



Third
Revolution
Projects

Chapter 4: EIA Methodology

Tydd Solar: Proposed Solar Farm, Land at
Treading Field, Treading Drain, Tydd St. Giles,
Cambridgeshire PE13 4PL



Applicant: Pathfinder Clean Energy UKDev Ltd

May 2026

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.0.1 This chapter of the EIA sets out the approach taken to the EIA process for the Proposed Development.
- 1.0.2 The EIA process assists the decision-maker in their determination of the application by identifying potential significant environmental effects and any necessary mitigation measures. This EIA has been completed in consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees, interested parties, and the general public.
- 1.0.3 The structure of this Environmental Statement (ES) follows the requirements of the EIA Regulations and relevant good practice guidance. The ES comprises a Non-Technical Summary (NTS), the main Environmental Statement (which this chapter forms part of), and accompanying figures and appendices.
- 1.0.4 This chapter is structured as follows:
- Overview of the relevant legislation, policy, and guidance
 - An outline of the EIA process utilised;
 - The scope of the assessment completed;
 - Details of the assessment of potential effects;
 - The consultation undertaken; and
 - Assumptions, likely limitations and uncertainty.

2.0 Legislation, policy, and guidelines

- 2.0.1 The process for Environmental Impact Assessment in the context of town and country planning in England is governed by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ('The Regulations'). The Proposed Development falls under Schedule 2 of The Regulations as it would be "a generating station". The criteria for considering whether a Schedule 2 development requires the preparation of an EIA are set out in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations. Section 4 of the EIA Regulations details the EIA process while Sections 4 and 5 and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations provide details of the information to be included within the Environmental Statement.
- 2.0.2 Additional topic-specific legislation, policy and guidance documents are noted within the technical assessment chapters of this ES and within the supporting Technical Appendices.

3.0 Framework for the EIA

- 3.0.1 Guidance on EIA states that the aim of an Environmental Impact Assessment is to protect the environment by ensuring that a local planning authority when deciding whether to grant planning permissions for a project, which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects.

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- 3.0.2 The findings of the EIA are presented in this ES, which has been prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations. The general approach which has been followed in undertaking the EIA is presented in this chapter and an overview of the methodology adapted for each technical study is provided within the respective technical chapters.

3.1 Screening and pre-application advice

- 3.1.1 Screening is the process by which it is determined whether or not an EIA should be conducted for a proposed development.
- 3.1.2 As set out in Section 2.0, the Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations. Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations sets out the criteria that should be considered in determining whether a Schedule 2 development is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence require a formal EIA.
- 3.1.3 The Proposed Development has been screened for EIA twice. The first screening was submitted on 15th September 2022 (Fenland application ref: F/YR22/1070/SC, South Holland application ref: PE/00249/22). A response was received from South Holland District Council on 13th October and from Fenland District Council on 11th October. The determination at the time by both councils was that the proposed development did not constitute EIA development and would not require an EIA.
- 3.1.4 The full planning application then proceeded through determination by the usual process where planning permission was refused by both local planning authorities. The decisions not to grant permission were not related to the absence of an EIA.
- 3.1.5 Subsequently, the applicant submitted appeals against the Council's decisions on 24th October 2025.
- 3.1.6 Following the refusal of the planning application, an application for a solar farm was submitted for a site immediately adjacent to the site that is the subject of this EIA ('the neighbouring site') and validated on 13th October 2025. For the avoidance of doubt, the application on the neighbouring site is completely separate and unrelated to the Proposed Development. An EIA screening decision for the neighbouring site was issued, determining that the neighbouring proposal constitutes an EIA development on the basis of cumulative impacts between the neighbouring scheme and the Proposed Development.
- 3.1.7 On this basis, Fenland District Council came to the view that the Proposed Development would also be considered an EIA development. The Secretary of State returned a screening direction on 27th January 2026 confirming the Proposed Development would be an EIA development on the basis of cumulative impact with the neighbouring scheme and the nearby Meridian Solar Farm Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project site.

3.2 Scoping

- 3.2.1 The EIA Scoping process is designed to identify the potentially significant environmental issues which should be considered when assessing the potential effects of the Proposed

Development, and those that are not likely to be significant – which can be ‘scoped out.’ An EIA Scoping Opinion may be obtained from the consenting authority, which sets out the matters that should be considered through the EIA.

3.2.2 The Applicant has submitted requests for scoping opinions to both South Holland and Fenland District Councils on 18th February 2026, confirming that the following two assessment chapters have been scoped in:

- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Utilisation of Best-and-Most-Versatile (BMV) Land

3.2.3 These topics have been scoped into this EIA based on the screening direction from the Secretary of State which states that “there is potential for cumulative effects from the combined loss of BMV agricultural land and landscape and visual effects.” Further, impacts to BMV land and to the landscape are the reasons cited for refusal of the scheme, with no other reason being cited by either local authority.

4.0 The EIA process

4.0.1 EIA is the systematic process of compiling, assessing, presenting and mitigating all the significant environmental effects of a proposed development. The assessment is designed to inform the decision-making process by way of setting out the likely environmental profile of a project. Identification of potentially significant adverse environmental effects then feeds into the design of the Proposed Development and the incorporation of appropriate mitigation measures into both the design of the scheme and the way in which it is constructed.

4.0.2 The main steps in the EIA assessment process for the Proposed Development have been:

- Baseline surveys to provide information on the existing environmental character of the Site and the surrounding area.
- Consideration of the possible interactions between the Proposed Development and the existing and predicted future site conditions. These interactions or effects are assessed using criteria based on accepted guidance and best practice.
- Prediction of the environmental effects, including direct, indirect, cumulative, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, beneficial and adverse effects, by assessing the design of the Proposed Development.
- Identification of any necessary changes to the Proposed Development and mitigation measures designed to avoid, reduce or offset adverse effects and enhance beneficial effects.
- Assessment of the significance of any residual effects after mitigation, in relation to the sensitivity of the feature affected and the magnitude of the impact predicted, in line with the methodology identified below.
- Identification of any uncertainties inherent in the methods used, the predictions made, and the conclusions drawn during the course of the assessment process.

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- Reporting of the results of the EIA in this ES.

4.1 Assessment of effects

- 4.1.1 Throughout the assessment, a distinction has been made between the term 'impact' and 'effect'. The EIA Regulations refer to the requirement to report the significance of 'effects'. An impact has been defined as the physical change of the characteristics of the receiving environment as a result of the Proposed Development (e.g. glint and glare from panels), whereas an effect refers to the significance of this impact (e.g. a significant residual glare effect on residential properties). These terms have been adopted throughout this ES to present a consistent approach to the assessment and evaluation of effects and their significance.
- 4.1.2 The exception to this is the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which classifies the level of physical and perceptual change to the receiving environment as the "magnitude of change" in line with the recommendations of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment third edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute & IEMA, 2013). However, this terminology should be considered interchangeable with "magnitude of impact".
- 4.1.3 Within this ES, the assessment of effects for each environmental topic takes the environmental impacts of the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development into account; and how the environmental baseline is expected to evolve in the absence of the Proposed Development (the do-nothing scenario).
- 4.1.4 In order to determine whether or not the potential effects of the Proposed Development are likely to be 'significant', a number of criteria are used. These significance criteria vary between topics but generally include:
- international, national and local designations or standards;
 - relationship with planning policy;
 - sensitivity of the receiving environment;
 - magnitude of impact;
 - reversibility and duration of the effect; and
 - inter-relationship between effects.
- 4.1.5 Effects that are considered to be significant are identified within the ES. The significance of the resultant effect is informed by professional judgement as to the importance or sensitivity of the affected receptor(s) and the nature and magnitude of the predicted changes. For example, a high magnitude of impact on a low sensitivity receptor will have an effect of lesser significance than the same impact on a high sensitivity receptor.
- 4.1.6 Table 1 below is used as a guide to demonstrate the relationship between the sensitivity of the identified receptor and the anticipated magnitude of an impact. Professional judgement is, however, important in verifying the suitability of this guiding 'formula' to the assessment

of the significance of each individual effect. Therefore, the table below may be adapted as necessary for different technical assessments.

Table 1: Significance of Effect

		Sensitivity of receptor/receiving environment to change			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of impact	High	Major	Moderate/Major	Minor/Moderate	Negligible
	Medium	Moderate/Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Minor/Moderate	Minor	Negligible/Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

4.1.7 The following terms are used in the Environmental Statement, unless otherwise stated, to determine the level of effects predicted to occur:

- major beneficial or adverse effect – where the Proposed Development would result in a large improvement (or deterioration) to the existing environment;
- moderate beneficial or adverse effect – where the Proposed Development would result in a medium improvement (or deterioration) to the existing environment;
- minor beneficial or adverse effect – where the Proposed Development would result in a small improvement (or deterioration) to the existing environment; and
- negligible – where the Proposed Development would result in no discernible improvement (or deterioration) to the existing environment.

4.1.8 Using professional judgement and with reference to relevant guidance, the majority of the assessments within this ES consider effects of moderate or greater significance to be ‘significant’, with those of minor significance or less to be non-significant. Any deviations from this are clearly stated within the individual technical chapters.

4.1.9 Summary tables are provided at the end of each technical chapter of the ES and within Chapter 7 that outline:

- the predicted effects associated with each environmental issue;
- the appropriate mitigation measures required to address these effects; and
- the subsequent overall residual effects.

4.1.10 Distinction has also been made between direct and indirect, short and long term, permanent and temporary effects.

4.2 Cumulative effects

4.2.1 Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations sets out the matters that are required to be incorporated into the ES. Part 5 of Schedule 4 states that an ES should include an assessment of “the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any

existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources.”

- 4.2.2 Cumulative effects are those which result from incremental changes caused by past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions resulting from the introduction of the Proposed Development. These cumulative effects cover the combined effect of individual impacts from the Proposed Development and combined impacts of other nearby solar and BESS developments. Consideration of cumulative solar and BESS developments is detailed within the accompanying technical chapters.

5.0 Scope of the EIA

5.0 Spatial scope

- 5.0.1 The spatial scope of the EIA, i.e. the geographical coverage of the assessment undertaken, has taken account of a number of factors, including the following:
- The extent of the proposed development as defined by the red line boundary in the submitted Site Location Plan
 - The nature of the baseline environment, sensitive receptors and the likely impacts that could arise; and
 - The distance over which predicted effects are likely to remain significant.
- 5.0.2 With regard to cumulative effects, the proposed cumulative impact area is proposed to be a 5km radius around the Proposed Development in which to identify further solar and BESS developments that could impact on the landscape or BMV land. The EIA Regulations, Planning Practice Guidance nor any other guidance does not define the area within which to consider cumulative effects so this radius has been chosen, using professional judgment, to provide a wide enough area within which significant cumulative effects might reasonably be considered in conjunction with the Proposed Development.

5.1 Temporal scope

- 5.1.1 Environmental surveys have been undertaken between 2022 and 2025 with initial baseline surveys occurring earlier in the project lifespan and update surveys occurring during consultation on the planning application.
- 5.1.2 For the purposes of the EIA, construction would be assumed to commence in 2028, should the appeal be allowed, and is expected to last 8-12 months.
- 5.1.3 The operational life of the Proposed Development is 40 years, after which time it is assumed that it will be decommissioned (which itself would take up to 1 year).
- 5.1.4 It is anticipated that the levels of effect during decommissioning would be undertaken in line with best practice processes and methods at that time and will be managed through an agreed Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan.

6.0 Environmental Statement

6.0.1 Regulations 18(3) and 18(4) and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations specify the information for inclusion in Environmental Statements.

Regulation / Schedule	Required information	Where provided within this Environmental Statement
Regulation 18(3)	An environmental statement is a statement which includes at least: a.) A description of the proposed development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the development;	Chapter 2
	b.) a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment	The relevant technical chapters (chapter 5&6)
	c.) a description of any features of the proposed development, or measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment;	The proposed development is described at Chapter 3 and the proposed mitigations are detailed in the relevant technical chapters
	d.) a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer; which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment	Chapter 2
	e.) a non-technical summary of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d); and	Accompanying non-technical summary
	f.) any additional information specified in schedule 4 relevant to the specific characteristics of the particular development or type of development and to the environmental features	Chapters 5 & 6

	likely to be significantly affected	
Regulation 18(4)	(2) An environmental statement must (a) Where scoping opinion or direction has been issued in accordance with regulation 15 or 16, be based on the most recent scoping opinion or direction issued (so far as the proposed development remains materially the same as the proposed development which was subject to that opinion)	Scoping opinions have been received from Fenland and South Holland District Councils and are attached as appendices 2 & 3
	(b) Include the information reasonably required for reaching a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the development on the environment, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment	The information reasonably required for reaching a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the development is provided throughout the Environmental Statement
	(c) be prepared, taking into account the results of any relevant UK environmental assessment, which are reasonably available to the person preparing the environmental statement, with a view to avoiding duplication of assessment	This ES has taken into account the results of any relevant UK environmental assessments.
Regulation 18(5)	In order to ensure completeness and quality of the environmental statement (a) The developer must ensure that the environmental statement is prepared by competent experts; and	The ES has been prepared by competent experts whose credentials are listed in section 5.0 of chapter one.
	(b) The environmental statement must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or (c)	Refer to section 5.0 of chapter one

	qualifications of such experts	
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7.0 Consultation

- 7.0.1 Consultation is a key component of the EIA process. Consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees has been undertaken by the Applicant since the feasibility stages of the Proposed Development.
- 7.0.2 As the application has already been submitted and determined by the relevant local planning authorities and the scheme has not been materially amended since those applications, the Proposed Development has already been significantly consulted on by both by the public and the relevant statutory bodies.
- 7.0.3 The Applicant and their EIA team have engaged through both formal consultation and informally through meetings, calls and emails. Details of the consultation undertaken can be found within each technical chapter.
- 7.0.4 This Environmental Statement will be submitted to the LPA and will be consulted upon by their Statutory and internal consultees. In parallel, public consultation will be undertaken on the Environmental Statement for the statutory period.

8.0 Consideration of alternatives

- 8.0.1 EIA legislation requires the consideration of alternatives and an indication of the reasons for selecting the site advanced, except where limited by constraints of commercial confidentiality.
- 8.0.2 The Proposed Development site has been demonstrated to be a viable and productive site for a solar development with associated BESS.
- 8.0.3 The Applicant considered a number of alternative layouts and different panel iterations for the Proposed Development, to arrive at the design for which consent is sought. A full description of the site identification and design iteration process is given in Chapter 2.

9.0 Assumptions, limitations and uncertainty

- 9.0.1 The EIA process is designed to enable informed decision-making based on the best available information about the environmental implications of a proposed development. However, there will always be some uncertainty inherent in the scale and nature of the predicted environmental effects as a result of the level of detailed information available at the time of assessment, data reliability or uncertainty, the potential for minor alterations to the Proposed Development following completion of the ES and/or the limitations of the prediction processes.
- 9.0.2 A number of assumptions were made during the EIA process and are detailed below:

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- the principal land uses adjacent to the site remain unchanged during the course of the Proposed Development's lifetime
 - current applications for solar and BESS development projects are included within the assessment of cumulative effects for each technical aspect, as relevant; and
 - information provided by third parties (including publicly available information and databases) is correct at time of submission of this ES.
- 9.0.3 Specific assumptions have also been made with regards to the individual technical disciplines, which are detailed within each chapter.
- 9.0.4 The main limitation to EIA is that while baseline conditions are assumed to be accurate at the time of surveying, due to the dynamic nature of the environment, these conditions may change during site preparation, construction and operation.
- 9.0.5 There is also the potential for a degree of necessary flexibility as certain aspects of the Proposed Development may be subject to change until a detailed design has been finalised. The maximum design envelope has been considered to ensure a robust assessment and any design flexibility will not exceed these parameters. This flexibility is relevant to:
- panel height;
 - foundation and infrastructure design; and
 - micro-siting of the panels and associated infrastructure, including the BESS, which may change due to investigation findings or implementation of mitigation measures.
- 9.0.6 Any limitations to the EIA are summarised in each technical chapter, where relevant, together with the means proposed to mitigate these.
- 9.0.7 Information on the construction of the Proposed Development has been developed by the project team based on professional judgement and outline design works, on the most likely methods of construction, plant, access routes and working areas etc. for the purposes of the EIA. The final choice of optimum construction methods will rest with the Principal Contractor and may differ from those used in this assessment, with any such uncertainty stated in the EIA Report. Any changes to these methods will remain within the maximum design envelope.