustainable drainage systems

The Environment Agency supports the Government's expectation that sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will be provided in new developments wherever appropriate.

Where infiltration SuDS are to be used for surface run-off from roads, car parking and public or amenity areas, they should:

- be suitably designed
- meet Governments non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems – these standards should be used in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance
- use a SuDS management treatment train – that is, use drainage components in series to achieve a robust surface water management system that does not pose an unacceptable risk of pollution to groundwater

Where infiltration SuDS are proposed for anything other than clean roof drainage in a SPZ1, a hydrogeological risk assessment should be undertaken, to ensure that the system does not pose an unacceptable risk to the source of supply.

See the Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection, position statement G13: Groundwater protection position statements.

BESS Site Design

We strongly recommend that all BESS sites have fully sealed drainage systems, with penstock valves which activate automatically when a fire breaks out.

Where BESS sites are designed with fire extinguishing systems that do not rely on water, fire crews might still use water for boundary cooling, and this can contain pollutants from the burning units, including any associated chemical leakage, and dust and ash from the air. As such, we expect firewater capture to be included in any design. Operation and activation of penstocks should be included within any maintenance schedule. Firewater must be tested for relevant contaminants to determine the appropriate route for disposal.

Where gravel or soil is proposed to be used within an impermeable drainage basin, the operator must demonstrate how they will manage accumulation of silt and pollutants within the base of the gravel. Contaminants from a fire event may accumulate in the gravel even if firewater runoff is identified as being suitable for release.

The National Fire Chief's Council has published detailed guidance on recommended fire protection measures for BESS sites. Grid Scale Battery Energy Storage System planning – Guidance for FRS (nfcc.org.uk)

Policy and legislation

The policy and guidance relevant to the assessment of flood risk and drainage impacts are given as Table 5.1. An equivalent table for the assessment of potential land contamination and protection of groundwater should be provided and for example include:

- Part IIA, Environmental Protection Act 1990

- The Environmental Permitting Regulations (England & Wales) 2016 (as amended))
- Overarching NPPS Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5) (January 2024)
- The Water Supply (Water Quality) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2019
- Groundwater (England and Wales) Regulations 2009

The applicant has referred to Environment Agency Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) guidance, which does include most relevant guidance discussed within LCRM. Relevant guidance should be referenced in the relevant reports. For example, when outlining proposed site investigation works, we expect the applicant to demonstrate what guidance will be used to determine the scope and carry out the works.

From: FS, Yorkshire and North East Area <yne@forestrycommission.gov.uk>
Sent: 18 February 2026 23:10
To: Sedgeby Solar Farm <sedgebysolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: EN0110026 - Sedgeby Solar Farm - EIA Scoping and Consultation and Regulation 11 Notification

Hello,

Thank you for seeking the Forestry Commission's advice about the impacts that this project may have on the trees and woodlands within the zone of influence of the proposals. As a Non-Ministerial Government Department, we provide no opinion supporting or objecting to an application. Rather we provide information on the potential impact that the proposed project could have on trees and woodlands. The Forestry Commission is pleased to provide you with the following information that may be helpful when you consider the application:

- Details of Government policy relating to ancient woodland and ancient & veteran trees
- Information on the importance and designation of ancient woodland and ancient & veteran trees
- Details of Government policy relating to non-ancient woodland and trees

Ancient Woodlands (ASNW/PAWS) and Ancient & Veteran Trees (AVT)

Ancient woodlands, and ancient & veteran trees, are irreplaceable. They have great value because they have a long history of woodland cover, with many features remaining undisturbed, including immensely complex ecological processes and relationships, above and below the ground. This applies equally to Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW), Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and ancient and veteran trees (AVT).

It is Government policy to refuse development that will result in the **loss or deterioration** of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodlands and/or ancient and veteran trees, unless "there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists" (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 186c). It is not possible to fully compensate for the loss of an irreplaceable habitat.

Sedgeby Solar Farm

There are significant areas of ancient woodland (ASNW and PAWS), and priority habitat woodlands, within the zone of influence of the proposed project.

A desk based study has identified the following areas of woodland (including 8 figure grid references), however a thorough assessment of the landscape should be made to ensure that all areas of woodland and individual trees are considered when assessing the potential impacts of this proposal:

SE 4491 7460 – woodland, mixed mainly conifer, 2.09ha, surrounded all sides by site boundary

SE 4460 7454 – woodland, conifer, 0.75ha – surrounded on 3 sides by site boundary

SE 4469 7407 – Priority Habitat deciduous woodland 2.08ha – site boundary follows northern boundary of woodland

SE 4496 7337 – woodland, conifer 2.94ha, conditional felling licence in place, 3.06ha, site boundary passes along northern boundary

SE 4577 7318 – Priority Habitat deciduous woodland, with small area of Priority Habitat wet woodland on east side of track, 36.67ha, conditional felling licence in place – site boundary passes along northern boundary to west of track, not clear whether area of wet woodland is excluded.

SE 4663 7316 – PAWS woodland, site boundary passes along western boundary

SE 4678 7366 – ASNW woodland, site boundary ~ 170m from woodland, and along northern boundary of woodland

SE 4746 7331 – PAWS woodland, site boundary runs along eastern boundary. This woodland appears to be missing from the Scoping Plan Site Boundary plan.

SE 4790 7265 – Priority Habitat deciduous woodland, narrow strip, site boundary follows boundary on both sides, in eastern end of woodland.

SE 4634 7365 – Traditional Orchard, site boundary passes along northern boundary

Joint Natural England and Forestry Commission Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland

For more information on the impacts of development on ancient woodland and how to assess these, please see the joint Forestry Commission /Natural England Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland – “Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions”, the supporting guidance included within it, and Keepers of Time – A Statement of Policy for England’s Ancient and Native Woodland (published June 2005).

The standing advice also provides information on mitigation, including the use of buffers. Any proposals in proximity to ancient woodland should have a minimum buffer zone of at least 15m from the boundary of the woodland to avoid root damage. Where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, for example the effects of air pollution from increased traffic and/or industrial processes, the proposal is likely to require a larger buffer

zone. For larger scale proposals such as this, a 50m buffer should be considered unless it can be clearly demonstrated that a smaller buffer is sufficient to ensure **no loss or deterioration of the habitat.** We would be keen to engage further with the developer in relation to any mitigation and compensation strategies.

In relation to non-ancient woodland and trees, we would like to draw your attention to paragraph 131 of the NPPF which states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

Mitigation and Biodiversity Net Gain

In line with Biodiversity Net Gain principles, the proposals should include significant tree and hedgerow planting, habitat creation and other ecological mitigation measures. Doing so will not only reduce impacts on ancient woodland and other sensitive habitats but also contribute to the Government's national tree-planting and tree canopy cover targets, supporting wildlife, climate resilience and long-term ecosystem health.

If you require any further comments or information, our contact details are included in the attached letter, or you can contact us via this email address.

Thanks,

Dan Brown

Local Partnership Advisor

Yorkshire and North East Area

Forestry Commission England

Tyneside House

1 Skinnerburn Road

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE4 7AR

Subscribe to our newsletter to be the first to hear about the latest information, advice, and news from the Forestry Commission

Health and Safety Executive

CEMHD Policy - Land Use Planning,
NSIP Consultations,
Building 1.2,
Redgrave Court,
Merton Road,
Bootle, Merseyside
L20 7HS.

HSE email: NSIP.applications@hse.gov.uk

By email only: sedgebysolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Dear Project Team

Date: 9 February 2026

PROPOSED SEDGEBY SOLAR FARM (the project)
PROPOSAL BY SEDGEBY SOLAR LTD (the applicant)
INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (ENVIROMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017 (as amended) REGULATIONS 10 and 11

Thank you for your letter of 21 January 2026 regarding the information to be provided in an environmental statement relating to the above project. HSE does not comment on EIA Scoping Reports but the following information is likely to be useful to the applicant.

HSE's land use planning advice

Will the proposed development fall within any of HSE's consultation distances?

According to HSE's records, the proposed Sedgeby Solar Farm project components as specified in the ***Sedgeby Solar Farm Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report, PINS Ref: EN0110026, January 2026, Figure 1.2: Site Identification Plan, Ref: TMY17c.v.2*** do not appear to cross the consultation zones of any Major Accident Hazard (MAH) sites with Hazardous Substances Consent or MAH pipelines and therefore, we would not wish to comment on its siting. If in the intervening period we are notified of a change to this situation, the developer would need to seek advice from us.

Hazardous Substance Consent

It is not clear whether the applicant has considered the hazard classification of any chemicals that are proposed to be present at the development. Hazard classification is relevant to the potential for accidents. For example, hazardous substances planning consent is required to store or use any of the Categories of Substances or Named Hazardous Substances set out in Schedule 1 of The Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2015 as amended, if those hazardous substances will be present on, over or under the land at or above the controlled quantities. There is an addition rule in the Schedule for below-threshold substances. If hazardous substances planning consent is required, please consult HSE on the application.

Consideration of risk assessments

Regulation 5(4) of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 requires the assessment of significant effects to include, where relevant, the expected significant effects arising from the proposed development's vulnerability to major accidents. HSE's role on NSIPs is summarised in the following Advice Note 11 Annex on the Planning Inspectorate's website - Annex G – The Health and Safety Executive. This document includes consideration of risk assessments on page 3.

Explosives sites

Explosives Inspectorate has no comment to make as there are no HSE licenced explosives sites in the vicinity of the proposed development.

Electrical Safety

No comment from a planning perspective.

At this time, please send any further communication on this project directly to the HSE's designated e-mail account for NSIP applications at nsip.applications@hse.gov.uk . We are currently unable to accept hard copies, as our offices have limited access.

Yours sincerely

Pp Shirley Rance

Cathy Williams
CEMHD4 NSIP Consultation Team

Historic England

Emily Park
Senior Environmental Advisor (PIEMA)
The Planning Inspectorate
<<by email>>

Direct Dial: 01904 601866

Our ref: PL00799663

18 February 2026

Dear Ms Park

REQUEST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) SCOPING OPINION FOR SEDGEBY SOLAR FARM

Application No. EN0110026

Thank you for your letter of 21 January 2026 consulting us about the above EIA Scoping Report.

This development could, potentially, have an impact upon a number of designated heritage assets[1] and their settings in the area around the site. In line with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), we would expect the Environmental Statement (ES) to contain a thorough assessment of the likely effects which the proposed development might have upon those elements which contribute to the significance of these assets.

Given the extent of the proposed solar array and the topography of the application site, this development is likely to be visible across a large area. As a result, it could affect the significance of heritage assets at some distance from the site itself. We would expect the assessment to clearly demonstrate that the extent of the proposed study area is of the appropriate size to ensure that all heritage assets likely to be affected by this development have been included and can be properly assessed.

Our initial assessment shows that there are numerous designated heritage assets within 5km of the proposed development. We would draw your attention, in particular, to the following:

- Medieval moated site, fishponds and associated field system 125m south of Eldmire Cottage (scheduled monument; NHLE 1015419)
- Church of St Cuthbert (grade II*; NHLE 1190725),
- Sessay Conservation Area, and

[1] A Designated Heritage Asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as 'A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation'.

Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any Information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.

- two grade II listed structures associated with 18th and 19th century agrarian land management of the proposal site (NHLE 1190704, 1150696).

This is not an exhaustive or definitive list, and we expect the ES to present a reasoned and appropriately detailed assessment of impact on designated and non-designated heritage assets.

The local planning authority's archaeological staff are best placed to advise on:

- local historic environment issues and priorities,
- how the proposal can be tailored to avoid and minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment,
- the nature and design of any required mitigation measures, and
- opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

The ES should also take account of the potential impact which associated activities (such as construction, servicing and maintenance, and associated traffic) might have upon perceptions, understanding and appreciation of the heritage assets in the area. The assessment should also consider, where appropriate, the likelihood of alterations to drainage patterns. This might lead to *in situ* decomposition or destruction of below ground archaeological remains and deposits and can also lead to subsidence of buildings and monuments.

It is important that the ES is designed to ensure that all impacts are fully understood. We have the following comments to make regarding the content of the final ES document:

- Reference to Historic England 2021: *Commercial renewable energy development and the historic environment Historic England Advice Note 15*.

- Lack of clarity concerning whether the proposed Historic Impact Assessment methodology includes non-designated heritage assets and whether this assessment would be informed by a site visit. This will need to be defined and agreed at an early stage and clearly presented in the final ES document.

- The residual impacts following the implementation of the Historic Impact Assessment will then need to be defined and significance criteria applied. The scope and methodology need to be defined and agreed at an early stage and clearly presented in the final ES document.

- Lack of clarity over whether viewpoint assessment data will form part of the Historic Impact Assessment. The scope and methodology need to be defined and agreed at an early stage and clearly presented in the final ES document. Section drawings and techniques such as photomontages are a useful part of these and should include both fixed and dynamic/kinetic viewpoints.

Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any Information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.

- Cumulative effects on the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets should be thoroughly analysed and presented in the ES. Cumulative effects of the development alongside those of other proposed developments in a defined geographic proximity to the project; and, cumulative effects for a single receptor where multiple impacts are predicted to arise from the scheme, should be considered.

If you have any queries about any of the above, or would like to discuss anything further, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Lilley
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
E-mail: [redacted]@historicengland.org.uk

Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any Information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.

From: White, Lou <[redacted]@leeds.gov.uk>
Sent: 21 January 2026 16:41
To: Sedgeby Solar Farm <sedgebysolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: EN0110026 - Sedgeby Solar Farm - EIA Scoping and Consultation and Regulation 11 Notification - Leeds City Council response

You don't often get email from [redacted]@leeds.gov.uk. Learn why this is important

Dear Emily,

Thank you for your email below.

Having noted the nature of the proposed development and its distance away from the shared district boundary, I can advise you that Leeds City Council has no comment to make in respect of the Applicant's EIA Scoping Report dated January 2026. We will defer considerations to the Host Authority, North Yorkshire Council, thank you.

Kind regards

Louise White

Development Management Team Leader for Minerals, Energy and Waste Planning

Leeds City Council

.....

National Grid House
Warwick Technology Park
Gallows Hill, Warwick
CV34 6DA

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Customer Connections Site Solutions (CCSS)
Land, Planning and External Affairs (LPEA)
National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET)
www.nationalgrid.com

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY:
sedgebysolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

18 February 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: APPLICATION BY Sedgeby Solar Limited (THE APPLICANT) FOR AN ORDER GRANTING DEVELOPMENT CONSENT FOR THE Sedgeby Solar Farm (THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT)

SCOPING CONSULTATION RESPONSE

We refer to your letter dated 21st January 2026 in relation to the above proposed application. This is a response on behalf of National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC (NGET).

Having reviewed the scoping report, I would like to make the following comments regarding NGET existing or future infrastructure in close proximity to the current red line boundary.

NGET has high voltage electricity substations and overhead transmission lines within close proximity the scoping area. The overhead lines form an essential part of the electricity transmission network in England and Wales.

Existing Infrastructure

Overhead Lines

2TW ROUTE 400 kV OHL	NORTON - OSBALDWICK 1
	NORTON - OSBALDWICK 24ZM ROUTE

We enclose a plan showing the location of NGET's apparatus in the scoping area.

In addition, GIS shapefiles of approximate locations of our national electricity transmission network are freely available from here: https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/network-route-maps. You can also check if your works will affect our transmission network by using the Line search website: https://lsbud.co.uk/.

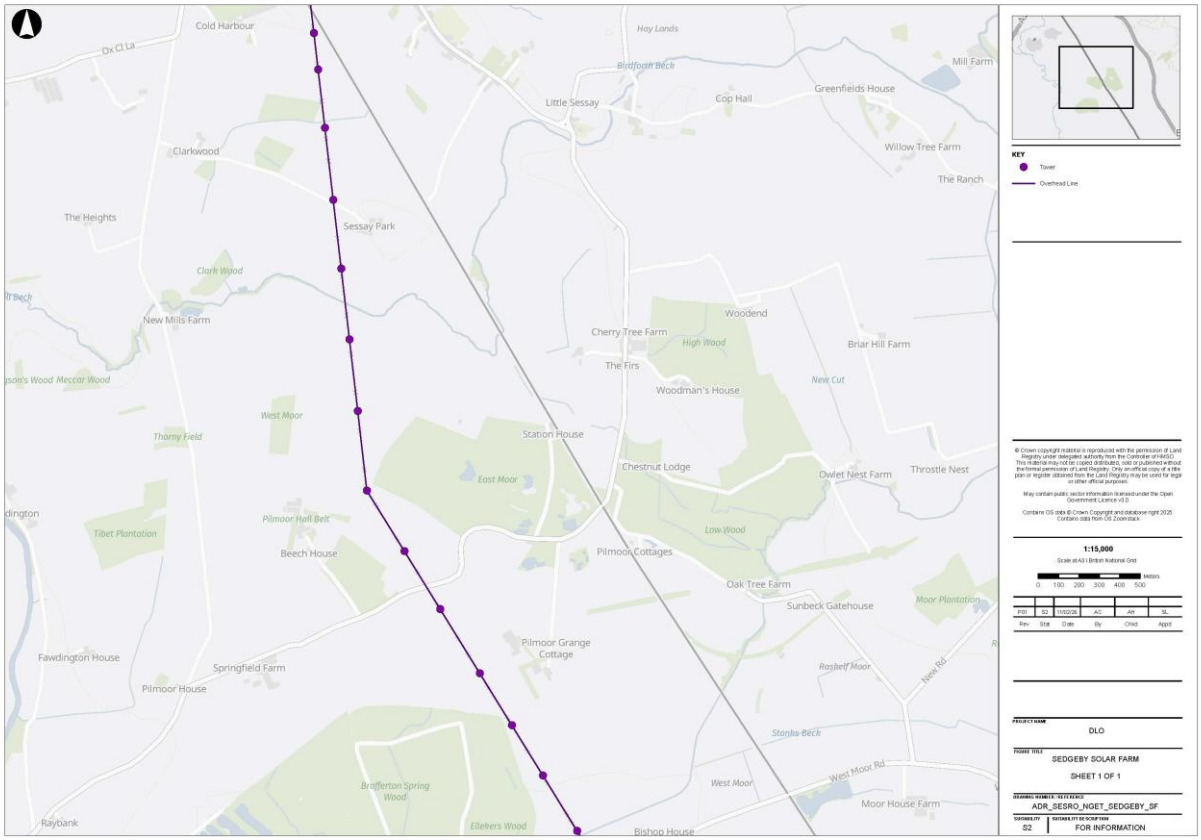


Figure 1: NGET Assets in proposed development area

New infrastructure

The National Energy System Operator (NESO) took over the electricity network planning responsibility from National Grid Electricity System Operator Limited (NGESO) on the 1st October 2024. Please consult with NESO separately from NGET where further information on the strategic need or capacity is sought.

Please refer to the Holistic Network Design (HND) and the NESO website to view the strategic vision for the UK's ever growing electricity transmission network:https://www.neso.energy/publications/beyond-2030/holistic-network-design-offshore-wind; and https://www.neso.energy/publications/beyond-2030

Onshore Infrastructure

Norton to Osbaldwick

We are proposing replacing the conductors on the existing circuit between Norton and Osbaldwick with higher capacity conductors. Please find out more about these projects on our here: https://www.neso.energy/publications/beyond-2030.

It should be noted that there may be further interactions with additional new strategic infrastructure where the projects are in their early development.

NGET requests that all existing and future assets are given due consideration given their criticality to the high-voltage transmission of electricity across the UK. We remain committed to working with the promoter in a proactive manner, enabling both parties to deliver successful projects wherever reasonably possible. As such we encourage that ongoing discussion and consultation between both parties is maintained on

interactions with existing or future assets, land interests, connections or consents and any other NGET interests which have the potential to be impacted prior to submission of the Proposed DCO.

The Great Grid Upgrade is the largest overhaul of the electricity grid in generations, we are in the middle of a transformation, with the energy we use increasingly coming from cleaner greener sources. Our infrastructure projects across England and Wales are helping to connect more renewable energy to homes and businesses. To find out more about our current projects please refer to our network and infrastructure webpage. https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects. Where it has been identified that your project interacts with or is in close proximity to one of NGET's infrastructure projects, we would welcome further discussion at the earliest opportunity.

These projects are all essential to increase the overall network capability to connect the numerous new offshore wind farms that are being developed, and transport new clean green energy to the homes and businesses where it is needed.

The following points should be taken into consideration.

Specific Comments – Electricity Infrastructure:

- NGET's Overhead Line/s is protected by a Deed of Easement/Wayleave Agreement which provides full right of access to retain, maintain, repair and inspect our asset

- Statutory electrical safety clearances must be maintained at all times. Any proposed buildings must not be closer than 5.3m to the lowest conductor. NGET recommends that no permanent structures are built directly beneath overhead lines. These distances are set out in EN 43 – 8 Technical Specification for "overhead line clearances Issue 5 (2019)".

- If any changes in ground levels are proposed either beneath or in close proximity to our existing overhead lines, then this would serve to reduce the safety clearances for such overhead lines. Safe clearances for existing overhead lines must be maintained in all circumstances.

- The relevant guidance in relation to working safely near to existing overhead lines is contained within the Health and Safety Executive's (www.hse.gov.uk) Guidance Note GS 6 "Avoidance of Danger from Overhead Electric Lines" and all relevant site staff should make sure that they are both aware of and understand this guidance.

- Plant, machinery, equipment, buildings or scaffolding should not encroach within 5.3 metres of any of our high voltage conductors. When those conductors are under their worst conditions of maximum "sag" and "swing" and overhead line profile (maximum "sag" and "swing") drawings should be obtained using the contact details above.

- If a landscaping scheme is proposed as part of the proposal, we request that only slow and low growing species of trees and shrubs are planted beneath and adjacent to the existing overhead line to reduce the risk of growth to a height which compromises statutory safety clearances.

- Drilling or excavation works should not be undertaken if they have the potential to disturb or adversely affect the foundations or "pillars of support" of any existing tower. These foundations always extend beyond the base area of the existing tower and foundation ("pillar of support") drawings can be obtained using the contact details above.

- NGET high voltage underground cables are protected by a Deed of Grant; Easement; Wayleave Agreement or the provisions of the New Roads and Street Works Act. These provisions provide NGET full right of access to retain, maintain, repair and inspect our assets. Hence, we require that no permanent / temporary structures are to be built over our cables or within the easement strip. Any such proposals should be discussed and agreed with NGET prior to any works taking place.

- Ground levels above our cables must not be altered in any way. Any alterations to the depth of our cables will subsequently alter the rating of the circuit and can compromise the reliability, efficiency

and safety of our electricity network and requires consultation with National Grid prior to any such changes in both level and construction being implemented.

Further Advice

NGET requests to be consulted at the earliest stages to ensure that the most appropriate protective provisions are included within the DCO application to safeguard the integrity of our apparatus and to remove the requirement for objection. All consultations should be sent to the following email address: **box.landandacquisitions@nationalgrid.com**

We hope the above information is useful. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Land Development Liaison team. In the meantime, we look forward to receipt of further information and consultation relating to potential impacts on our assets.

The information in this letter is provided not withstanding any discussions taking place in relation to connections with electricity customer services.

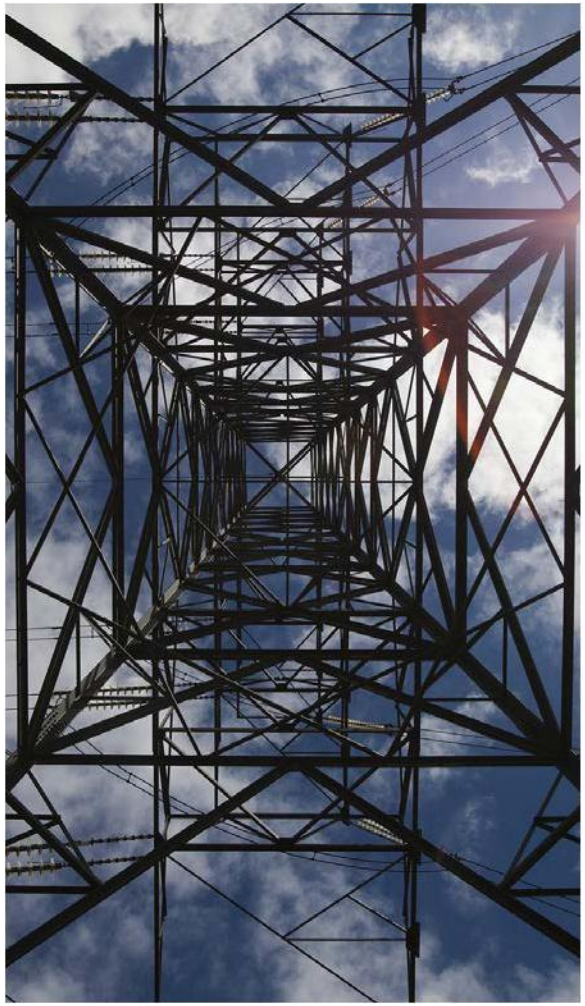
Yours faithfully,

Tiffany Bate
Lead Development Liaison Officer
Customer Connections Site Solutions (CCSS)
Land, Planning and External Affairs (LPEA)

Rachel Hagan
Development Liaison Support Officer
Customer Connections Site Solutions (CCSS)
Land, Planning and External Affairs (LPEA)

Technical Guidance Note 287

Third-party guidance for working near National Grid Electricity Transmission equipment



Disclaimer
National Grid Gas Transmission and National Grid Electricity Transmission or their agents, servants or contractors do not accept any liability for any losses arising under or in connection with this information. This limit on liability applies to all and any claims in contract, tort (including negligence), misrepresentation (excluding fraudulent misrepresentation), breach of statutory duty or otherwise. This limit on liability does not exclude or restrict liability where prohibited by the law, nor does it supersede the express terms of any related agreements.

Purpose and scope

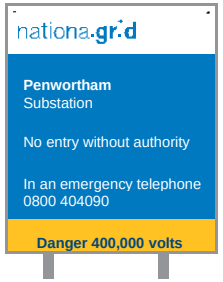
The purpose of this document is to give guidance and information to third parties who are proposing, scheduling or designing developments close to National Grid Electricity Transmission assets.

The scope of the report covers information on basic safety and the location of our assets – and also highlights key issues around particular types of development and risk areas.

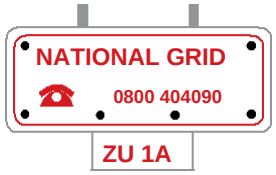
In the case of electrical assets, National Grid does not authorise or agree safe systems of work with developers and contractors. However, we will advise on issues such as electrical safety clearances and the location of towers and cables. We also work with developers to minimise the impact of any National Grid assets that are nearby.

How to identify specific National Grid sites

Substations
The name of the Substation and emergency contact number will be on the site sign.



Overhead Lines
The reference number of the tower and the emergency contact number will be on this type of sign.



Contact National Grid

Plant protection

For routine enquiries regarding planned or scheduled works, contact the Asset Protection team online, by email or phone.

www.lsbud.co.uk

Email: assetprotection@nationalgrid.com

Phone: 0800 001 4282

Emergencies

In the event of occurrences such as a cable strike, coming into contact with an overhead line conductor or identifying any hazards or problems with National Grid's equipment, phone our emergency number 0800 404 090 (option 1).

If you have apparatus within 30m of a National Grid asset, please ensure that the emergency number is included in your site's emergency procedures.

Consider safety

Consider the hazards identified in this document when working near electrical equipment

Part 1

Electricity transmission infrastructure

National Grid owns and maintains the high-voltage electricity transmission network in England and Wales (Scotland has its own networks). It's responsible for balancing supply with demand on a minute-by-minute basis across the network.

Overhead lines

Overhead lines consist of two main parts – pylons (also called towers) and conductors (or wires). Pylons are typically steel lattice structures mounted on concrete foundations. A pylon's design can vary due to factors such as voltage, conductor type and the strength of structure required.

Conductors, which are the 'live' part of the overhead line, hang from pylons on insulators. Conductors come in several different designs depending on the amount of power that is transmitted on the circuit.

In addition to the two main components, some Overhead Line Routes carry a Fibre Optic cable between the towers with an final underground connection to the Substations.

In most cases, National Grid's overhead lines operate at 275kV or 400kV.

Underground cables

Underground cables are a growing feature of National Grid's network. They consist of a conducting core surrounded by layers of insulation and armour. Cables can be laid in the road, across open land or in tunnels. They operate at a range of voltages, up to 400kV.

Substations

Substations are found at points on the network where circuits come together or where a rise or fall in voltage is required. Transmission substations tend to be large facilities containing equipment such as power transformers, circuit breakers, reactors and capacitors. In addition Diesel generators and compressed air systems can be located there.

Part 2

Statutory requirements for working near high-voltage electricity

The legal framework that regulates electrical safety in the UK is *The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations (ESQCR) 2002*. This also details the minimum electrical safety clearances, which are used as a basis for the Energy Networks Association (ENA) TS 43-8. These standards have been agreed by CENELEC (European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation) and also form part of the *British Standard BS EN 50341-1:2012 Overhead Electrical Lines exceeding AC 1kV*. All electricity companies are bound by these rules, standards and technical specifications. They are required to uphold them by their operator's licence.

Electrical safety clearances

It is essential that a safe distance is kept between the exposed conductors and people and objects when working near National Grid's electrical assets. A person does not have to touch an exposed conductor to get a life-threatening electric shock. At the voltages National Grid operates at, it is possible for electricity to jump up to several metres from an exposed conductor and kill or cause serious injury to anyone who is nearby. For this reason, there are several legal requirements and safety standards that must be met.

Any breach of legal safety clearances will be enforced in the courts. This can and has resulted in the removal of an infringement, which is normally at the cost of the developer or whoever caused it to be there. Breaching safety clearances, even temporarily, risks a serious incident that could cause serious injury or death.

National Grid will, on request, advise planning authorities, developers or third parties on any safety clearances and associated issues. We can supply detailed drawings of all our overhead line assets marked up with relevant safe areas.

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Your Responsibilities - Overhead lines

Work which takes place near overhead power lines carries a significant risk of coming into proximity with the wires. If any person, object or material gets too close to the wires, electricity could ‘flashover’ and be conducted to earth, causing death or serious injury. You do not need to touch the wires for this to happen. The law requires that work is carried out in close proximity to live overhead power lines only when there is no alternative, and only when the risks are acceptable and can be properly controlled. Statutory clearances exist which must be maintained, as prescribed by the Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002.

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, you are responsible for preparing a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and safe systems of work, to ensure that risks are managed properly and the safety of your workforce and others is maintained. Your risk assessment must consider and manage all of the significant risks and put in place suitable precautions/controls in order to manage the work safely. You are also responsible for ensuring that the precautions identified are properly implemented and stay in place throughout the work.

Work near overhead power lines must always be conducted in accordance with GS6, ‘avoiding danger from overhead power lines’, and any legislation which is relevant to the work you are completing.

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What National Grid will provide

National Grid can supply profile drawings in PDF and CAD format showing tower locations and relevant clearances to assist you in the risk assessment process.

What National Grid will not provide

National Grid will not approve safe systems of work or approve design proposals

Part 3

What National Grid will do for you and your development

Provision of information

National Grid should be notified during the planning stage of any works or developments taking place near our electrical assets, ideally a minimum notification period of 8 weeks to allow National Grid to provide the following services:

Drawings

National Grid will provide relevant drawings of overhead lines or underground cables to make sure the presence and location of our services are known. Once a third party or developer has contacted us, we will supply the drawings for free.

Risk or impact identification

National Grid can help identify any hazards or risks that the presence of our assets might bring to any works or developments. This includes both the risk to safety from high-voltage electricity and longer-term issues, such as induced currents, noise and maintenance access that may affect the outcome of the development. National Grid will not authorise specific working procedures, but we can provide advice on best practice.

400kV

The maximum nominal voltage of the underground cables in National Grid's network

Risks or hazards to be aware of

This section includes a brief description of some of the hazards and issues that a third party or developer might face when working or developing close to our electrical infrastructure.

Land and access

National Grid has land rights in place with landowners and occupiers, which cover our existing overhead lines and underground cable network. These agreements, together with legislation set out under the *Electricity Act 1989*, allow us to access our assets to maintain, repair and renew them. The agreements also lay down restrictions and covenants to protect the integrity of our assets and meet safety regulations. Anyone proposing a development close to our assets should carefully examine these agreements.

Our agreements often affect land both inside and outside the immediate vicinity of an asset. Rights will include the provision of access, along with restrictions that ban the development of land through building, changing levels, planting and other operations. Anyone looking to develop close to our assets must consult with National Grid first.

For further information, contact Asset Protection:

Email: assetprotection@nationalgrid.com
Phone: 0800 001 4282

Electrical clearance from overhead lines

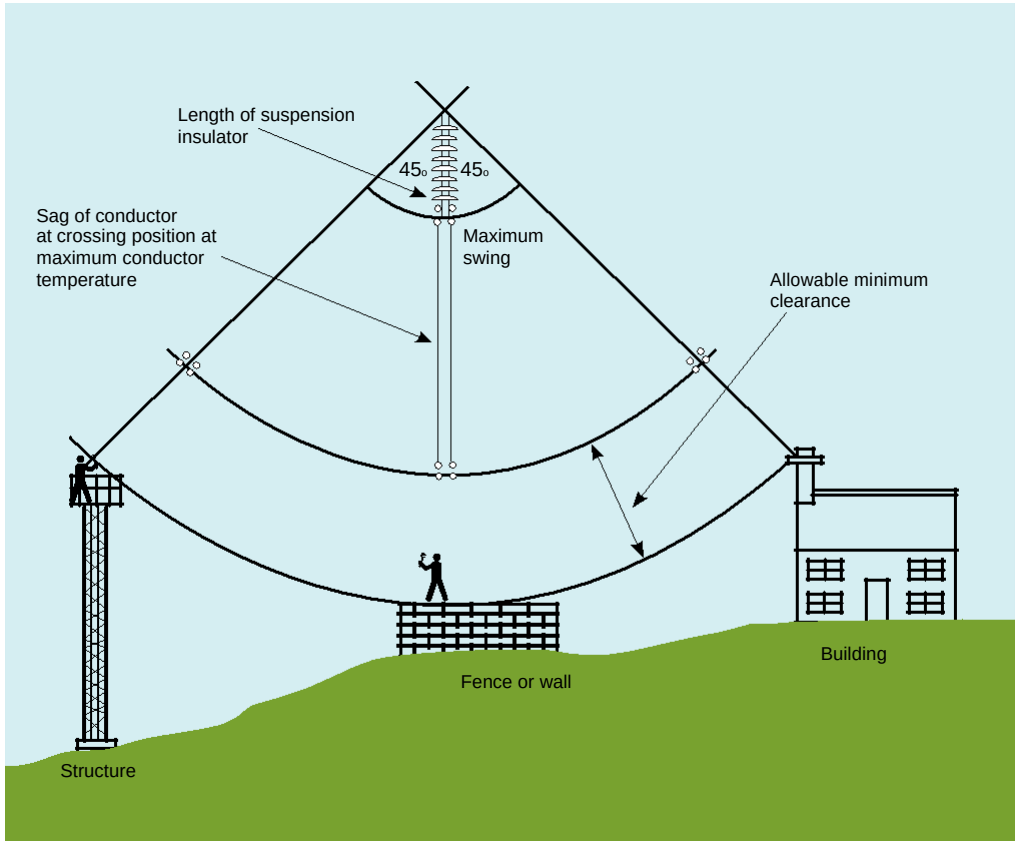
The clearance distances referred to in this section are specific to 400kV overhead lines. National Grid can advise on the distances required around different voltages i.e. 132kV and 275kV.

As we explained earlier, *Electrical Networks Association TS 43-8* details the legal clearances to our overhead lines. The minimum clearance between the conductors of an overhead line and the ground is 7.3m at maximum sag. The sag is the vertical distance between the wire's highest and lowest point. Certain conditions, such as power flow, wind speed and air temperature can cause conductors to move and allowances should be made for this.

The required clearance from the point where a person can stand to the conductors is 5.3m. To be clear, this means there should be at least 5.3m from where someone could stand on any structure (i.e. mobile and construction equipment) to the conductors. Available clearances will be assessed by National Grid on an individual basis.

National Grid expects third parties to implement a safe system of work whenever they are near Overhead Lines.

Diagram not to scale



There should be at least 5.3m between the conductors and any structure someone could stand on

We recommend that guidance such as *HSE Guidance Note GS6 (Avoiding Danger from Overhead Power Lines)* is followed, which provides advice on how to avoid danger from all overhead lines, at all voltages. If you are carrying out work near overhead lines you must contact National Grid, who will provide the relevant profile drawings.

7.3m

The required minimum clearance between the conductors of an overhead line, at maximum sag, and the ground

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The undergrounding of electricity cables at Ross-on-Wye

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Underground cables Underground cables operating at up to 400kV are a significant part of the National Grid Electricity Transmission network. When your works will involve any ground disturbance it is expected that a safe system of work is put in place and that you follow guidance such as *HSG 47 (Avoiding Danger from Underground Services)*.

You must contact National Grid to find out if there are any underground cables near your proposed works. If there are, we will provide cable profiles and location drawings and, if required, on-site supervision of the works. Cables can be laid under roads or across industrial or agricultural land. They can even be layed in canal towpaths and other areas that you would not expect.

Cables crossing any National Grid high-voltage (HV) cables directly buried in the ground are required to maintain a minimum seperation that will be determined by National Grid on a case-by-case basis. National Grid will need to do a rating study on the existing cable to work out if there are any adverse effects on either cable rating. We will only allow a cable to cross such an area once we know the results of the re-rating. As a result, the clearance distance may need to be increased or alternative methods of crossing found.

For other cables and services crossing the path of our HV cables, National Grid will need confirmation that published standards and clearances are met.

Impressed voltage

Any conducting materials installed near high-voltage equipment could be raised to an elevated voltage compared to the local earth, even when there is no direct contact with the high-voltage equipment. These impressed voltages are caused by inductive or capacitive coupling between the high-voltage equipment and nearby conducting materials and can occur at distances of several metres away from the equipment. Impressed voltages may damage your equipment and could potentially injure people and animals, depending on their severity. Third parties should take impressed voltages into account during the early stages and initial design of any development, ensuring that all structures and equipment are adequately earthed at all times.

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Earth potential rise

Under certain system fault conditions – and during lightning storms – a rise in the earth potential from the base of an overhead line tower or substation is possible. This is a rare phenomenon that occurs when large amounts of electricity enter the earth. This can pose a serious hazard to people or equipment that are close by.

We advise that developments and works are not carried out close to our tower bases, particularly during lightning storms.

Noise

Noise is a by-product of National Grid's operations and is carefully assessed during the planning and construction of any of our equipment. Developers should consider the noise emitted from National Grid's sites or overhead lines when planning any developments, particularly housing. Low-frequency hum from substations can, in some circumstances, be heard up to 1km or more from the site, so it is essential that developers find adequate solutions for this in their design. Further information about likely noise levels can be provided by National Grid.

Maintenance access

National Grid needs to have safe access for vehicles around its assets and work that restricts this will not be allowed.
In terms of our overhead lines, we wouldn't want to see any excavations made, or permanent structures built, that might affect the foundations of our towers. The size of the foundations around a tower base depends on the type of tower that is built there. If you wish to carry out works within 30m of the tower base, contact National Grid for more information. Our business has to maintain access routes to tower bases with land owners. For that reason, a route wide enough for an HGV must be permanently available. We may need to access our sites, towers, conductors and underground cables at short notice.

30m

If you wish to carry out work within this distance of the tower base, you must contact National Grid for more information

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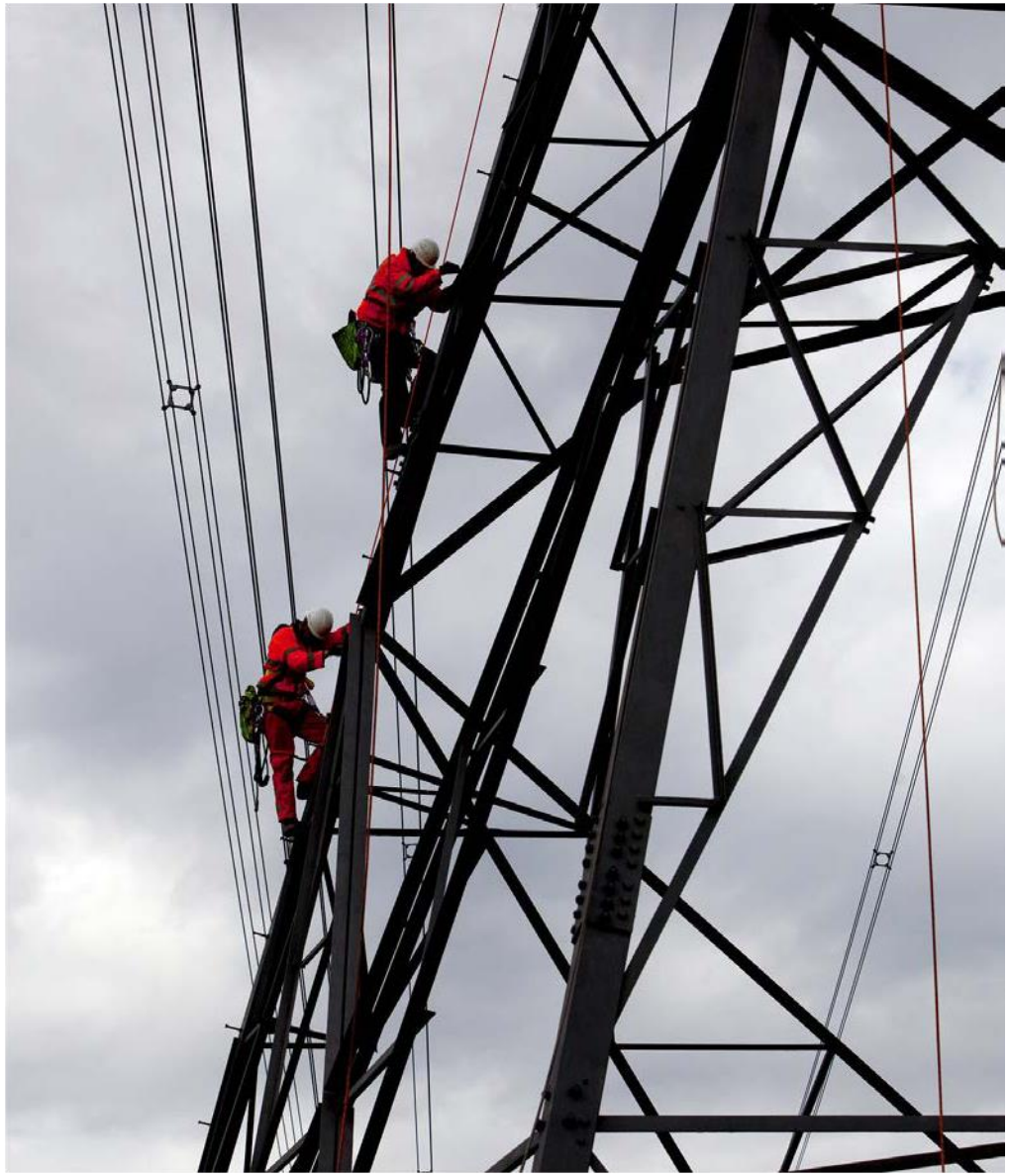

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Fires and firefighting

National Grid does not recommend that any type of flammable material is stored under overhead lines. Developers should be aware that in certain cases the local fire authority will not use water hoses to put out a fire if there are live, high-voltage conductors within 30m of the seat of the fire *(as outlined in ENA TS 43-8)*.

In these situations, National Grid would have to be notified and reconfigure the system – to allow staff to switch out the overhead line – before any firefighting could take place. This could take several hours.

We recommend that any site which has a specific hazard relating to fire or flammable material should include National Grid's emergency contact details (found at the beginning and end of this document) in its fire plan information, so any incidents can be reported.

Developers should also make sure their insurance cover takes into account the challenge of putting out fires near our overhead lines.

Excavations, piling or tunnelling

You must inform National Grid of any works that have the potential to disturb the foundations of our substations or overhead line towers. This will have to be assessed by National Grid engineers before any work begins.

BS ISO 4866:2010 states that a minimum distance of 200m should be maintained when carrying out quarry blasting near our assets. However, this can be reduced with specific site surveys and changes to the maximum instantaneous charge (the amount of explosive detonated at a particular time).

All activities should observe guidance layed out in *BS 5228-2:2009*.

Microshocks

High-voltage overhead power lines produce an electric field. Any person or object inside this field that isn't earthed picks up an electrical charge. When two conducting objects – one that is grounded and one that isn't – touch, the charge can equalise and cause a small shock, known as a microshock. While they are not harmful, they can be disturbing for the person or animal that suffers the shock.

For these reasons, metal-framed and metal-clad buildings which are close to existing overhead lines should be earthed to minimise the risk of microshocks. Anything that isn't earthed, is conductive and sits close to the lines is likely to pick up a charge. Items such as deer fences, metal palisade fencing, chain-link fences and metal gates underneath overhead lines all need to be earthed.

For further information on microshocks please visit **www.emfs.info.**

200m

The minimum distance that should be maintained from National Grid assets when quarry blasting

Specific development guidance

Wind farms

National Grid's policy towards wind farm development is closely connected to the *Electricity Networks Association Engineering Recommendation L44 Separation between Wind Turbines and Overhead Lines, Principles of Good Practice.* The advice is based on national guidelines and global research. It may be adjusted to suit specific local applications.

There are two main criteria in the document:

(i) The turbine shall be far enough away to avoid the possibility of toppling onto the overhead line

(ii) The turbine shall be far enough away to avoid damage to the overhead line from downward wake effects, also known as turbulence

The toppling distance is the minimum horizontal distance between the worst-case pivot point of the wind turbine and the conductors hanging in still air. It is the greater of:

- the tip height of the turbine plus 10%
- or, the tip height of the turbine plus the electrical safety distance that applies to the voltage of the overhead line.

To minimise the downward wake effect on an overhead line, the wind turbine should be three times the rotor distance away from the centre of the overhead line.

Wake effects can prematurely age conductors and fittings, significantly reducing the life of the asset. For that reason, careful consideration should be taken if a wind turbine needs to be sited within the above limits. Agreement from National Grid will be required.

Commercial and housing developments

National Grid has developed a document called *Design guidelines for development near pylons and HVO power lines*, which gives advice to anyone involved in planning or designing large-scale developments that are crossed by, or close to, overhead lines.

The document focuses on existing 275kV and 400kV overhead lines on steel lattice towers, but can equally apply to 132kV and below. The document explains how to design large-scale developments close to high-voltage lines, while respecting clearances and the development's visual and environmental impact.

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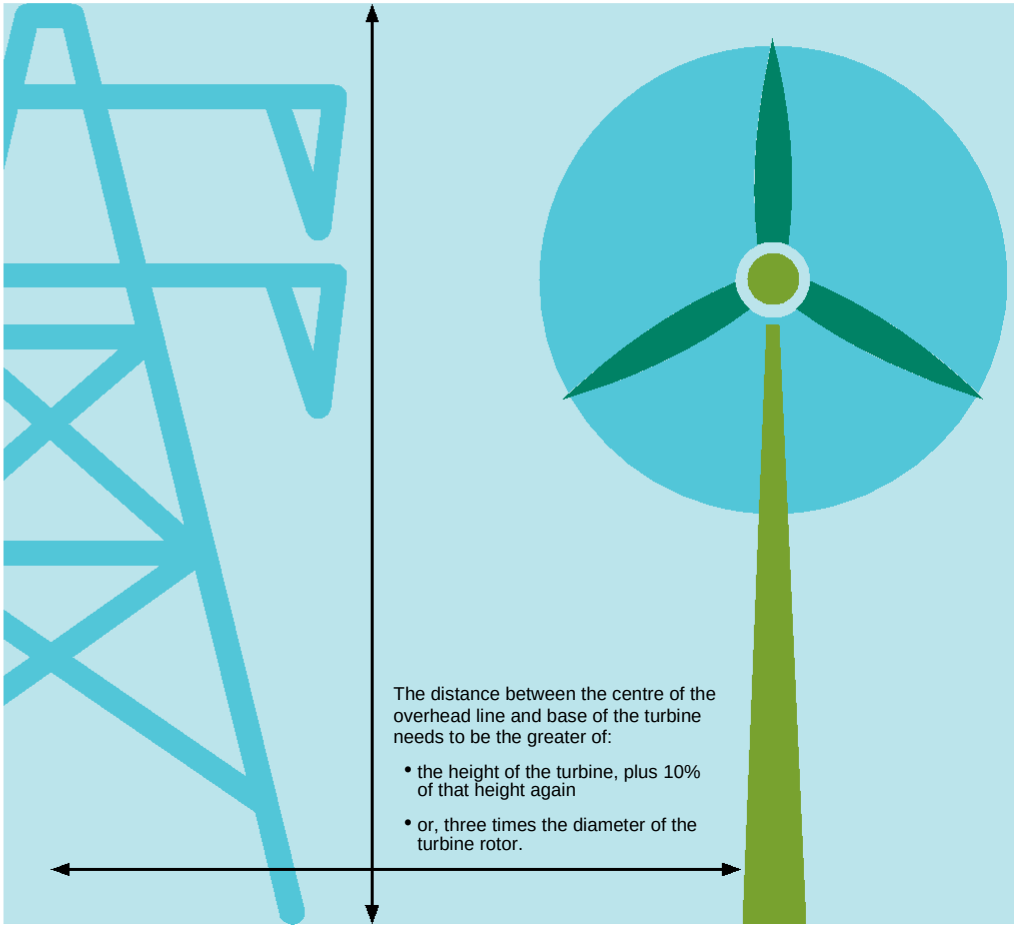
Diagram not to scale



Turbines should be far enough away to avoid the possibility of toppling onto the overhead line

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The advice is intended for developers, designers, landowners, local authorities and communities, but is not limited to those organisations.

Overall, developers should be aware of all the hazards and issues relating to the electrical equipment that we have discussed when designing new housing.

As we explored earlier, National Grid's assets have the potential to create noise. This can be low frequency and tonal, which makes it quite noticeable. It is the responsibility of developers to take this into account during the design stage and find an appropriate solution.

Solar farms

While there is limited research and recommendations available, there are several key factors to consider when designing Solar Farms in the vicinity of Overhead Power Lines.

Developers may be looking to build on arable land close to National Grid's assets. In keeping with the safety clearance limits that we outlined earlier for solar panels directly underneath overhead line conductors, the highest point on the solar panels must be no more than 5.3m from the lowest conductors.

This means that the maximum height of any structure will need to be determined to make sure safety clearance limits aren't breached. This could be as low as 2m. National Grid will supply profile drawings to aid the planning of solar farms and determine the maximum height of panels and equipment.

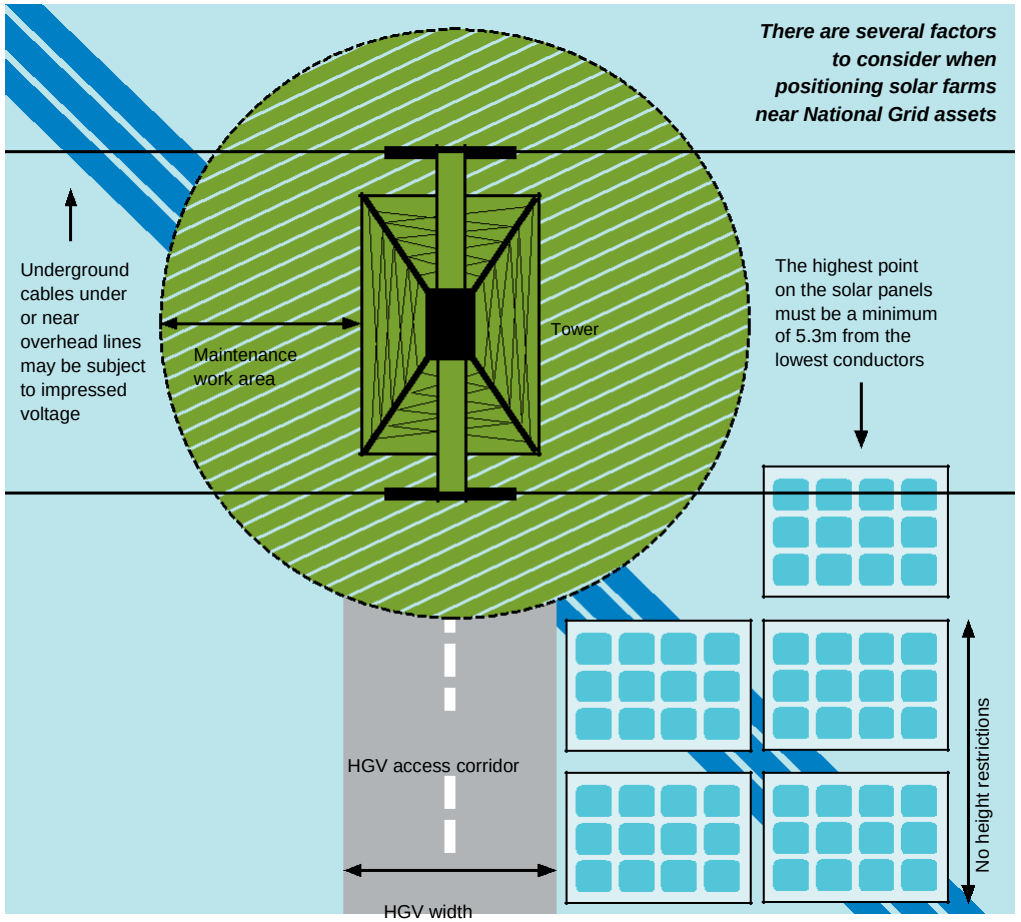
Solar panels that are directly underneath power lines risk being damaged on the rare occasion that a conductor or fitting falls to the ground. A more likely risk is ice falling from conductors or towers in winter and damaging solar panels.

There is also a risk of damage during adverse weather conditions, such as lightning storms, and system faults. As all our towers are earthed, a weather event such as lightning can cause a rise in the earth potential around the base of a tower. Solar panel support structures and supply cables should be adequately earthed and bonded together to minimise the effects of this temporary rise in earth potential.

Any metallic fencing that is located under an overhead line will pick up an electrical charge. For this reason, it will need to be adequately earthed to minimise microshocks to the public.

For normal, routine maintenance and in an emergency National Grid requires unrestricted access to its assets. So if a tower is enclosed in a solar farm compound, we will need full access for our vehicles, including access through any compound gates. During maintenance – and especially re-conductoring – National Grid would need enough space near our towers for winches and cable drums. If enough space is not available, we would require solar panels to be temporarily removed.

Diagram not to scale



Asset protection agreements

In some cases, where there is a risk that development will impact on National Grid's assets, we will insist on an asset protection agreement being put in place. The cost of this will be the responsibility of the developer or third party.

Contact details

Emergency situations

If you spot a potential hazard on or near an overhead electricity line, do not approach it, even at ground level. Keep as far away as possible and follow the six steps below:

- Warn anyone close by to evacuate the area
- Call our 24-hour electricity emergency number: 0800 404 090 (Option 1)[1]
- Give your name and contact phone number
- Explain the nature of the issue or hazard
- Give as much information as possible so we can identify the location – i.e. the name of the town or village, numbers of nearby roads, postcode and (ONLY if it can be observed without putting you or others in danger) the tower number of an adjacent pylon
- Await further contact from a National Grid engineer

[1] It is critically important that you don't use this phone number for any other purpose. If you need to contact National Grid for another reason please use our Contact Centre at www2.nationalgrid.com/contact-us to find the appropriate information or call 0800 0014282.

Routine enquiries

Email:
assetprotection@nationalgrid.com

Call Asset Protection on:
0800 0014282

Opening hours:
Monday to Friday 08:00-16:00

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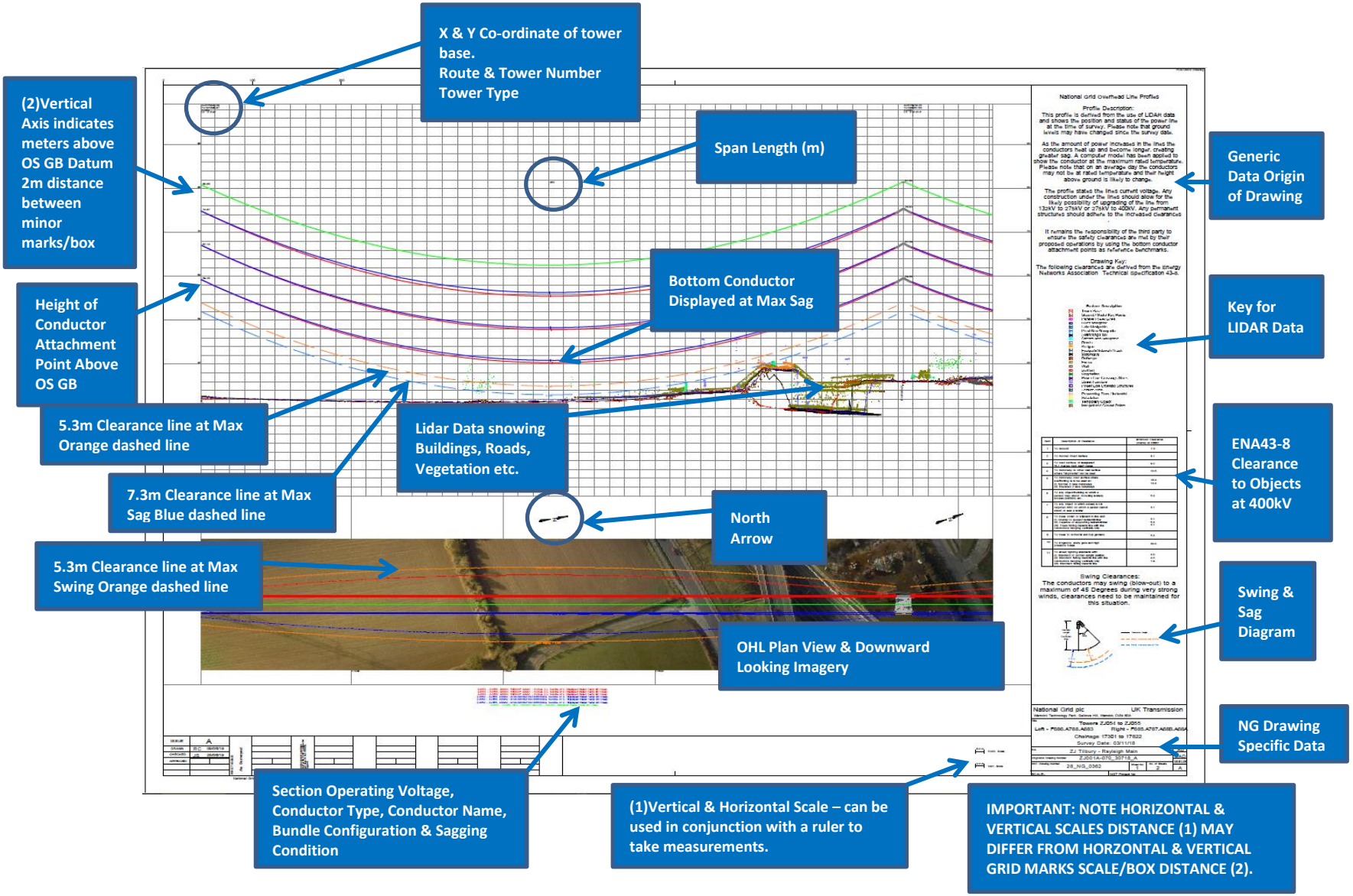
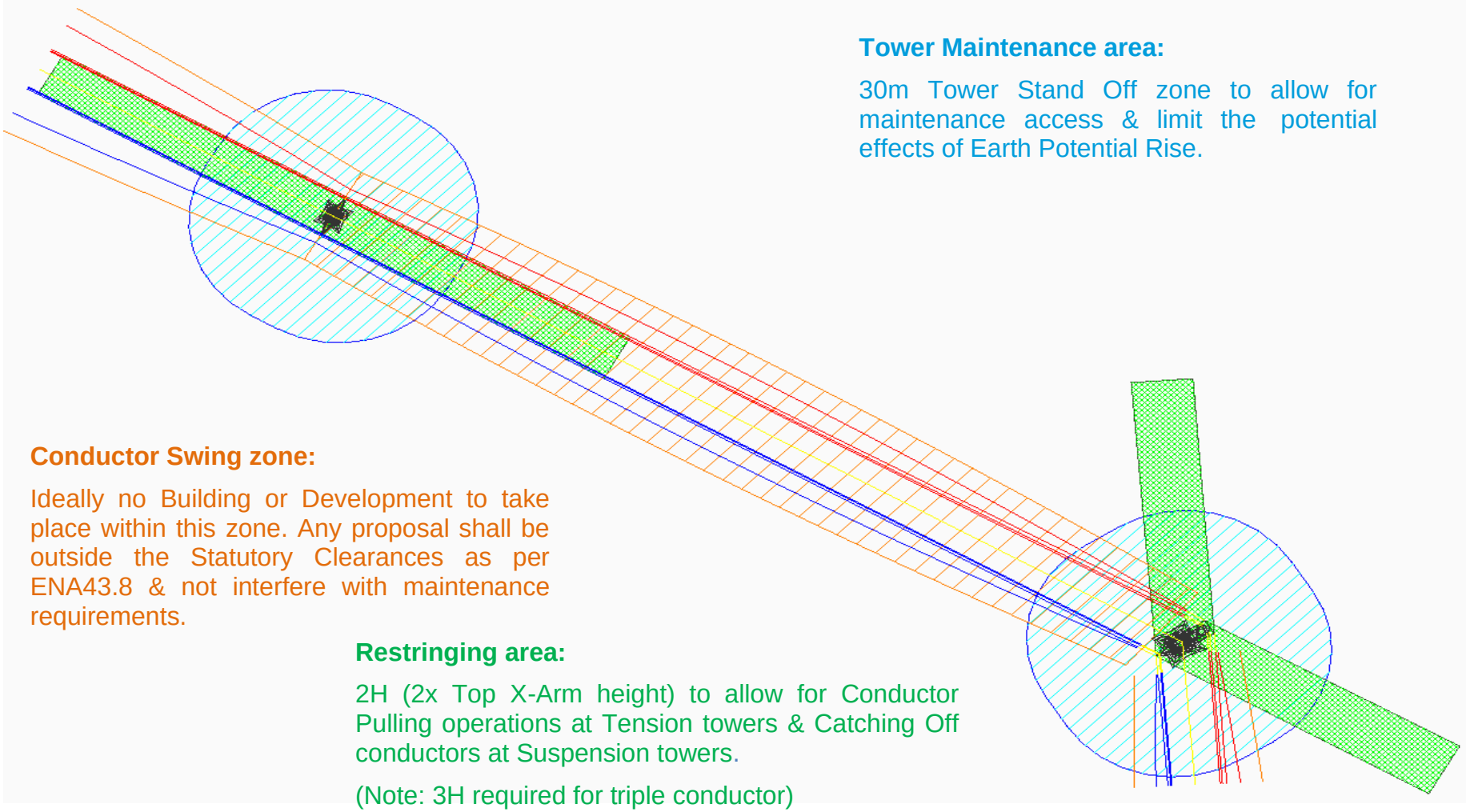
14 APPENDIX A

OHL Profile Drawing Guide



15 APPENDIX B

OHL Tower Stand Off & Reconductoring Area



Tower Maintenance area:

30m Tower Stand Off zone to allow for maintenance access & limit the potential effects of Earth Potential Rise.

Conductor Swing zone:

Ideally no Building or Development to take place within this zone. Any proposal shall be outside the Statutory Clearances as per ENA43.8 & not interfere with maintenance requirements.

Restringing area:

2H (2x Top X-Arm height) to allow for Conductor Pulling operations at Tension towers & Catching Off conductors at Suspension towers.

(Note: 3H required for triple conductor)

From: NATS Safeguarding <NATSSafeguarding@nats.co.uk>
Sent: 29 January 2026 08:53
To: Sedgeby Solar Farm <sedgebysolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: EN0110026 - Sedgeby Solar Farm - EIA Scoping and Consultation and Regulation 11 Notification [SG40870]

You don't often get email from natssafeguarding@nats.co.uk. Learn why this is important

Our Ref: SG40870

Dear Sir/Madam

The proposed development has been examined from a technical safeguarding aspect and does not conflict with our safeguarding criteria. Accordingly, NATS (En Route) Public Limited Company ("NERL") has no safeguarding objection to the proposal.

However, please be aware that this response applies specifically to the above consultation and only reflects the position of NATS (that is responsible for the management of en route air traffic) based on the information supplied at the time of this application. This letter does not provide any indication of the position of any other party, whether they be an airport, airspace user or otherwise. It remains your responsibility to ensure that all the appropriate consultees are properly consulted.

If any changes are proposed to the information supplied to NATS in regard to this application which become the basis of a revised, amended or further application for approval, then as a statutory consultee NERL requires that it be further consulted on any such changes prior to any planning permission or any consent being granted.

Yours faithfully

NATS Safeguarding

E: natssafeguarding@nats.co.uk

4000 Parkway, Whiteley,
Fareham, Hants PO15 7FL
www.nats.co.uk

NATS Internal

Date: 18 February 2026
Our ref: 539151
Your ref: EN0110026

Consultations
Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 900

The Planning Inspectorate
Environmental Services
Operations Group 3
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN
sedgebysolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir/ Madam

Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Consultation under Regulation 10 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) – Regulation 11

Proposal: Sedgeby Solar Farm
Location: Near Little Sessay, North Yorkshire

Thank you for seeking our advice on the scope of the Environmental Statement (ES) in the consultation dated 21 January 2026, received on the same date.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

A robust assessment of environmental impacts and opportunities, based on relevant and up to date environmental information, should be undertaken prior to an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO). Annex A to this letter provides Natural England's advice on the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed development.

Detailed advice on scoping the Environmental Statement is available in the attached Annex.

For any further advice on this consultation please contact consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Ellie Feary
Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Area Team
Natural England

Annex A – Natural England's Advice on EIA Scoping

1. General principles

1.1. Regulation 11 of the Infrastructure Planning Regulations 2017 - (The EIA Regulations) sets out the information that should be included in an ES to assess impacts on the natural environment. This includes:

- A description of the development – including physical characteristics and the full land use requirements of the site during construction and operational phases
- Appropriately scaled and referenced plans which clearly show the information and features associated with the development
- An assessment of alternatives and clear reasoning as to why the preferred option has been chosen
- A description of the aspects and matters requested to be scoped out of further assessment with adequate justification provided[1].
- Expected residues and emissions (water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation etc.) resulting from the operation of the proposed development
- A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development including biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land, including land take, soil, water, air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), cultural heritage and landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors
- A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment – this should cover direct effects but also any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium, and long term, permanent and temporary, positive, and negative effects. Effects should relate to the existence of the development, the use of natural resources (in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity) and the emissions from pollutants. This should also include a description of the forecasting methods to predict the likely effects on the environment
- A description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment
- An outline of the structure of the proposed ES.

2. Cumulative and in-combination effects

2.1. It will be important for any assessment to consider the potential cumulative effects of this proposal, including all supporting infrastructure, with other similar proposals and a thorough assessment of the 'in combination' effects of the proposed development with any existing developments and current applications. A full consideration of the implications of the whole scheme should be included in the ES. All supporting infrastructure should be included within the assessment.

2.2. The ES should include an impact assessment to identify, describe and evaluate the effects that are likely to result from the project in combination with other projects and activities that are being, have been or will be carried out. The following types of projects should be included in such an assessment, (subject to available information):

a. existing completed projects;

[1] National Infrastructure Planning Advice Note Seven, Environmental Impact Assessment, Process, Preliminary Environmental Information and Environmental Statements (see Insert 2 – information to be provided with a scoping request)

b. approved but uncompleted projects;
c. ongoing activities;
d. plans or projects for which an application has been made and which are under consideration by the consenting authorities; and
e. plans and projects which are reasonably foreseeable, i.e. projects for which an application has not yet been submitted, but which are likely to progress before completion of the development and for which sufficient information is available to assess the likelihood of cumulative and in-combination effects.

2.3. Table 1 includes a non-comprehensive list of other projects that are proposed in close proximity to this proposal. The ES should consider potential impacts from the Project both alone and in-combination with all other relevant plans or projects.

Table 1: Plans or projects that Natural England is aware of that might need to be considered in the ES
Project/ Plan
ZB25/00821/FUL - Construction and operation of up to a 30MW Solar PV farm
ZB23/02461/FUL – Land South of Pilmoor Grange
21/01362/FUL - OS Field 6800 Fence Dike Lane Scruton North Yorkshire
17/00409/FUL | Installation of a 12kW Ground Mounted Photovoltaic Array
15/01268/FUL – Boscar Grange Solar Farm
14/02236/FUL - Cold Harbour Farm Blind Piece Lane Dalton North Yorkshire YO7 3JG

3. Environmental data

3.1. Natural England is required to make available information it holds where requested to do so. National datasets held by Natural England are available at http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/data/default.aspx.

3.2. Detailed information on the natural environment is available at www.magic.gov.uk. This includes Marine Conservation Zone GIS shapefiles.

3.3. Natural England's SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a GIS dataset which can be used to help identify the potential for the development to impact on a SSSI. The dataset and user guidance can be accessed from the Natural England Open Data Geoportal.

3.4. Natural England does not hold local information on local sites, local landscape character, priority habitats and species or protected species. Local environmental data should be obtained from the appropriate local bodies. This may include the local environmental records centre, the local Wildlife Trust, local geo-conservation group or other recording society.

4. Biodiversity and Geodiversity

4.1. The assessment will need to include potential impacts of the proposal upon sites and features of nature conservation interest as well as opportunities for nature recovery through biodiversity net gain (BNG). There might also be strategic approaches to take into account.

4.2. Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) is the process of identifying, quantifying, and evaluating the potential impacts of defined actions on ecosystems or their components. EcIA may be carried out as part of the EIA process or to support other forms of environmental assessment or appraisal. Guidelines and an EcIA checklist have been

developed by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

4.3. For additional information relating to Solar Parks, it may be helpful to refer to the Technical Information Note at the link below, which provides a summary of advice about their siting, their potential impacts and mitigation requirements for the safeguarding of the natural environment. Solar parks: maximising environmental benefits (TIN101).

4.4. For additional information regarding the impact of solar farms on birds, bats and general ecology, please refer to the report below, which provides an evidence review of relevant scientific and grey literature. Evidence review of the impact of solar farms on birds, bats and general ecology 2016 - NEER012 (naturalengland.org.uk).

5. Designated nature conservation sites

5.1. This NSIP is unlikely to adversely impact any European or internationally designated nature conservation sites.

6. Nationally designated sites - Sites of Special Scientific Interest

6.1. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Further information on the SSSI and its special interest features can be found at www.magic.gov.uk.

6.2. The development site is within or may impact on the following Site of Special Scientific Interest:

- Pilmoor SSSI.

6.3. The Environmental Statement should include a full assessment of the direct and indirect effects of the development on the features of special interest within Pilmoor SSSI. Appropriate mitigation measures to avoid, minimise or reduce and significant adverse effects should be identified where required.

Table 2: Potential risks to nationally designated sites

Site name with link to citation	**Potential impact pathways where further information/ assessment is required**
Pilmoor SSSI SSSI detail	Natural England welcomes that the EIA scoping report concludes that effects on nationally designated site features has been scoped into the assessment for the Environmental Statement (ES). Direct loss or damage to designated site habitat Natural England notes that an alternative cable route is proposed along an existing forestry track situated within Pilmoor SSSI. Natural England advises that the potential for direct loss of or damage to SSSI features resulting from these works should be assessed in the Environmental Statement. Water quality – Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) The proposed development includes a BESS. We advise that there is potential hydrological connectivity between the BESS infrastructure

Table 2: Potential risks to nationally designated sites	
Site name with link to citation	**Potential impact pathways where further information/ assessment is required**
	and Pilmoor SSSI. Where BESS are hydrologically connected to designated sites, it must be demonstrated that there will be no net increase in pollutants from contaminated water produced by the deployment of emergency countermeasures. This may include production of a firewater management plan to detail control measures or mitigation. Water supply – Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Water supply impacts associated with any proposed abstractions during construction should be assessed, including horizontal directional drilling (if required). Where water abstraction is required within designated site catchments, further assessment should be undertaken. Dust Natural England notes that air quality impacts from dust generation have been scoped out of the Environmental Statement (ES) assessment. We advise that dust produced during construction could cause smothering effects where the designated site is within 200m. Potential impacts should therefore be considered in the Environmental Statement. Introduction of Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) Natural England notes that INNS are identified as a pressure at this designated site. We welcome the proposal to assess the potential impacts of introduction or spread of INNS as part of the ES.

7. Protected species

7.1. The ES should assess the impact of all phases of the proposal on protected species (including, for example, great crested newts, reptiles, birds, water voles, badgers and bats). Natural England does not hold comprehensive information regarding the locations of species protected by law. Records of protected species should be obtained from appropriate local biological record centres, nature conservation organisations and local groups. Consideration should be given to the wider context of the site, for example in terms of habitat linkages and protected species populations in the wider area.

7.2. The area likely to be affected by the development should be thoroughly surveyed by competent ecologists at appropriate times of year for relevant species and the survey results, impact assessments and appropriate accompanying mitigation strategies included as part of the ES. Surveys should always be carried out in optimal survey time periods and to current guidance by suitably qualified and, where necessary, licensed, consultants.

7.3. Natural England has adopted standing advice for protected species, which includes guidance on survey and mitigation measures. A separate protected species licence from Natural England or Defra may also be required. Applicants can make use of

Natural England's charged Pre Submission Screening Service for a review of a draft wildlife licence application.

8. District Level Licensing for great crested newts

8.1. Based on section 4.7.35 of the Environmental Scoping Report (January 2026) Natural England is aware that Sedgeby Solar Limited are considering applying to use the District Level Licensing scheme for great crested newts (GCN).

8.2. Where strategic approaches such as DLL for GCN are used, a Letter of No Impediment (LONI) will not be required. Instead, the developer will need to provide evidence to the Examining Authority (ExA) on how and where this approach has been used in relation to the proposal, which must include a counter-signed Impact Assessment and Conservation Payment Certificate (IACPC) from Natural England, or a similar approval from an alternative DLL provider.

8.3. The DLL approach is underpinned by a strategic area assessment which includes the identification of risk zones, strategic opportunity area maps and a mechanism to ensure adequate compensation is provided regardless of the level of impact. In addition, Natural England (or an alternative DLL provider) will undertake an impact assessment, the outcome of which will be documented in the IACPC (or equivalent).

8.4. If no GCN surveys have been undertaken, Natural England's risk zone modelling may be relied upon. During the impact assessment, Natural England will inform the applicant whether their scheme is within one of the amber risk zones and therefore whether the Proposed Development is likely to have a significant effect on GCN.

8.5. The IACPC will also provide additional detail including information on the Proposed Development's impact on GCN and the appropriate compensation required.

8.6. By demonstrating that the DLL scheme for GCN will be used, consideration of GCN in the ES can be restricted to cross-referring to the Natural England (or alternative provider) IACPC as a justification as to why significant effects on GCN populations as a result of the Proposed Development would be avoided.

9. Priority Habitats and Species

9.1. Priority Habitats and Species are of particular importance for nature conservation and included in the England Biodiversity List published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Most priority habitats will be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites. Lists of priority habitats and species can be found here. Natural England does not routinely hold species data. Such data should be collected when impacts on priority habitats or species are considered likely.

9.2. Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land. Sites can be checked against the (draft) national Open Mosaic Habitat (OMH) inventory published by Natural England and freely available to download. Further information is also available here.

9.3. An appropriate level habitat survey should be carried out on the site, to identify any important habitats present. In addition, ornithological, botanical, and invertebrate surveys should be carried out at appropriate times in the year, to establish whether any scarce or priority species are present.

9.4. The ES should include details of:

- Any historical data for the site affected by the proposal (e.g. from previous surveys)
- Additional surveys carried out as part of this proposal
- The habitats and species present
- The status of these habitats and species (e.g. whether priority species or habitat)
- The direct and indirect effects of the development upon those habitats and species
- Full details of any mitigation or compensation measures
- Opportunities for biodiversity net gain or other environmental enhancement.

10. Ancient Woodland, ancient and veteran trees

10.1. The ES should assess the impacts of the proposal on the ancient woodland and any ancient and veteran trees, and the scope to avoid and mitigate for adverse impacts. It should also consider opportunities for enhancement.

10.2. Ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat of great importance for its wildlife, its history, and the contribution it makes to our diverse landscapes. Paragraph 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the highest level of protection for irreplaceable habitats and development should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

10.3. Natural England maintains the Ancient Woodland Inventory which can help identify ancient woodland. The wood pasture and parkland inventory sets out information on wood pasture and parkland.

10.4. The ancient tree inventory provides information on the location of ancient and veteran trees.

10.5. We note that ancient woodland has been identified directly adjacent to the development site in Sessay Wood. Natural England welcome the proposal to include a 15m buffer to Ancient Woodland.

10.6. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have prepared standing advice on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees. In particular, Natural England recommends that the assessment guide is used to focus the assessment of potential impacts within the ES.

11. Biodiversity Net Gain

11.1. Natural England welcome the commitment to complete additional surveys to inform the design and implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (EIA Scoping Report, page 97).

11.2. Although BNG is not yet a mandatory requirement for NSIPs, we strongly recommend that BNG provision is secured through this development. This will reflect the important role NSIPs must play in delivering the government's environmental targets.

Early engagement with Natural England on BNG proposals will help maximise outcomes and reduce risks.

The biodiversity baseline should include all land contained within the site's red line boundary and proposals can be iteratively refined over time and throughout detailed

design.

We encourage developers to:

- develop their BNG proposals in adherence with well-established BNG principles
- use the latest version of the Defra biodiversity metric, adhering to the metric guidance

Biodiversity gains should ideally be secured for a minimum of 30 years and be subject to adaptive management and monitoring. BNG plans should be secured by a suitably worded requirement in the DCO.

11.3. Natural England considers that major infrastructure developments should set the highest environmental standard. They should lead by example in showing how investment in sustainable infrastructure can better serve communities, including through the delivery of environmental goals, such as flood resilience, expanding natural habitats and contributing toward Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions. Nature-based solutions built into infrastructure schemes provide one means for setting in place the government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

11.4. Natural England recognises the high opportunity for the development to deliver BNG on-site and it is recommended that the following guidance is applied in order to achieve this:

- Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development
- BS 8683: 2021 Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain Specification

11.5. In addition, the applicant should be aware of forthcoming guidance and legislation in relation to the Environment Act 2021, which may be released in the interim prior to submission of the DCO application.

11.6. In order to maximise nature recovery and target habitat enhancement where it will have the greatest local benefit it is recommended that locally identified opportunities should be acknowledged and incorporated into the design of BNG (both on and off-site). This should include any locally mapped ecological networks and priority habitats. In addition, Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a new mandatory system of spatial strategies for nature established by the Environment Act 2021 which will contribute to the national Nature Recovery Network (NRN). Work is currently underway to develop these strategies, which will identify strategic priorities for nature protection, recovery, and enhancement. It is noted that the application site is located within a 'connectivity corridor' and an area of 'mapped measures', as identified in the North Yorkshire LNRS. It is recommended that engagement with relevant local planning authorities, responsible authorities and statutory consultees (including Natural England) is undertaken to align habitat enhancement with the North Yorkshire LNRS.

12. Landscape

12.1. Landscape and visual impacts

Public bodies have a duty to seek to further the statutory purposes of designation in carrying out their functions (under section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023). This duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

The environmental assessment should refer to the relevant National Character Areas. Character area profiles set out descriptions of each landscape area and statements of environmental opportunity.

The EIA should include a full assessment of the potential impacts of the development on local landscape character using landscape assessment methodologies. We encourage the use of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), based on the good practice guidelines produced jointly by the Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) in 2013. LCA provides a sound basis for guiding, informing, and understanding the ability of any location to accommodate change and to make positive proposals for conserving, enhancing or regenerating character.

A landscape and visual impact assessment should also be carried out for the proposed development and surrounding area. Natural England recommends use of the methodology set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2013 (3rd edition) produced by LI and IEMA. For National Parks and AONBs, we advise that the assessment also includes effects on the 'special qualities' of the designated landscape, as set out in the statutory management plan for the area. These identify the particular landscape and related characteristics which underpin the natural beauty of the area and its designation status.

The assessment should also include the cumulative effect of the development with other relevant existing or proposed developments in the area. This should include an assessment of the impacts of other proposals currently at scoping stage.

To ensure high quality development that responds to and enhances local landscape character and distinctiveness, the siting and design of the proposed development should reflect local characteristics and, wherever possible, use local materials. Account should be taken of local design policies, design codes and guides as well as guidance in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. The ES should set out the measures to be taken to ensure the development will deliver high standards of design and green infrastructure. It should also set out detail of layout alternatives, where appropriate, with a justification of the selected option in terms of landscape impact and benefit.

The National Infrastructure Commission has also produced Design Principles for National Infrastructure - NIC endorsed by Government in the National Infrastructure Strategy.

12.1.1. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) should also be carried out for the proposed development and surrounding area. Natural England recommends use of the methodology set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2013 (3rd edition) produced by LI and IEMA.

The assessment should also include the cumulative effect of the development with other relevant existing or proposed developments in the area. This should include an assessment of the impacts of other proposals currently at scoping stage.

For Protected Landscapes, we advise that the assessment also includes a separate section which assesses the effects on the 'special qualities' of the Protected Landscape, as set out in the statutory Management Plan for the area. These identify

the particular landscape and related key characteristics which underpin the natural beauty of the area and its designation status.

12.2. National Parks and National Landscapes

The development site may impact on the Howardian Hills National Landscape and North York Moors National Park. Natural England welcomes the inclusion of these National Landscapes into the study area for assessment.

We note that only one viewpoint from each National Landscape has been proposed in the Landscape and Visual Impact chapter of the EIA Scoping Report. We advise that additional viewpoints from within each National Landscape should be considered due to the high sensitivity of these Landscapes, the likely elevated views and the potential for cumulative effects.

Natural England's advice will seek to ensure the highest level of protection is given to the conservation of landscape and scenic beauty of Protected Landscapes and their settings.

Our advice on Protected Landscapes is informed by:

- The primary statutory purpose of Protected Landscapes which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage;
- The highest planning protection afforded to Protected Landscapes in relation to landscape and scenic beauty; and
- The special qualities as set out in the Protected Landscapes statutory Management Plans.

The NPPF (December 2024) in paragraph 189 and the current overarching Energy National Policy Statement EN-1 (paragraphs 5.9.9 and 5.9.10) are clear that Protected Landscapes have the highest level of planning protection as England's finest landscapes. For development in the setting of a Protected Landscape the NPPF advises that it should be '*sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas'*. The current overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy EN-1 advises avoiding compromise of the [statutory] purposes of designation and sensitive design within relevant constraints.

The setting of a Protected Landscape is an area of landscape beyond the boundary where its landscape character complements or contrasts to that of the designated landscape. In either circumstance, intervisibility between the two areas supports or enhances the Protected Landscape, and this close relationship has a bearing on the natural beauty and special qualities of the Protected Landscape.

From December 2023 Section 245 (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA, 2023) places a duty on relevant authorities to seek to further the statutory purposes of a Protected Landscape. The duty applies to local planning authorities and other decision makers in preparing development plans, making planning decisions on development and infrastructure proposals, as well as to other public bodies (including Natural England) and statutory undertakers.

The duty to 'seek to further' is an active duty, not a passive one. Any relevant authority should take appropriate, reasonable, and proportionate steps to explore how the statutory purposes of the Protected Landscape can be furthered. The duty also applies to potential development in the setting of a Protected Landscape, where proposals outside the designated area impact on its natural beauty.

An assessment of the effect of the proposed development on 'special qualities' of the relevant Protected Landscapes will be critical as part of the process of 'seeking to further the purposes' of the designated areas.

In addition, Natural England's advice is that the proposed measures should align with and help to deliver the aims and objectives of the relevant Protected Landscape's Management Plan. The relevant Protected Landscape Authority, Conservation Board or Partnership can also provide advice.

13. Connecting people with nature

13.1. The ES should consider potential impacts on access land, common land, public rights of way and, where appropriate, the England Coast Path and coastal access routes and coastal margin in the vicinity of the development, in line with NPPF paragraph 104 and there will be reference in the relevant National Policy Statement. It should assess the scope to mitigate for any adverse impacts. Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIP) can be used to identify public rights of way within or adjacent to the proposed site that should be maintained or enhanced.

13.2. Measures to help people to better access the countryside for quiet enjoyment and opportunities to connect with nature should be considered. Such measures could include reinstating existing footpaths or the creation of new footpaths, cycleways, and bridleways. Links to other green networks and, where appropriate, urban fringe areas should also be explored to help promote the creation of wider green infrastructure. Access to nature within the development site should also be considered, including the role that natural links have in connecting habitats and providing potential pathways for movements of species.

13.3. Relevant aspects of local authority green infrastructure strategies should be incorporated where appropriate.

14. Soils and agricultural land quality

14.1. Soils are a valuable, finite natural resource and should also be considered for the ecosystem services they provide, including for food production, water storage and flood mitigation, as a carbon store, reservoir of biodiversity and buffer against pollution. It is therefore important that the soil resources are protected and sustainably managed. Impacts from the development on soils and best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land should be considered. Further guidance is set out in the Natural England Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land.

14.2. The following issues should be considered and, where appropriate, included as part of the ES:

- The degree to which soils would be disturbed or damaged as part of the development.
- The extent to which agricultural land would be disturbed or lost as part of this development, including whether any BMV agricultural land would be impacted.

14.3. This may require a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey if one is not already available. For information on the availability of existing ALC information see www.magic.gov.uk.

- Where an ALC and soil survey of the land is required, this should normally be at a detailed level, e.g. one auger boring per hectare, (or more detailed for a small site) supported by pits dug in each main soil type to confirm the physical characteristics of the full depth of the soil resource, i.e. 1.2 metres. The survey data can inform suitable soil handling methods and appropriate reuse of the soil resource where required (e.g. agricultural reinstatement, habitat creation, landscaping, allotments and public open space).
- The ES should set out details of how any adverse impacts on BMV agricultural land can be minimised through site design/masterplan.
- The ES should set out details of how any adverse impacts on soils can be avoided or minimised and demonstrate how soils will be sustainably used and managed, including consideration in site design and master planning, and areas for green infrastructure or biodiversity net gain. The aim will be to minimise soil handling and maximise the sustainable use and management of the available soil to achieve successful after-uses and minimise off-site impacts.

14.4. Further information is available in the Defra Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soil on Development Sites and The British Society of Soil Science Guidance Note Benefitting from Soil Management in Development and Construction.

15. Air quality

15.1. Natural England advises that the potential for air quality impacts arising from this NSIP needs to be assessed. Natural England refers you to our standard advice on air quality impacts which can be found in Annex A. This standard advice is Natural England's formal statutory advice. It provides decision makers with the information needed to fulfil their statutory duties when making decisions on proposals with potential air pollution impacts. An overall conclusion regarding impacts on statutory protected sites must take into account the standard advice for air pollution.

16. Climate change

16.1. As the government's adviser on the natural environment, climate change is central to Natural England's work. Climate change is a profound threat to nature and people. The natural environment is experiencing the impacts of climate change and needs to recover, adapt to change and build resilience. Sustainable development can and should contribute to net zero through supporting nature recovery and climate change mitigation and adaptation, helping both nature and people adapt, through Nature-based Solutions.

16.2. The Environmental Statement (ES) should identify how the development affects the ability of the natural environment (including habitats, species, and natural processes) to adapt to climate change, including its ability to provide adaptation for people. This should include impacts on the vulnerability or resilience of a natural feature (i.e. what's already there and affected) as well as impacts on how the environment can accommodate change for both nature and people, for example whether the development affects species ability to move and adapt. Nature-based Solutions, such as providing green infrastructure on-site and in the surrounding area (e.g. to adapt to flooding, drought and heatwave events), habitat creation and peatland restoration, should be considered. The ES should set out the measures that will be adopted to address impacts.

16.3. Renewable and low carbon energy schemes should maximise opportunities for delivering multiple benefits for nature recovery, biodiversity, and people. Habitats

created and enhanced through schemes should be well-designed, good quality, well-managed and contribute to strategic priorities for nature.

17. Green infrastructure

17.1. Green Infrastructure (GI) is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as "a *network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity."*

17.2. NSIPs play a role in delivering GI to enable more sustainable development, climate resilience, and nature recovery. Natural England highlights that the Overarching NPS for Energy (EN1) states:

"4.6.13 In addition to delivering biodiversity net gain, developments may also deliver wider environmental gains and benefits to communities relevant to the local area, and to national policy priorities, such as:

- *reductions in GHG emissions*
- *reduced flood risk*
- *improvements to air or water quality,*
- *climate adaptation,*
- *landscape enhancement*
- *increased access to natural greenspace, or*
- *the enhancement, expansion or provision of trees and woodlands*

The scope of potential gains will be dependent on the type, scale, and location of specific projects. ***Applicants should look for a holistic approach to delivering wider environmental gains and benefits through the use of nature-based solutions and Green Infrastructure."***

Natural England therefore encourages the incorporation of GI into NSIPs.

17.3. GI refers to natural and semi-natural features and networks, such as parks, woodlands, and wetlands, that provide a range of benefits including flood protection, air quality improvement, and biodiversity enhancement.

GI should:

- create and maintain green liveable places that enable people to experience and connect with nature
- enhance ecological networks, support ecosystems services and connect as a living network at local, regional and national scales.

17.4. Natural England has developed the Green Infrastructure Framework – a national standard to guide the planning, design, and maintenance of green infrastructure in England. This framework provides guidance for integrating natural elements into major developments.

17.5. For evidence-based advice and tools on how to design, deliver and manage green and blue infrastructure (GI), we refer you to Green Infrastructure Home. This includes:

- The Principles that underpin the Green Infrastructure Framework, which set out what good green infrastructure is, why it's important and how to do it well.

- The Standards, which define what good green infrastructure 'looks like' for local planners, developers, parks and greenspace managers and communities, and how to plan it strategically to deliver multiple benefits for people and nature.
- The Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide, which provides guidance for developers on how well-designed GI can integrate with built design to create good quality, distinctive and sustainable places.
- Mapping Database with analysis of existing provision, including mapped representation of the areas thought to meet the size and proximity criteria.
- The Environmental Benefits from Nature Tool highlights wider benefits and comparison of options.

17.6. We recommend a bespoke approach to identifying the most suitable types, locations and scale of GI needed to support growth, alongside health and wellbeing, biodiversity and climate resilience in the context of each proposal. Consideration should be given to the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy/ies (LNRS).

17.7. Natural England recommends that NSIPs should include a GI plan, including a long-term delivery and management plan. Relevant aspects of local authority GI strategies and Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) should be integrated and delivered where appropriate.

18. Biodiversity Enhancement

18.1. Section 2.10 of the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3, 2024) highlights that solar farms have the potential to greatly increase the biodiversity value of a site, especially on land which was previously intensively managed.

18.2. Research indicates that solar farms managed specifically for biodiversity show significant increases in plants, invertebrates, and birds, compared with sites which are not. Consequently, the implementation of good design and management on solar sites can result in significant environmental enhancements beyond that which is required through Biodiversity Net Gain.

18.3. Please refer to Annex G for further information regarding the management of solar farms to enhance biodiversity.

19. Other advice

19.1. Natural England has been involved in plans to carry out a Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier scheme within the Cable Route Search Area indicated on the maps in the EIA Scoping Report. We recommend that this scheme is taken into consideration when assessing the viability and restoration of the cable route area.

Standard Advice for Air Quality Impacts in National Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)

Natural England provides the following standard advice on air pollution. This advice relates to the protection of protected sites under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and should be taken as Natural England's formal representation. This standard advice is applicable to all stages of the NSIP process and may be used by the applicant for NSIP pre application stages, by the Examining Authority (ExA) during the statutory stages of the NSIP and by the relevant Secretary of State as the competent authority.

Protected sites are 'sites of special scientific interest' (SSSIs) and 'habitats sites' (also called 'European sites'). For the purposes of this advice, Habitats Sites are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), possible SACs, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Potential SPAs, Ramsar sites, and sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on Habitats Sites. Although their regulatory frameworks differ, the general principles and approach for air pollution assessment outlined for Habitats Sites are also relevant for SSSIs. Where the following advice applies to both, we use the term protected sites. Where the advice or approach differs, the individual terms are used.

This includes advice on information that is required to assess this and how to interpret the results of air quality modelling for the decision maker to conclude whether air quality impacts would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a Habitat site or a SSSI. You should also consider any relevant caselaw that could affect how you carry out any air quality assessments.

Air pollutants

This advice covers the following air pollutants from the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of a proposal

- ammonia (NH3)
- nitrogen oxides (NO, NO2 or NOx)
- nitrogen deposition
- acid deposition
- sulphur dioxide (SO2)

Standing advice on air pollution and development is also available here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/air-pollution-and-development-advice-for-local-authorities

Whilst the standing advice does not cover NSIPs, it does include additional technical advice which may prove useful. However, in summary, Table 1 provides the steps that we advise should be taken to assess air quality impacts on protected sites. The applicant should provide their own assessment containing the information and detailed modelling you need. You need to review this and make your own conclusion.

Table 1: Sequential approach to air quality assessments

Stage	Step		Supplemental evidence/ basis for judgment
Initial screening for credible risk of an effect	**1**	Check Distance criteria - could significant emissions reach a protected site? Yes = move to Step 2 No = no further HRA required	The Air Pollution Information System (APIS) includes an introduction to air pollution. APIS provides site specific information on the interest features of individual protected sites and

			the sensitivity to air quality impacts of those features. Please see Table 2 for industrial air pollution screening distances. For road traffic impacts, roads on the affected road network that lie within 200m of a designated site should be considered. Use Magic Map to check the location of designated sites. Search for the location then select the 'Designations' option.
	2	Check if the qualifying habitats or supporting habitat of qualifying species are sensitive to air quality impacts. Yes = move to Step 3 No = no further HRA required APIS Site relevant Critical Loads and Levels (based on literature and professional judgement) http://www.apis.ac.uk/srcl Some habitats may not have a critical load because there is not enough data. In these cases, you should find the critical load for a similar habitat type or feature.	The qualifying features of Habitats Sites can be identified in the relevant Site Conservation Objectives and Supplementary advice packages, which include a definitive list of legally qualifying features. These objectives are available here. Alternatively, a list of qualifying features can also be found by searching for the Habitats Site and SSSIs on Designated Sites View , alongside Conservation Objectives and Supplementary Advice for Habitats Sites. The above links will also show whether any of the qualifying features for Habitats Sites have a Restore or Maintain Conservation Objective in relation to air quality thresholds (critical levels or loads). If the site is a SPA or an SAC/SSSI designated for an animal species (as opposed to a habitat), determine whether the predicted pollution effects on the supporting habitat will have a negative effect on the notified species.
Detailed AQ modelling	**3**	Undertake detailed modelling using a recognised dispersal model – i.e. Atmospheric Dispersion Modelling System (ADMS) Unless robust site-specific evidence is provided, we advise the lower range of the critical load should be used in modelling. If there are site specific reasons why it is more appropriate to use the higher end of the range, then this should be clearly evidenced.	Air Quality modelling should include relevant scenarios that are clearly identified. One such example of scenarios is a baseline plus future forecasts as follows: Baseline, a construction year, and future operational year(s), do nothing (without proposal), do something (with proposal); taking into account background trends for each pollutant). For proposals that will emit pollutants from a point source, it is helpful to provide isopleths of the dispersion modelling results, showing the predicted contours of pollutant concentration and deposition of the development. These may be assessed against the locations of protected sites and sensitive features within those sites. At least 3 years of meteorological data should be included within the AQ modelling for sources other than for road transport modelling The Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) has produced the following document to assist its

			members in the assessment of the air quality impacts of development on designated nature conservation sites: air-quality-impacts-on-nature-sites-2020.pdf
Applying screening thresholds	**4a**	Apply Screening Threshold Alone If below threshold alone, move to step 4b. If above = move straight to step 5	Ascertain the Process Contribution (PC) from the plan or project (emissions and predicted deposition). Apply Screening threshold (1% of critical level or load) alone using the annual averages. If the process contribution is less than 1% of the relevant long-term benchmark (Environmental Assessment Level, Critical Level or Critical Load), the emission is not likely to have a significant effect alone irrespective of the background levels.
	4b	Apply Screening Threshold In-combination. If below threshold in-combination = no LSE/significant risk of damage etc and no further assessment required. If above = move straight to step 5 Applicants might use the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) 'decision-making thresholds' as a reason for not completing an in-combination assessment. If so, you should check they have correctly followed the JNCC guidance on decision-making thresholds. If this guidance shows they do not need to complete an in-combination assessment, continue to step 5. If applicants have not used the decision-making thresholds, or have not followed them correctly, they will need to provide an in-combination assessment.	Use information from competent authorities (Planning Portal, PINS NSIP register or Environmental Permitting register) to determine if there are plans or projects in the pipeline (not included in the current baseline) that should be considered in-combination If the combined process contribution is less than 1% of the relevant long-term benchmark (Environmental Assessment Level, Critical Level or Critical Load), the emission is not likely to have a significant effect in-combination irrespective of background levels.
Detailed Assessment of ecological impacts	**5**	This step is to consider the ecological impacts of AQ on the interest features of the designated site and is not based only on numerical figures. If it is not certain whether sensitive features are located within the areas to be impacted, a site visit may be helpful to determine this. For SSSIs, this step should provide all the information necessary, including any required mitigation, for the decision maker to determine if there would be an adverse effect on a SSSI. If Habitats Sites are impacted by the proposals, move to Step 6.	The following information is likely to be helpful for the decision maker: Is the sensitive feature(s) located within the pollution footprint? Should it be there for the site to meet its Conservation Objectives or is there some other, natural reason (e.g. hydrology), why the sensitive feature(s) would not be expected to occur there? Check APIS Trends Tab for reasonable expectation on whether background pollution may be decreasing or not. Habitats that have already been subject to high background nitrogen deposition can develop tolerance to further deposition. This cannot be used to justify further exceedance as it would undermine conservation objectives to reverse decline. You should consider predicted effects on

			the species richness of a habitat against the site's conservation objectives.
Appropriate Assessment (AA) for habitats sites	**6**	The competent authority to undertake their AA to conclude whether or not there will be an adverse effect on integrity (AEOI) of habitats sites. Any mitigation proposed should also be assessed at this point. Should the AA conclude that the proposal would have an AEOI that cannot be excluded with mitigation measures, consider the derogation route of the HRA process. Should compensation measures be required under derogation, please contact Natural England for specific advice. Note: If an AA has been undertaken of the proposals alone and concluded that there will not be an adverse effect on integrity, if there are residual impacts that are not fully mitigated, these will need to be considered in combination with other plans or projects	Where mitigation is required to enable a conclusion of no adverse effect on integrity to be reached the AA must be able to show that mitigation measures can be relied upon to avoid adverse effects over the full lifetime of the project (ie construction, operation and decommissioning where relevant). To be viable, such measures should be **effective, reliable, timely, guaranteed** and of **sufficient duration**. The assessment of such measures should be supported by evidence. When deciding on whether the proposals set out in the NSIP will have an adverse effect on Integrity on a Habitats Site, the Conservation Objectives and any supplementary advice should be taken into account. Including whether the site is already exceeding the environmental thresholds for ammonia, nitrogen oxides and nitrogen deposition and has a restore conservation objective.

Mitigation measures

If you cannot conclude there is no adverse effect, the applicant will need to apply mitigation measures. Measures will only be appropriate if you can quantify their effectiveness in reducing emissions on the protected site. You should check that mitigation measures are in place to avoid adverse effects on site integrity over the lifetime of the project.

Mitigation may include measures that:

- the applicant volunteers
- you impose through formal conditions or restrictions in any permission or authorisation – these may be different or stricter measures than ones proposed by the applicant

Examples could include:

- relocation or redesign of developments to avoid impacts on protected sites
- control of other emissions of the same pollutants with an overlapping effect
- a change in stack height for industrial processes
- Euro 6 standards for construction machinery
- adding wooded shelterbelts, trees, green walls and hedges to limit dispersal of emissions, as long as these measures in themselves would not negatively impact the protected site

Table 2: Industrial air pollution screening distances

Emission source	Distance for SSSIs	Distance for habitats sites
Industrial developments	2km	5km
General combustion processes (under 20MW energy input)	500m	500m
General combustion processes (20MW to 50MW energy input)	2km	2km
General combustion processes (over 50MW energy input)	2km	10km
Mechanical and biological waste treatment	500m	500m
Landfill waste	2km	2km
Compost (under 500 tonnes maximum annual operational throughput)	500m	500m
Compost (500 to 75,000 tonnes maximum annual operational throughput)	1km	1km
Compost (over 75,000 tonnes maximum annual operational throughput)	2km	2km
Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals	5km	5km
Oil and gas exploration and extraction	500m	500m
Quarries	200m	200m
Other industrial developments causing air pollution	500m	500m

Additional advice

Common Standards Monitoring[1] is used to define the ecological condition of a protected site. It is undertaken on a broader level and does not currently consider air quality impacts. The relevant benchmark for assessing impacts is the critical thresholds. Therefore, the existing status of a designated site should not be the sole reason for judgement on potential impact.

For many protected sites, the current background pollution may already be exceeding the relevant critical load/level from a different source type to the project being assessed (e.g. where the main source of background exceedance is due to agriculture, but the proposal is an industrial project). Proposals must consider their own impacts against the relevant environmental thresholds. There are many reasons why background levels are high, but the conservation objective is to 'maintain or restore' air pollutants to within these benchmarks. The objective would be undermined by proposals that add further emissions, including if it compromises any strategic initiatives to reduce air pollution levels.

You must determine if there is evidence that the increased emissions represent a measurable risk and could compromise the strategic initiatives. You would need to consider information on:

[1] HYPERLINK "https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/common-standards-monitoring/"Common Standards Monitoring | JNCC - Adviser to Government on Nature Conservation

- the extent to which any declining national trends in air pollution, or strategic initiatives to tackle emissions affecting the site more locally, might otherwise lead to improvements
- the rate at which such improvements are anticipated
- the extent of the impacts of a plan or project, and whether those impacts can properly be considered temporary and reversible

If the affected area is small, consider the risk to site integrity proportionally. For example, how important is the area in terms of rarity, location, distribution, vulnerability to change and ecological structure. If it is a supporting habitat, consider its importance to the designated species on the site. Consider any site survey information that may provide evidence of existing impacts.

Emissions from road transport (if applicable):
Emissions from road transport may be an operational impact or be limited to the construction phase of proposals. Roads on the affected road network that lie within 200m of a designated site should be considered. If all affected roads are further than 200m from a protected site, then there is no likely significant effect (habitats sites) or no impact (SSSIs) on protected sites from air pollution

Improvements in vehicle technology and a move to further electrification of the vehicle fleet will, over time, result in lower background levels of nitrogen deposition and nitrogen oxide pollution near to roads. As most sites are currently over the relevant thresholds and have a "restore" objective, this should be noted as a "retardation" of the restore objective and expressed in months and years. Retardation of less than one year is acceptable as air quality is considered against an annual average. Please note that ammonia impacts cannot be assessed in this manner as there is no certainty of a declining trend.

Defra Emissions Factor Toolkit

The Defra Emission Factor Toolkit (EFT) allows for gradual introduction of electric vehicles into the fleet (cars and LGVs) up to 2050. These are the emission factors we advise that NSIPs should be using (which we advise should also consider ammonia emissions as well as NOx – using one of three sets of emission factors available). However, the User Guide to the EFT highlights that calculation tools only support assessment years 2018 up to 2030, reflecting that predictions and assumptions beyond then become less certain. Where EFT calculated emissions are to be used after 2030 to inform air quality assessments, the EFT indicates that appropriate caveats around the limitations of the analysis must be included to accompany the assessment. We therefore advise that emission factors no later than 2030 are used for HRAs– which would mean percentages of EVs are at predicted 2030 levels. A key concern is that, although EVs themselves have no tailpipe emissions, and the percentage of them will increase, the remaining combustion engine vehicles on the road may become more polluting as they age as selective catalytic reduction technology may create 'ammonia slip' over time. Ammonia slip is the unreacted ammonia (NH_3) that escapes from a selective catalytic reduction (SCR) or selective non-catalytic reduction (SNCR) system used to reduce NOx in exhaust gases.

Motorways within the affected road network

There is potentially an added complexity to the need for in-combination assessments when considering traffic on motorways, as including these roads can mean that the assessment takes account of traffic growth related to strategic factors or long range (external) trips that are

independent of the specific plan or project and neighbouring plans or projects. These roads are strategically important and tend to have high volumes of traffic as well as being well represented in traffic models. The air quality assessment should therefore include traffic flows on these roads, but the external trips can be excluded from the initial screening assessment. A justification and explanation of which journeys are included and excluded in the traffic model should be provided.
The conclusions reached on the air pollution impacts of the HRA must be incorporated into the wider HRA conclusions for other impact pathways identified for the proposals.

How to Use this Advice in Decision Making

Provided you have followed the above advice and have been able to conclude there would be no adverse effects on any protected sites we would be able to agree with your decision to authorise the project

Solar farms have the potential to greatly increase the biodiversity value of a site, especially on land which was previously intensively managed. Research indicates that solar farms managed specifically for biodiversity show significant increases in plants, invertebrates, and birds, compared with sites which are not[1]. Consequently, the implementation of good design and management on solar sites can result in significant environmental enhancements beyond that which is required through biodiversity net gain[2].

This guidance has been developed by the Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Area Team in collaboration with national specialists, and is intended to provide an overview of recommended practices to enhance biodiversity on solar farms, including:

- The creation of habitat on site, within the margins and around the array.
- Conservation grazing/mowing to manage created habitat.
- The layout of the array and supplementary infrastructure.

Proposed enhancements should aim to achieve environmental and biodiversity net gain in line with the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan and any other relevant measures and targets, including statutory targets set under the Environment Act 2021 or elsewhere.

Further information regarding each of these methodologies can be found in the footnoted sources. These practices are evolving as further research emerges and are therefore subject to change. The Biodiversity Management Plan should be designed to fit the physical and ecological attributes of the site, tying in with existing habitats and species of value[3].

Please note that this information is provided to inform the design and management of biodiversity enhancements within solar schemes only. Potential environmental impacts associated with solar farms, including designated sites and protected species impacts, should be adequately addressed in the application for planning permission / Development Consent prior to consideration of enhancements, in line with established principles. Natural England will provide site-specific advice on direct and indirect impacts to designated sites and protected species, where relevant.

1.0 The creation of on-site habitat

It is estimated that once PV panels have been installed 70-95% of ground surface remains available to contribute to biodiversity targets. If correctly managed, these areas can be used to develop botanically diverse habitats around, and where circumstances allow, beneath the panels. The identification of target habitats should consider the existing natural habitats on and around the site and the objectives of local strategies including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

1.1 Planting between/around panels

The conversion of land to solar often offers the opportunity for the development of grassland habitat around the array. This may include maintaining or extending existing habitat, or creating new habitat. Common approaches include seeding flowering strips for pollinators, creating rough tussocky grasslands margins, and the establishment of traditional grazing meadows[4].

Prior to habitat creation, soil tests and botanical surveys should be undertaken to ensure the chosen habitat is suitable for the context. The soil samples will dictate where to locate, and the nature of, the biodiversity enhancements. Determining the level of modification of the starting grassland will aid in projecting the level of management which will be required, as seed sown in modified and semi-improved grassland can become rapidly outcompeted by grasses if unmanaged[5]. Ex-arable sites may not be suitable for immediate conversion to wild flower meadow where higher nutrient values still exist.

[1] Parker et al (2021) *Realising the Biodiversity Potential of Solar Farms*
[2] DESNZ (2025) *National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)*
[3] BRE National Solar Centre (2014) *Biodiversity Guidance for Solar Developments*
[4] Parker et al (2021) *Realising the Biodiversity Potential of Solar Farms*
[5] Foresight (2024) *Nature Recovery Blueprint for Solar Sites*

In the creation of grassland habitat, plants of local provenance should be selected, and planted on a site-by-site basis in accordance with local growing conditions. Successfully establishing species-rich grassland on previously intensively managed farmland is challenging, and in the short/mid-term less diverse, transitional habitat will likely establish. As the habitat develops, consistent management will allow for continued further enhancement. Diverse sward has been shown to establish quicker if sufficient spacing (>3m) between panels is used within the array (see section 3.1).

1.2 Planting beneath solar panels

The microclimate created by the shading effect of the panels mean that the same planting regime cannot necessarily be used under the panels and within the margins, and seed mixes will need to be selected according to the specific conditions. Shading from both rain and sun creates an environment unsuitable for many grassland species. The seeding of grassland species beneath panels has been met with varying degrees of success, and in some instances plants can fail to establish[6]. An unpublished 2025 study from 124 UK solar farms indicates that typically low diversity grassland habitat establishes beneath the solar panels (Solar Habitat, 2025).

However, where conditions allow, e.g. panels are set higher and light levels are greater, it may be possible to establish more diverse habitats. There is emerging evidence that a range of shade-tolerant species are able to establish under panels[7]. If appropriate for the soil type and consistent with the site's objectives, selecting species which require less direct sun and are naturally low growing is encouraged. With sufficient management, a range of woodland, herbs, ferns, and some grassland species have been found to establish under panels[8].

1.3 Site preparation and management

Site preparation should generally begin in spring, and consist of an initial mowing phase followed by weed removal, repeated several times over the summer to prevent annual weeds and grasses consolidating. The final sowing should occur in autumn, when wildflowers would naturally seed and are less likely to require watering. Seed can efficiently be sown directly on the bare ground exposed immediately after the array has been installed, post-harrowing, though experimentation with pre-installation sowing is encouraged. Using companion plug plants in key locations to enhance seeding has been shown to significantly increase the likelihood of plants establishing, as agricultural grasses have been shown to outcompete seeded species in nutrient-rich post agricultural context.

Soil compaction of the site can occur during the construction phase[9]. Care should be taken to ensure that the site, including areas to be managed for biodiversity, is not adversely impacted as soil compaction will impact the viability of future planting. General guidance for protecting soils during development is available in Defra's Code of Practice for Soils on Construction Sites.

Aftercare management is essential to ensure establishment of species rich grassland, primarily through maintaining a suitable grazing/mowing regime. If using grazing, it is important to maintain an appropriate density to allow the plants to develop. Low intensity spring and winter grazing has been shown to increase plant diversity on solar sites and is therefore welcomed. Summer grazing has been shown to have a negative effect on plant diversity and is discouraged[10,11]. If mowing, the creation of varied sward height is encouraged to increase structural diversity. The cessation of grazing from May to September (depending on seed mix) will allow wildflowers to flower and set seed, reducing the need for reseeding in later seasons. The grazing/mowing regime should be secured and monitored throughout the lifetime of the project.

[6] Solar Energy UK (2024) *Solar Habitat Report: Ecological trends on solar farms in the UK*
[7] Montag et al (2016) *The Effects of Solar Farms on Local Biodiversity: A Comparative Study*
[8] Solar Energy UK (2024) *Solar Habitat Report: Ecological trends on solar farms in the UK*
[9] ADAS (2023) *The impact of solar photovoltaic (PV) sites on agricultural soils and land quality*
[10] Blaydes et al (2021) *Opportunities to enhance pollinator biodiversity in solar parks*
[11] Montag et al (2016) *The Effects of Solar Farms on Local Biodiversity: A Comparative Study*

The monitoring of botanical diversity should be factored into the ongoing management of the site, with reseeding considered where appropriate. Whilst species will colonise naturally, periodic reseeding every few years may be required to maintain plant biodiversity and ensure establishment. Pernicious weeds can proliferate beneath solar panels if the ground is bare. Using a combination of spot treatment for weeds, targeted cutting throughout the growing season, and the planting of appropriate seed mixes to minimise bare ground coverage, these species can be managed long term, without the need for the extensive herbicide use[12]. See GOV.UK's guidance on establishing species-rich grassland for further information.

Note that this advice does not apply to the management of breeding and non-breeding bird mitigation areas, which will likely require different management.

2.0 Boundary features

The retention, enhancement, and creation of boundary features such as hedgerows, treelines, ditches, and field margins offer significant opportunities for biodiversity enhancement on solar farms, in addition to creating wildlife corridors within solar sites and to other habitats.

2.1 Hedgerows

Hedgerows provide a multitude of biodiversity benefits in addition to managing visual impacts via screening, a common requirement of solar planning applications. Given the post-agricultural context on which many solar sites are located there are often opportunities for the establishment/enhancement of existing hedgerows.

Hedgerows should be developed using native species such as hawthorn, hazel, field maple, blackthorn, ash, holly, and elder. Locally relevant species should be selected in the first instance. The UK planting season is between November and March, with November and December being the preferred months. Once the hedgerow is well established, a 3-5 year cutting regime should be implemented which manages panel shading while leaving long periods for growth. For hedges of high wildlife value this cycle may be up to 7-10 years, wherein additional laying should be considered. When cutting is required, it should take place in January/February to allow for flowering and berry production. See Natural England guidance on hedgerow planting for further information.

2.2 Field margins

Solar sites often include access routes between the array and the site perimeter. These marginal areas, when used in combination with hedgerow and tree planting, offer the greatest potential for biodiversity enhancement in the array area. The establishment of grassland habitat within these margins should follow the methodology detailed in section 1, though these sites are less constrained than the panel-adjacent areas so a greater range of habitats and species can be considered[13]. The creation of tussocky grassland on the margins alongside the security fence is a common approach which is generally low maintenance and beneficial for a variety of different species, including foraging birds of prey, ground nesting birds, and wintering invertebrates.

Margins should be around 7-10 metres wide to leave sufficient space for access and the development of functional habitat[14].

2.3 Ponds

Creating ponds, scrapes and other wetland features in low-lying wet areas of the site, which may otherwise be unsuitable for construction, is encouraged. Features implemented to manage site drainage such as

[12] Montag et al (2016) *The Effects of Solar Farms on Local Biodiversity: A Comparative Study*
[13] Parker et al (2022) *Realising the Biodiversity Potential of Solar Farms*
[14] BRE National Solar Centre (2014) *Biodiversity Guidance for Solar Developments*

swales can also be managed for wildlife, provided they are not fed by surface water from fields treated with agricultural inputs such as fertilizers or pesticides[15].

3.0 Array structure

The layout and type of panels can determine the viability of habitat creation within the array area, and careful panel siting can greatly improve habitat connectivity within the site.

3.1 Panel layout

The use of a greater distance between panels will result in increased sunlight and rainwater distribution, which will in turn support the development of more diverse habitat structure for plants and wildlife. The siting of panels should include wide margins and boundary features, as detailed in section 2.0, in addition to any dedicated areas for biodiversity enhancement. Significant increases in biodiversity have been recorded when sufficient spacing between panels is used within the array. Distances of 3m+ have been shown to lead to a significant increases in amphibian, avian, and botanical diversity.[16]

Studies show that while solar farms can improve farmland bird diversity, evidence suggests ground nesting and wading birds are unlikely to forage or nest on, or in close proximity to, solar sites[17]. Therefore, the scheme design should avoid visual impacts to breeding and non-breeding birds though appropriate siting away from high-use areas. Where impacts cannot be avoided, mitigation may include provision of larger areas of suitable habitat for these species. Natural England will provide site-specific advice where species associated with designated sites may be impacted by a proposed development.

3.2 Panel height

Consideration should be given to the most suitable panel height in the scheme design, accounting for relevant species and habitats. Generally, a panel height of at least 2m at the lowest point may be more suitable to facilitate varied vegetation development and wildlife mobility[18]. This height enables the growth of a greater range of vegetation, enhances sunlight and rainwater distribution, improves soil quality, and generates diverse microclimates able to support a broader range of species. A greater panel height can also increase ease of access for habitat management if managing the sward via mechanical means.

Studies show that a panel height of 1.2m at the lowest point can lead to a 90% reduction in biomass output directly beneath the panels, compared with a 30% reduction at 2m[19]. The use of tracking solar panels can further minimise the microclimate effect of panel shading.

3.3 Fencing

Security fencing should be used strategically to minimize habitat fragmentation and protect the site's assets. Wildlife-friendly fencing which incorporates a 10-20cm gap between the base of the fence and the ground will enable the movement of mammals and other wildlife with minimal compromise for site security[20].

When designing habitat enhancements a site-specific approach is required – there should be consideration of the varying requirements of protected species who may utilize the site. The use of low-profile fencing around habitat creation areas for ground-nesting bird species has been shown to improve bird counts. This is likely due to the increased availability of protected nesting areas[21]. Therefore, allowing large mammal access may not be appropriate in an area designed to provide habitat for ground-nesting birds.

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[15] Parker et al (2022) *Realising the Biodiversity Potential of Solar Farms*
[16] Peschel et al (2019) *Solar parks – profits for biodiversity*
[17] Copping et al (2024) *Solar farm management influences breeding bird responses in an arable-dominated landscape*
[18] Benbouzid et al (2025) *Evaluating the Potential for Improving Biodiversity in Solar Farms*
[19] Adeh et al (2019) *Remarkable agrivoltaic influence on soil moisture, micrometeorology and water-use efficiency*
[20] BRE National Solar Centre (2014) *Biodiversity Guidance for Solar Developments*
[21] Golawski et al (2025) *Increased bird diversity around small-scale solar energy plants in agricultural landscape*

4 Other advice

4.1 Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has been designed to leave habitats for wildlife in a measurably better state than they were prior to development. Developments that fall under the BNG requirement must deliver a biodiversity uplift of at least 10%, as measured by the statutory biodiversity metric. Enhancing the margins and sub-panel area for biodiversity can contribute to the delivery of BNG up to, or beyond, the 10% requirement.

When designing the BNG scheme for a solar site, careful consideration should be given to which habitats will be able to establish under and between the panels. Where the site is formerly arable or pasture, Other Neutral Grassland in poor/moderate condition has been found to establish in the sub-panel area[22]. Where new habitat is included within a scheme it is worth considering multifunctional or additionality benefits of the design. Guidance has been developed on what mitigation or enhancement measures can also count towards the BNG calculation through environmental stacking.

4.2 Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are county-level initiatives which aim to drive co-ordinated, practical, and focussed action for nature recovery across England. LNRS consist of a framework of prioritised actions and specific mapped measures which will be delivered through a number of mechanisms such as biodiversity net gain and agri-environment schemes, to contribute to strategic biodiversity enhancements specific to that locality. Local planning authorities must have regard to the LNRS when carrying out their duties. If consulted early in the site selection process, the LNRS may be able to help inform conscientious siting of the array, in addition to informing any other strategies which could contribute to the wider Nature Recovery Network. Beyond the Local Authority, the Local Nature Partnerships contact may be able to provide site-specific advice.

4.3 Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure (GI) is defined as a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which are capable of delivering a wide range of benefits for both humans and nature. Natural England has developed the Green Infrastructure Framework – a national standard to guide the planning, design, and maintenance of green infrastructure in England. This framework provides guidance for integrating natural elements into major developments. Consideration of GI principles in solar scheme design may support multi-functional outcomes and Natural England can provide GI advice for 'high opportunity' developments. You may wish to consult the Green Infrastructure Map when considering potential connectivity to existing green spaces.

[22] SEUK (2022) *Best Practice Guidance: Increasing Biodiversity at All Stages of a Solar Farm's Lifecycle*

From: Rob Smith [redacted]@northyorkmoors.org.uk>
Sent: 27 January 2026 14:53
To: Sedgeby Solar Farm <sedgebysolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: EN0110026 - Sedgeby Solar Farm - EIA Scoping and Consultation and Regulation 11 Notification

> **You don't often get email from [redacted]@northyorkmoors.org.uk. Learn why this is important**

Dear Sir or Madam

Thank you for consulting the North York Moors National Park Authority on the above matter.

The Authority wishes to make the following observations on the EIA Scoping request:

With reference to potential for cumulative landscape and visual impact, it is noted that para. 4.8.60 states that it is proposed to scope out consideration of energy developments beyond 5km. The Authority considers that such an approach could result in other energy developments with the potential to contribute to cumulative impact, alongside the Sedgeby Solar Farm proposal, being scoped out of consideration.

Of particular relevance in this context is the current application for a proposed large scale Battery Energy Storage System on land at Hag Lane, South Kilvington (this proposal is identified with map reference 5 in the Scoping request sites table within the Cumulative Impact section of the Scoping request). Although located outside the suggested 5km radius, and currently proposed to be scoped out, the Hag Lane BESS proposal is located in relatively close proximity to the National Park boundary and would form one of a number of large scale energy developments which would be visible to varying degrees from elevated views across the Vale from elevated ground along the western fringe of the National Park. The development of a further large scale energy project at the Sedgeby Solar Farm site could further contribute to cumulative impact, as such developments would be likely to be visible either sequentially or simultaneously to varying degrees to those using the public rights of way network along the western escarpment of the National Park. Such rights of way include the important Cleveland Way National Trail. Furthermore, developments beyond the 5km radius but in relatively close proximity the western fringe of the National Park have the potential to contribute to gradual encroachment and impact on the setting of the National Park; a matter referred to in the North York Moors Landscape Character Assessment.

With regard to economic and socio-economic impacts, the Authority notes that para. 4.5.24 states that wider tourism effects are scoped out 'due to the fact that there is not expected to be a significant effect, be it adverse or beneficial in respect of either of these

potential effects. However, in practice this appears to be an assumption rather than a fact, as the Scoping report does not appear to contain any specific information to justify the statement. It is considered important that proper consideration is given to the potential for impact on the tourism economy, including as a result of cumulative impact considerations identified earlier in this response, as well as in relation to the identified special qualities of the National Park.

Yours sincerely

Rob Smith

Senior Minerals Planner

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Our Ref ZB26/00139/GENENQ
Your Ref EN0110026
Date 18 February 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) – Regulations 10 and 11

Application by Sedgeby Solar Limited (the Applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for Sedgeby Solar Farm (the Proposed Development)

Scoping Consultation and notification of the applicant's contact details and duty to make available information to the applicant if requested

Thank you for consulting North Yorkshire Council on the above.

Our responses to the Scoping Report are as follows:

Air quality

We have reviewed the relevant chapter of the Scoping Report in relation to Air Quality and we agree with the proposed approach with the following pertinent points being noted within the report.

- Commitment CO7: A Phase I ground contamination assessment will be produced and submitted in support of the Application. Should this identify contaminate/made ground within the Site, a suitable ground investigation will take place prior to commencement Pre-construction of development and remediation if necessary. This will be secured in the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan and a Requirement in the Development Consent Order.

- The potential air quality impacts of the Proposed Development are identified as:

    - Impacts of dust arising during the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development; and
    - Impacts of vehicle and plant emissions during the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development.

- Commitment CO27: Standard and proven construction/demolition methodologies are available to minimise dust effects as set out in the Institute of Air Quality Management guidance 'Assessment of dust from demolition and construction 2024'. These will be set out in the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan and the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) and secured via the Development Consent Order.

- All construction impacts affecting traffic and transportation associated with the Proposed Development are proposed to be scoped in within the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), with operational and decommissioning impacts to be scoped out.

- An Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan will be developed and used to capture all the mitigation for potential construction related effects identified through the EIA and will form an Appendix to the Environment Statement.

- An Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan will be developed and used to capture any mitigation required for effects related to the decommissioning of the Proposed Development and will form an Appendix to the Environment Statement.

Biodiversity

The EIA Scoping Report is supported a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and a breeding bird report. The Ecology Chapter of the Scoping Report sets out requirements for further assessment and surveys. It is expected the ecological assessment includes a thorough EcIA and Ecology chapter of an Environmental Statement, undertaken to CIEEM standards which should including surveys and assessment of designated sites, habitats and species, with surveys undertaken to current industry standards at the appropriate time of year. The assessment should include all direct, indirect, temporary and permanent impacts (including on adjacent protected sites) and include cumulative impacts.

The scoping report generally appears comprehensive in setting out the scope for proposed further surveys and assessment, however, the red line boundary shows that a site access appears to cross through Pilmoor SSSI, although this does not appear to be acknowledged within the Scoping Report. This circumstance may therefore require a fuller assessment of potential impacts (including indirect impacts from pollution, hydrology etc) on the SSSI than has currently been provided for within the Scoping Report.

The Scoping Report recognises the importance of the existing site for Skylark and has committed "to mitigate potential impacts on breeding skylark resulting from habitat loss associated with the construction of the Proposed Development, areas where skylark are currently breeding will be identified. Within these areas, skylark plots will be established to enhance habitat suitability and promote successful breeding" This commitment is welcome but will require to be fully evidenced, that these aims can be successfully achieved, in accordance with current guidelines.

The Scoping Report also indicates the intention to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment which is welcomed. Any BNG assessment should be undertaken in full accordance with the rules set out in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, including the Trading Rules and those on 'habitat degradation' which may apply to recent loss of trees to create an access track, which is noted in the PEA). North Yorkshire Council has produced a guidance note on "Classification of land beneath solar panel arrays for the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (NYC, December 2025) and the Natural England Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Area Team have also produced guidance "Annex G: Biodiversity Enhancement on Solar Farms".

The PEA provides an extensive species list for 'modified grassland' which is generally a very species poor habitat type. This may be a result of the conflation in the PEA of many parcels of species-poor grassland (which may have a cumulatively high species list), but it would be expected that individual grassland parcels should be assessed separately within the EcIA, to ensure that they have been correctly classified.

There are a large number of trees within the site boundary, which have been assessed through the Arboricultural Survey. Some of these display features, such as very large girth or hollowing, which may indicate potential veteran status. Some of these trees may once have been associated with Sessay Park and could be remnants of former parkland habitat. Potential veterans should be assessed against the

definition set out in BNG Regulations The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024 and any veterans must be treated as 'irreplaceable habitat'.

Individual trees, lines of trees and hedgerows are important ecological features, within the landscape as are watercourses and ponds which is now dominated by large-scale arable farmland. The surrounding landscape still retains remnant features of a once richer lowland complex of habitats such as woodland, and heath and fen at Pilmoor SSSI and ancient woodland at Sessay Wood SINC, which are both adjacent to the application site. The PEA identifies that there are 34 ha of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland and 38 ha of Ancient Replanted Woodland bordering the site. ASNW should be treated as 'irreplaceable habitat' in relation to the NPPF and the BNG Regulations and buffered appropriately in accordance with Forestry Commission and Natural England Standing Advice.

There may be a potential opportunity to significantly enhance non-operational land surrounding the solar arrays to strengthen the links and corridors (such as along Birdforth Beck which links into the Yorkshire Rivers IIA) through the landscape and to create habitats which buffer and enhance the setting of the adjacent protected sites, such as Pilmoor and Sessay Wood, in accordance with the philosophy of the Lawton Review (2010).

The Scoping Report indicates that the applicant is likely to apply for a Great Crested Newt District Level Licence. If they do choose to go down this route the applicant must submit a countersigned IACPC certificate to the local planning authority before the LPA will be able to determine the application.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) encourage the applicant to review the Council's SuDS Guidance, as this outlines what is required for each type of planning application and what the LLFA expectations are for design requirements. The SuDS guidance can be found here: https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/environment-and-neighbourhoods/flooding/flood-and-water-management/sustainable-drainage-systems-guidance-2022-update.

Furthermore, to adhere to the Drainage Hierarchy, the LLFA have a guidance document for infiltration testing, which can be found here: https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/environment-and-neighbourhoods/flooding/flood-and-water-management/supplementary-infiltration-guidance.

Any future proposal should address all of the following: Flood Risk, Runoff Destinations, Peak Flow Control, Volume Control, Designing for exceedance, Climate Change & Urban Creep and Maintenance Plan. Guidance on the requirements for each of the above can be found in the first link.

All drainage schemes must comply with the standard design parameters.

Cultural heritage – Built heritage

The Proposed Development consists of a solar generating station with an expected generating capacity of 350 megawatts (MW) and a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with associated infrastructure.

Location:
The Site is located south of Little Sessay. The Site is approximately 420 ha, split across two 'development parcels' – known as Sessay Park (west) and Briar Hill (east). Connecting the two 'development parcels' is an area of land to be used to provide an electrical connection between them using an underground cable.

Comments:
Conservation comments are provided for an EIA Scoping Report submitted to the Council for consideration upon the setting of heritage assets including conservation areas surrounding the sites. The scoping report considers potential impacts which may cause significant environmental effects. The comments below are related to build form conservation and their setting.

Setting and Planning Balance

The comments have been assessed using the National Planning Statement, National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Guidance along with relevant local plan policies for North Yorkshire.

The NPPG references the NPPF regarding the historic environment and provides further clarification on the setting of a heritage asset. It states (Reference ID: 18a013-20190723) that: “The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places.”

Study Area

Conservation comments area provided for this preapplication discussion scoping report submitted to the council for consideration upon the setting of heritage assets including conservation areas surrounding the sites. The scoping report considers potential impacts which may cause significant environmental effects. The comments below are related to build form conservation and their setting.

- Briar Hill

Land has been selected around an area known as Briar Hill 15 parcels of land in total. The closest parcels of land BH1 BH2 BH3 are near the Little Sessay conservation area boundary. Within the conservation are lies to the south close to the land parcels mentioned is a cluster of listed buildings; Church of St Cuthbert Grade II*, Churchyard Wall at Church of St Cuthbert Grade II, Cross south east of Church of St Cuthbert Grade II, Lychgate to Church of St Cuthbert Grade II, Bridge over Birdforth Beck Grade II Sessay Church of England School and Masters House Grade II.

There are two further listed buildings within the Briar Hill study area theses are Grade II buildings Barn north of Wood End and Woodmans House Farmhouse, and Throstle Nest.

- Sessay Park

The Sessay Park area identifies 8 parcels of land which area approximately 780m southwest of Little Sessay and 500m southwest of Sessay. Therefore, further away from the heritage assets noted in Briar Hill. The only listed building of note which is close to the areas of land identified is Bridge over river Bridgeforth beck north west of New Mills Grade II.

Cable Corridor Options Area

The EIA scoping opinion request document goes on to outline an area for cable route search this area is highlighted in blue on pages 8 and 11. For the purposes of above ground heritage assets it is considered that this element of the proposal would not harm the setting of above ground designated assets. Other than the initial cable exposure of land to route the cable.

Construction Assessment

Potential impacts via construction would affect the cultural significance of built environment including the character of conservation areas, and the contribution made by setting.

The proposed development may result in permanent and irreversible impacts resulting from construction. This includes but may not be limited to changes to belowground environments. There may also be temporary, short-term, reversible impacts from the construction of the development and would potentially include, but are not limited to construction compounds, materials storage areas, temporary access routes, security lighting, welfare facilities, and other construction related infrastructure. Also included would be the setting of built heritage assets and conservation areas due to level changes and extent of artificial light, noise from construction, vehicle movement, and presence of construction personnel required and traffic to build the scheme.

Conclusion:

During operation of the development would introduce change into the setting of designated heritage assets. It is stated in the EIA Scoping Opinion Request document that any resulting impacts upon those assets due to alterations within their settings would be apparent for the duration of the operational phase.

It is noted that for the most part the designated heritage assets are respected for their historic fabric and architectural detail. With respect to their setting, the views towards the assets are the critical components of their experience part of this the agricultural nature in which the buildings can be seen or are located

within the boundary of. Given the proposal would be erected on farmland, regard to and the development of options to potentially mitigate any effects should be made.

The scoping opinion request has identified the Grade II Listed Buildings of Throstle Nest and Barn North of Wood End as the key sensitive heritage designations, given they form part of their historically associated farmland. It is proposed that effects upon built form heritage assets are taken into consideration for the EIA, appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated into the design of the proposals.

Cultural heritage – Archaeology

The report downplays archaeological potential and the impact of solar arrays suggesting that there would be no or negligible material loss of archaeological interest. The Council consider that this cannot be established without further information on the nature of the archaeological resource.

Paragraph 4.10.22 states that where intrusive groundworks are required, e.g. for battery storage areas, that impacts would be mitigated through appropriate investigation and recording. The preferred option would be to ensure that these elements of the proposal are sited away from sensitive archaeological remains and a design or engineered response would be more appropriate.

It is noted in paragraph 4.10.31 that a draft Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment has been prepared and that it is intended to carry out a geophysical survey. We agree that these surveys will be helpful in assessing the impact of the proposal on below ground heritage assets.

We agree with Paragraph 4.10.47 which states that archaeology is scoped into the EIA and further investigations, including an updated HEDBA, geophysical survey, and trial trenching (if required), will be undertaken to inform appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures.

The assessment methodology set out in 4.10.43 and 4.10.47 are agreed, however, the Council consider that some of the preceding paragraphs make assumptions about significance, level of impact and the purpose of the assessment being to investigate and record rather than a broader consideration of mitigation which may include design or engineered mitigation.

The Council note that the Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment appears to be well produced and researched and the proposed geophysical survey (para. 6.7) followed by intrusive investigation is welcomed. However, the Council reserve judgement until the results of the geophysical survey are known but would add that the intrusive survey should target not only anomalies in the areas of highest impact but also anomalies of potentially high significance in areas of less impact.

Electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields

The Council welcomes the consideration of this in the EIA.

Human health

The Council have the following comments to make:

<u>Context</u>

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Public and Population health is determined by the complex interaction of a wide range of different determinants of health; from an individual’s genetic make-up, to lifestyles and behaviours, and the communities, local economy, built and natural environments. Therefore, all developments will have some effect on the determinants of health, which in turn will influence the health and wellbeing of the general population, vulnerable groups and individual people.

Having reviewed the consultation documents and the information provided within the scoping report, we wish to make the following specific comments and recommendations:

Chapter 4.5 of the EIA Scoping Report concerns Socio-economics and Human Health. However, the assessment methodology does not include an appropriate assessment for the consideration of health, such as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) guidance (2022). These are acknowledged as providing a robust and recognised approach to assessing Population and Human Health Impacts.

We recommend that a standalone Population and Human Health Chapter should be produced as Part of the Environmental Impact Assessment. The assessment should use the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) Guide to: Effective Scoping of Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment and subsequent assessment should consider the document Determining Significance for Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment'.

The IEMA guide, "Effective Scoping of Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment" (November 2022), highlights there is the potential for developments to impact the wellbeing of the local population, through worry and anxiety, from the point of the initial announcement of development.

We recommend that the timelines and assessment methodologies utilised to identify health impacts also cover the scoping stage (i.e. immediate impacts), as well as the broader timeline of construction, operation and decommissioning.

In accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, assessment of population and human health must be carried out by a suitably qualified professional. IEMA guidance (2022) '*Determining Significance for Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment'* states that "EIA significance is defined as informed expert judgement of the importance, desirability or acceptability of a change", which for human health relates to whether the change is important, desirable or acceptable for public health.

The IEMA document (2024) "*Competent Expert for Health Impact Assessment including Health in Environmental Assessments*" should be utilised to ensure that appropriately qualified professionals undertake any assessment relevant to human health. Relevant competencies of the assessing individual should be noted as part of the report.

Landscape and visual

Chapter 4.8 specifically relate to Landscape and Visual Impact in the Applicant's EIA Scoping Report.

The Council provide the following answers to the questions posed:

- **Question L1 - Is the 3km study area from the extents of the Proposed Development, except for Howardian Hills National Landscape and North York Moors National Landscape having a study area up to 7.5km, considered appropriate?**

  Yes

- **Question L2 - Do consultees consider the selection of viewpoints and visualisations appropriate?**

  There are cumulative impacts that are likely to be visible from Husthwaite – especially in PROW's running south from the village and/ or from Woolpots lane. The proposed needs to be considered in relation to the Woolpots solar site as a cumulative impact and the best way to do this is to make an assessment from this viewpoint. This receptor is also on the edge/ just outside of the Howardian Hills National Landscape.

- **Question L3 - Is it considered appropriate to scope out all landscape character and visual receptors beyond 3km, apart from those located within the Howardian Hills National Landscape and North York Moors National Landscape?**

  Yes

- **Question L4 - Is the exclusion of the settlements of Raskelf, Dalton, Cundall and Husthwaite from the assessment considered appropriate?**

  No see above comment on viewpoints. PROW running north -south should be included in viewpoint assessments to take account of cumulative impacts from Husthwaite which sits on higher ground overlooking Woolpots and the proposed will have the potential to be seen within the context of other solar farms (proposed or consented) from this vantage point.

- **Question L5 - Is the approach to the RVAA, including the 0.5km study area, considered appropriate?**

  Yes

- **Question L6 - Is the proposed assessment approach to the Landscape and Visual ES Chapter deemed appropriate?**

  Documents to be considered in the assessment should include LITGN 2024-01 which gives further guidance alongside GLVIA (whilst not replacing it). It refines how principles should be interpreted and applied.

  It is stated in the scoping report that visualisations will only be prepared from 4 of the Viewpoints assessed. Does this mean that there will be no photography/ type 1 visualisations to accompany the assessments from the rest of the viewpoints? We would prefer to see accompanying type 1 for all with type 3 from a select few.

Major accidents and disasters

The chapter on Major accidents and disasters is in line with the PINS advice page. We have no further comment at this time.

Noise and vibration

Section 4 of the EIA Scoping Report covers the relevant standards, guidance and assessment methods that the Environmental Health department of the Council would expect to see when assessing impact from noise and vibration of a development of this kind.

The Applicant has stated that they will consult with this department regarding noise and vibration as part of the assessment process and non-statutory and statutory consultation to agree on the proposed assessment methodology, which will also give opportunity for the Environmental Health department to make any further comments.

Noise and vibration from the onsite equipment including inverters and transformers and other equipment has the potential to produce noise. The department has advised that the impact of existing and new commercial noise sources should be assessed in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 and where background levels are defined as low, an assessment must be made as to whether the equipment is likely to be tonal. If the equipment has tonal characterises this must be accounted for and corrections applied accordingly. A lower fixed threshold rating level (rather than a ‘no exceed by background level’) is only acceptable, if tonal corrections have been applied appropriately.

Any onsite field noise monitoring must be sufficiently robust and take account of worst case scenarios. Unattended only field assessments will not be acceptable. Given the location, background levels due to road and rail transport will verify through the day and week and this must be accounted and considered when conducting the field assessments.

This department would also welcome the mentioned Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) once this is able to be produced.

This department would expect mitigation measures to be included with all reports and surveys should they be required to prevent adverse impacts at nearby sensitive receptors.

Traffic and movement

It is noted that the developer is to produce a Transport Assessment for the site to support its production.

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) have the following comments to make:

BESS Requirements

A BESS should have:

Provision for 3 fire appliances to stand on site, and for each to turn on site and leave in forward gear.

- Emergency access in different wind direction than main entrance. Please note the red line boundary needs to extend to public highway for both main and emergency access.
- Any access over private roads or culverts, need to be proven to be capable of carrying fully loaded fire tender – applicants must undertake a structural check on culverts and swept path on tight bends etc.
- Any single lane access must consider what happens in a fire emergency. This includes passing place provision as bare minimum. Additional commentary is required when the access serves multiple uses as there is an increased risk of conflict and obstruction.
- All fire water from an emergency incident must stay on site and not runoff onto public highway. This is likely to be significant in volume and potentially contaminated. Details should be submitted to evidence this will not enter the highway system.

An emergency access is required to BESS sites. This site has only a single access to the highway and requires an emergency access in a different wind direction. This will need to be formally constructed and maintained as an emergency access for the duration of the operation of the development.

The internal layout is not yet confirmed but will require an internal perimeter track to allow access for Fire Devices.

Highway Access and Routing

- Additional mitigation methods will be required for safe use of the identified routes, with specific requirements for appropriate, formally constructed passing places where the carriageway width is under 5.5 metres in width. The LHA will need to see details of signage and management features to ensure no traffic deviates from the approved routes

Cumulative impact of nearby developments was briefly noted in the Scoping Note (4.2.50), although this should be reviewed at each stage of the application process and applications are regularly approved as per Section 4.12 of the Scoping Note.

Commitment Register

The applicant has also committed to restricting all construction and decommissioning traffic to outside peak traffic hours. The applicant should provide details on the restricted hours and how these have been identified, including details of staff movements (related shift patterns), or only deliveries.

National Cycle Network

NCN route 657 runs along Race Lane and Low Lane and we would expect to see relatively high levels of these vulnerable users. Further assessment should be undertaken, and mitigations measures provided to ensure their continued safety.

Site compounds

- Fencing must not obstruct any passage of the adopted highway or interfere with any visibility splays on the highway.

- Details of temporary lighting will be required to ensure no detrimental impact to highway users.

Crossing or alteration of watercourses

- Structural approval may also be required for any access routes (new or proposed) which cross a watercourse.

The LHA request the following documentation is provided within any future planning application:

- Transport Assessment
- Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Glint and Glare Report

From a Local Highway Authority perspective, an EIA Assessment **is envisaged** for this application, as the IEMA guidance pertaining to highways impact is triggered.

With response to the 5 questions highlighted in the Section 4.2 of the Scoping Note:

- The proposed Study Area scope is acceptable at the current stage, including the A19, with potential requirement for extensions depending on the identified outcome.
- It is accepted that the operational use will have negligible impact on highway safety, and that the construction phase is the worst case phase requiring assessment.
- The LHA needs additional detail with regards to mitigation measures for the routes, including vehicular, cycle, horse and pedestrian use.
- The applicant should consider the planning portal before further submissions. The LHA regularly receives new planning applications, including those currently at confidential pre-app stages, which could affect the proposed development.
- The scope of effects appear to be acceptable, but additional details will be required for further submissions as noted throughout the document.

PROW

There is a Definitive Map Modification Order which is on the same alignment as public footpath 10.127/11/3) to upgrade the footpath to a bridleway / restricted byway and is based on historical evidence.

We are pleased to note in the documents provided so far that there is a proposed 5 metre buffer zone on each side of the public rights of way, which is to be welcomed. We would request that no routes are subject to temporary closure orders during the construction of the project, but if this isn't possible, then such closures should be kept to a minimum and alternative routes for the public to use should be provided.

While the Sessay Park site has no PROWs passing directly through it, the wider area has a number of footpath and bridleway PROW links and so we would expect to see relatively high levels of these vulnerable users. Further assessment should be undertaken, and mitigations measures provided to ensure their continued safety.

Cumulative and in-combination effects

The cumulative impact assessment is in line with the PINS advice page. We anticipate working closely with the applicant on this matter as the assessment progresses and have no further comment at this time.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to make contact.

Yours faithfully,

Martin Grainger
Head of Development Management

NORTH YORKSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

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27 January 2026

FIRE SAFETY - COMMUNICATION WITH THE PLANNING AUTHORITY

Sedgeby Solar Limited, Sedgeby Solar Farm

Receipt is acknowledged of your planning communication:

Dated: 21 January 2026
Plans No: EN0110026

Your communication has been dealt with as follows:

At this stage in the planning process the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority in its capacity as Fire and Rescue Authority ("YNYCA") offer the following observations to the proposed development: The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) publication Grid Scale Battery Energy Storage System Planning BESSDesignGuidance(nfcc.org.uk) should be used as current best practice guidance in the design and installation of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) sites.

The majority of information we collect regarding business fire safety is non-personalised information, however any personal data we collect will be managed in accordance with our Privacy Notice which can be viewed on our website, www.northyorksfire.gov.uk/about-us/data/privacy-policies/.

Under the Regulatory Reform Order 2005 we are obliged to publish a public register of enforcement action which can be viewed via our website, www.northyorksfire.gov.uk/about-us/financial/lists-and-registers/.

Should you require further information please contact the officer whose name appears at the head of the letter.

Yours faithfully

North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Corporate Directorate for Growth, Enterprise and Environment
Development Management
Seafield House
Kirkleatham Street
Redcar
TS10 1SP

Email: planning_admin@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk
www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/Planning
Direct line01287 612627

The Planning Inspectorate

Our Ref: R/2026/0037/LAC
Your Ref:
Contact: Mr D Pedlow
Date: 26 January 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

PROPOSAL: **Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (The EIA Regulations) – Regulations 10 and 11**
- Scoping consultation and notification of the applicant's contact details and duty to make available information to the applicant if requested Ref. No. EN0110026
LOCATION: **SEDGEBY SOLAR FARM**
APPLICANT: **The Planning Inspectorate**

Thank you for your consultation received on **21 January 2026**.

I would advise that having considered the detail of the application, we have no comments to make at this point in time.

Yours faithfully

Mr D Pedlow
Development Management Team Leader

From: Simon and Judith Walburn <[redacted]@hotmail.com>
Sent: 16 February 2026 12:07
To: sedgebysolar@planninginspectorate.uk.gov <sedgebysolar@planninginspectorate.uk.gov>
Subject: Your Ref EN0110026 Sedgeby Solar

Dear Wing Sum To

Sessay Parish Council wish to have the following points considered in connection with this application.

1)Concerns over the siting of battery units, including the risk of noise pollution and airborne pollution in the event of fire.

2)Concerns regarding the possibility of heavy metals leaching from panels and contaminating the soil and groundwater

3)Concerns regarding the loss of good quality farmland and the industrialisation of a rural agricultural area

4)Concerns over the impact of heavy traffic over unsuitable rural roads, particularly through villages, past Sessay School, St Cuthberts Church and the nearby Grade II Listed bridge over Birdforth Beck.

5)Concerns over the effect on wildlife, including general disruption to habitat and animal movement caused by the panels and perimeter fencing.

6)Concerns over the visual impact of the proposed development and its negative effect on local amenity.

7)Concerns over the impact on the panoramic view towards the Pennines from the western side of the North York Moors National Park

8)Concerns over the impact of the substation, the proposed site of which is currently unknown, which should be included in any consideration of this proposal

9)Concerns that the area already hosts solar farms, with another about to start construction. The cumulative impact of this proposal and the existing solar farms should be considered

10)Concerns over the effect on drainage and the heightened risk of flooding, particularly in the area that is currently designated 'flood risk'.

Yours sincerely

Simon Walburn

Chairman, Sessay Parish Council

UK Health Security Agency

Environmental Hazards and Emergencies Department
Seaton House, City Link
London Road
Nottingham, NG2 4LA

nsipconsultations@ukhsa.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/ukhsa

Your Ref: EN0110026
Our Ref: 94390CIRIS

Wing Sum To
Environmental Advisor on behalf of the Secretary of State
The Planning Inspectorate
c/o QUADIENT
69 Buckingham Avenue
Slough SL1 4PN

12th February 2026

Dear Wing Sum To

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
Sedgeby Solar Farm, EN0110026
Scoping Consultation Stage

Thank you for including the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) in the scoping consultation phase of the above application. ***Please note that we request views from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and the response provided below is sent on behalf of both UKHSA and OHID.*** The response is impartial and independent.

The health of an individual or a population is the result of a complex interaction of a wide range of different determinants of health, from an individual's genetic make-up to lifestyles and behaviours, and the communities, local economy, built and natural environments to global ecosystem trends. All developments will have some effect on the determinants of health, which in turn will influence the health and wellbeing of the general population, vulnerable groups and individual people. Although assessing impacts on health beyond direct effects from for example emissions to air or road traffic incidents is complex, there is a need to ensure a proportionate assessment focused on an application's significant effects.

Having considered the submitted scoping report we wish to make the following comments:

Environmental Public Health
We understand that the promoter will wish to avoid unnecessary duplication and that many issues including air quality, emissions to water, waste, contaminated land etc. will be covered elsewhere in the Environmental Statement (ES). We believe the summation of relevant issues

into a specific section of the report provides a focus which ensures that public health is given adequate consideration. The section should summarise key information, risk assessments, proposed mitigation measures, conclusions and residual impacts relating to human health. Compliance with the requirements of National Policy Statements and relevant guidance and standards should also be highlighted.

In terms of the level of detail to be included in an ES, we recognise that the differing nature of projects is such that their impacts will vary. UKHSA and OHID's predecessor organisation Public Health England produced an advice document *Advice on the content of Environmental Statements accompanying an application under the NSIP Regime*', setting out aspects to be addressed within the Environmental Statement[1]. This advice document and its recommendations are still valid and should be considered when preparing an ES. Please note that where impacts relating to health and/or further assessments are scoped out, promoters should fully explain and justify this within the submitted documentation.

Air Quality

Our position is that pollutants associated with road traffic or combustion, particularly particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen are non-threshold; i.e, an exposed population is likely to be subject to potential harm at any level and that reducing public exposure to non-threshold pollutants (such as particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide) below air quality standards will have potential public health benefits. We support approaches which minimise or mitigate public exposure to non-threshold air pollutants, address inequalities (in exposure) and maximise co-benefits (such as physical exercise). We encourage their consideration during development design, environmental and health impact assessment, and development consent.

We recommend that dust, particulate emissions (both PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) and traffic exhaust emissions should be scoped in for further assessment for the construction and decommissioning phases of the project owing to the proximity of human receptors to the site.

Regarding a potential fire occurring at the Battery Energy System Storage (BESS), it is acknowledged that an Outline Battery Safety Management Plan (OBSMP) is proposed to mitigate this. Nevertheless, we recommend that the air quality impacts of a fire at the BESS should be scoped in for further assessment. This should include point source emissions modelling of a worst-case scenario to predict potential NOx, particulate emissions and other relevant pollutants such as HF, HCI, HCN in the event of a fire including wildfire), and predict concentrations at nearby sensitive receptors.

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1 https://khub.net/documents/135939561/390856715/Advice+on+the+content+of+environmental+statements+accompanying+an+application+under+the+Nationally+Significant+Infrastructure+Planning+Regime.pdf/a86b5521-46cc-98e4-4cad-f81a6c58f2e2?t=1615998516658

Incidents and Accidents

The applicant elects to scope out further assessment of major incidents and disasters. The applicant does not consider the risk or potential impacts of chemical fuel spillages/leaks, road/rail accidents, utilities failure, criminal activities or fire (other than for BESS infrastructure). We recommend that a risk assessment and proposed mitigation measures to prevent incidents and accidents should be scoped in for further assessment.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of UK Health Security Agency

Please mark any correspondence for the attention of National Infrastructure Planning Administration.