

# Chapter B

## Scope and Methodology

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# **East Claydon Greener Grid Park Environmental Statement**

## **Chapter B Scope & Methodology**

April 2025

**Lichfields**

**The Minster Building, 21 Mincing Lane,  
London EC3R 7AG  
[www.lichfields.uk](http://www.lichfields.uk)**

**LICHFIELDS**

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# Contents

<b>B1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>B2.0</b>	<b>Requirement for an EIA</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>B3.0</b>	<b>Scope of the Environmental Statement</b>	<b>4</b>
	Request for an EIA Scoping Opinion	4
	The Scope of the EIA	5
<b>B4.0</b>	<b>EIA Process and Difficulties</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>B5.0</b>	<b>Methodological Approach</b>	<b>17</b>
	General Approach	17
	Proposed Development Assessed	17
	Embedded Mitigation	17
	Assessment of Effects	18
	Structure of Technical Assessments	20
<b>B6.0</b>	<b>Consultation and Engagement</b>	<b>22</b>
	Engagement with Buckinghamshire Council and Other Key Stakeholders	22
	Public Engagement	23
	Relationship of Consultation to the EIA	23
<b>B7.0</b>	<b>Abbreviations &amp; Definitions</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>B8.0</b>	<b>References</b>	<b>25</b>

## **B1.0 Introduction**

- B1.1 This chapter describes the process undertaken to identify the likely significant environmental effects giving rise to the need for Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”). It also provides information on how the EIA has assisted in the iterative process of designing the Proposed Development.
- B1.2 Individual technical chapters (Chapters D to I, the Residual Effects and Cumulative Impact Assessment at Chapter J and the Mitigation and Monitoring summary at Chapter K) describe the specific technical methodologies adopted to identify and assess the potential environmental effects arising.
- B1.3 The structure of this chapter is as follows:
- 1 Section 2: sets out the requirement for an EIA;
  - 2 Section 3: describes the process of scoping the EIA with Buckinghamshire Council (BC);
  - 3 Section 4: reviews the overall difficulties in the process of assessment that have arisen in carrying out the EIA (further detail is provided in Chapters D to I, where relevant and applicable);
  - 4 Section 5: sets out the broad methodological approach taken for the assessment of potential environmental effects in this EIA, with topic specific methodologies provided in Chapters D to I; and
  - 5 Section 6: provides an overview of the process of consultation which has taken place to inform and assist in the process of EIA.
- B1.4 The chapter should be read in conjunction with the following technical appendices provided at Volume 2 to this ES:
- Appendix B1 – EIA Scoping Request (August 2024);
  - Appendix B2 – BC Formal Scoping Opinion (November 2024);
  - Appendix B3 – Scoping Correspondence.

## **B2.0 Requirement for an EIA**

- B2.1 As described in Chapter A ‘Introduction and Background’ of this Environmental Statement (‘ES’), EIA is a process undertaken in respect of certain types of development prior to the grant of planning permission.
- B2.2 The need for EIA is derived from European Union (‘EU’) Directive No 2014/52/EU (“the EIA Directive”)¹ on the assessment of certain public and private projects on the environment. The EIA Directive was first produced in 1985 as Directive No 85/337/EEC² and has been amended several times since. The Directive was originally incorporated into UK planning legislation in Regulations issued in 1988 with further key updates in 1999 and (for some parts of the UK, including England) in 2011.
- B2.3 On 16 May 2017, the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017³ came into force in England to incorporate the requirements of the 2014 Directive into domestic legislation. On 1 October 2018, minor amendments to the Regulations came into force in the form of the Town and Country Planning and Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2018⁴. This EIA has been carried out with regard to the requirements of the 2017 EIA Regulations as updated by the 2018 Amendment Regulations (together, the ‘2017 EIA Regulations’).
- B2.4 On 31 January 2020 the UK officially withdrew from the EU, known as ‘exit day’, and the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 came into force⁵. The Regulations mean that there is no change to the way in which the 2017 EIA Regulations (as updated) are applied in England.
- B2.5 A consultation paper was issued by the previous Government in March 2023 setting out proposals to replace the current EIA system with one focused on environmental outcomes. Part 6 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act⁶ will secure powers to implement a new system of environmental assessment known as Environmental Outcomes Reports. The Act has now been given Royal Assent. However, the Act will not come into effect until the Government brings forward commencement provisions and accompanying secondary legislation. Therefore, it does not need to be taken into account as part of this ES.
- B2.6 This ES sets out the findings of an assessment of the potential for likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development. It has been prepared because the Proposed Development falls within Part 3(a) of Schedule 2 of the 2017 EIA Regulations. Part 3(a) includes development which is an ‘*industrial installation for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1)*’; which includes more than 0.5 hectares of land.
- B2.7 For Schedule 2 developments, the 2017 EIA Regulations require that an EIA is undertaken where the development is “*likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location*”.
- B2.8 Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations contains ‘selection criteria’ to be used in determining whether Schedule 2 development requires an EIA. It identifies the characteristics of the development, the sensitivity of the location and the characteristics of the potential impact as the key ‘Selection Criteria for Screening Schedule 2 Development’.

- B2.9        An EIA has been conducted in respect of the Proposed Development due to its scale and location and the nature of the potential effects arising. It considers the likelihood of significant effects arising during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. Where significant adverse effects on the environment are identified, the assessment process establishes mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and, where possible, off-set the effects and monitoring measures to ensure their ongoing delivery.

## **B3.0 Scope of the Environmental Statement**

### **Request for an EIA Scoping Opinion**

- B3.1 To assist in identifying those environmental issues requiring consideration, the 2017 EIA Regulations make provision for an applicant to seek the local authority's formal opinion on the scope of the EIA (the 'scoping opinion'). The scoping opinion identifies those issues that the local authority considers may give rise to the most significant effects and enables the applicant to focus the assessment on those areas.
- B3.2 On 23 August 2024, a request was made to Buckinghamshire Council (Aylesbury Vale Area) to form an EIA scoping opinion with respect to the Proposed Development. A copy of the request is provided Appendix B1 (Volume 2 to this ES).
- B3.3 The request was made under Regulation 15 of the 2017 Regulations which establishes the criteria which need to be provided to assist a relevant planning authority in forming a scoping opinion. Accordingly, a summary of the likely issues, the potential effects and the proposed methodology of assessment for the identified areas of interest accompanied the request in the form of an EIA Scoping Report. The report contained a range of information so as to enable Buckinghamshire Council to form an EIA Scoping Opinion.
- B3.4 BC consulted with both internal and external consultees as part of the preparation of its EIA Scoping Opinion. The responses were integrated into the main scoping opinion text, as appropriate. The EIA Scoping Opinion (Appendix B2, Volume 2 to this ES) confirms that responses were received from the following consultees:
- 1 Environment Agency;
  - 2 Natural England;
  - 3 BC Biodiversity and Ecology;
  - 4 BC Economic Development;
  - 5 BC Environmental Health;
  - 6 BC Heritage;
  - 7 BC Archaeological Services;
  - 8 BC Highways and Transport;
  - 9 BC Lead Local Flood Authority; and,
  - 10 BC Public Rights of Way Officer.
- B3.5 Copies of the responses are available to be viewed on the BC planning register using the reference number 24/02556/SO with further details provided below, and are collated at Appendix B3 of this ES.
- B3.6 In addition, the following were consulted by BC but no response was received:
- 1 Network Rail;
  - 2 BC Landscape and Urban Design; and
  - 3 BC Climate Change and Sustainability.

## The Scope of the EIA

- B3.7 In its formal EIA Scoping Opinion (dated 14 November 2024) (Appendix B2, Volume 2 to this ES), BC confirmed that an EIA is required for the Proposed Development. It is noted that the EIA Scoping Opinion should be read in conjunction with the EIA Scoping Report.
- B3.8 Since the EIA scoping exercise was conducted in 2024, the design of the Proposed Development has evolved, and now includes grid balancing equipment in the form of Synchronous Compensators. However the overall nature, purpose and scale still sit within the maximum extent of development that was described within the 2024 EIA Scoping Report (Appendix B1), which the EIA Scoping Opinion was based upon. Therefore the EIA Scoping Opinion remains valid in relation to this ES<sup>1</sup>.
- B3.9 The EIA Scoping Opinion prescribes information for consideration as part of the EIA. In addition, it includes various information of relevance to the wider planning submission and consideration of the application more generally. On this basis, Table B3.1 below describes how this ES responds to the EIA Scoping Opinion and identifies where and how each issue has been addressed.
- B3.10 To keep the ES as succinct as possible, Table B3.1 only repeats information from the EIA Scoping Opinion where it requires a response within this ES. Introductory sections of the Scoping Opinion relate to information provided in the scoping request, consultation by the LPA, and an overview of the purpose of the scoping opinion. These sections are not repeated in the Table below.
- B3.11 A copy of the full EIA Scoping Opinion is included within Appendix B2 (Volume 2 to this ES).

Table B3.1 Response to Buckinghamshire Council's EIA Scoping Opinion

Summary of Information from Buckinghamshire Council (November 2024)	Response as part of the ES (April 2025)
<b>Development Proposals and Alternatives</b>	
The Scoping Report does not consider alternative sites. It is required that the Applicant will provide details of suitable alternative sites considered and an assessment of a "Do Nothing" scenario (which assumes no development is implemental and the current baseline conditions continue.	The technical chapters D-I each include a section titled 'Future Baseline' which assesses the 'do nothing' scenario in relation to each technical topic scoped into the EIA. A general consideration is also provided within Chapter C under the 'no development alternative'. Chapter C confirms also that the Site is the only location identified by the Applicant for the Proposed Development, and the Applicant has not given, and will not be giving, consideration as part of the EIA to other sites for the developments of a similar scale.
<b>Consultation and Part of the EIA Process</b>	
The Applicant is consulting the LPA as part of the EIA process. Consultee comments received by	Noted. All consultee comments on the EIA Scoping Report are appended to this ES

<sup>1</sup> The Planning Practice Guidance states: "Where a scoping opinion or direction has been issued, an Environmental Statement must 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 the opinion or direction" (PPG, Paragraph 038, Ref ID: 4-038-20170728)



<b>Summary of Information from Buckinghamshire Council (November 2024)</b>	<b>Response as part of the ES (April 2025)</b>
the LPA during the preparation of this Scoping Opinion will be referred to in summary in relevant parts of this response. The Applicant is however advised to consider the consultation responses that can be found on the Council Planning Portal under ref: 24/02556/SO. This letter should be read in conjunction with the responses	(Appendix B3) and have been considered in the preparation of the ES. Further detail is provided under 'consultation' within this chapter, and within each technical chapter D-I.
<b>Geographical Scope</b>	
The proposed EIA will include the physical extent of the Site as shown in Appendix 1. However, the impact of the proposal is likely to extend beyond the proposed site boundary. Where relevant, these matters are set out under each topic. The geographical extent of the EIA will also need to include the potential impact of related and un-related activities, and any other land required for development specific infrastructure outside the proposed site boundary.	Each technical Chapter D-I defines the study area or zone of influence/impact that is relevant to that technical assessment.  The development assessed by the EIA is described in detail within Chapter C of this ES. This includes the grid connection route, which is included within the Site boundary for the Planning Application. Related activities such as construction traffic routing are assessed within the ES as appropriate and as scoped within the scoping process.  No activities unrelated to the Proposed Development are assessed within the EIA, as this would not be proportionate.
<b>Temporal Scope</b>	
The construction of the project is likely to take 18-24 months, however, the duration of the operational phase is currently unclear. The Environmental Statement (ES) should clarify the temporal scope of the Proposed Development, for both construction and operational phases of the development.	Chapter C confirms the duration of the construction period (24 months), and the proposed lifetime of the Proposed Development (40 years). These periods have been assessed throughout the ES as appropriate. Chapter H of the ES in respect of Climate Change assumes a 60 year operational period on the basis of industry standard guidance for climate change (GHG) assessments, and this is considered to represent worst case in respect of this topic.
It is noted in the report there are references to decommissioning at paragraph 4.16, and at paragraph 12.26 it indicates that the site is capable of being returned to agricultural land use at the end of its life. However, the description of development does not describe whether the development is proposed to be a temporary permission, nor does it describe the number of years the development is required. The information relating to decommissioning is therefore vague and needs to be set out in further detail.	As above, Chapter C confirms the proposed lifetime of the development. Assumptions regarding the decommissioning process are set out within Chapter C, and have been assessed throughout the ES as appropriate.
<b>Cumulative Scope</b>	

<b>Summary of Information from Buckinghamshire Council (November 2024)</b>	<b>Response as part of the ES (April 2025)</b>
<p>The Scoping Report identifies the schemes which are likely to result in the potential for cumulative impacts with regards to highways, biodiversity, landscape, heritage and residential amenity within the EIA. [full list not repeated here].</p> <p>The LPA agrees that the potential cumulative effects of the Proposed Development in association with other committed developments should be included, both during the construction phase and operational phases of development.</p>	<p>Chapter J of this ES includes a review of the committed developments in the surrounding area, with reference to the view provided within the EIA Scoping Opinion on the likely cumulative impacts from each.</p>
<b>Vulnerability of the proposed development to major accidents or disasters</b>	
<p>It is recommended that the ES sets out any consultation undertaken by the Applicant with relevant infrastructure operators and regulatory bodies (including the HSE and Buckinghamshire Fire Service) and any other relevant technical consultees in the preparation of the EIA.</p>	<p>Chapter B includes an overview of consultation undertaken during the EIA process which as informed the design evolution and production of the ES. Each technical chapter D to I also includes a 'consultation' section reporting on consultation undertaken relevant to that technical assessment.</p>
<p>The Applicant should make use of appropriate guidance (eg that referenced in the Health and Safety Executives (HSE) Annex to Advice Note 11) to better understand the likelihood of an occurrence and the Proposed Development's susceptibility to potential major accidents and hazards.</p>	<p>While related to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, the HSE Advice Note Annex has been reviewed in preparing the ES.</p>
<p>The description and assessment should consider the vulnerability of the Proposed Development to a potential accident or disaster and also the Proposed Development's potential to cause an accident or disaster. The assessment should specifically assess significant effects resulting from the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment. Any measures that will be employed to prevent and control significant effects should be presented in the ES. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.</p>	<p>Chapter C, Table C3.2, provides an overview of how the risk of the Proposed Development to, or to cause, a major accident or disaster has been considered within the ES; and any measures embedded or proposed to reduce the risk.</p> <p>It is not considered there would be any risks of major accidents and/or disasters to cultural heritage receptors generated by the Proposed Development, with the nearest asset being c.420metres from the Site. No further consideration is given within the ES.</p>
<p>The LPA agrees to scoping out project vulnerability. The LPA also agrees that a number of other topics consider vulnerabilities as part of their assessment. Therefore, with appropriate cross-referencing, a stand-alone topic chapter is not required for this in the ES.</p>	<p>Chapter C of the ES considers how the Proposed Development has considered project vulnerabilities as a whole, cross referencing other ES chapters in Table C3.2.</p>

Summary of Information from Buckinghamshire Council (November 2024)	Response as part of the ES (April 2025)
The applicant is expected to provide a Fire Safety Statement with the application explaining how the proposal complies with the current guidance by the National Fire Chiefs Council	Fire Safety information is provided to accompany the Planning Application, in the form of an Outline Battery Safety Management Plan and Fire Water Management Plan.
<b>Planning Policy Context</b>	
The Proposed Development will need to be considered in accordance with relevant policies and guidance at local and national levels. For consistency, all environmental topic chapters within the ES should refer to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guide (PPG), Best Practice/Guidance and Standing Advice, as relevant to that topic matter.	Each technical chapter D-I includes a review of the relevant legislation, national policy/guidance, local policy/guidance, and other best practice guidance. Chapter A also provides an overview of the policy context within which the Proposed Development is brought forward.
<b>Agricultural Land Resources and Land Use</b>	
The LPA agrees that this can be scoped out. The site comprises some 63.4ha of land. The applicant has carried out an Agricultural Land Classification Survey where it was found that the area is solely made up of Subgrade 3b land quality and therefore, not of the best and most versatile land quality. There is no policy constraint to the use of non-BMV land for development that will support the transition to renewable energy.	Noted. The ALC Survey Report accompanies the Planning Application.
<b>Air Quality</b>	
The air quality section of the Scoping Report states that the nature of the proposed development means there are no air pollution effects associated with the operation of BESS. As such, there will be no significant effects arising from air quality and this topic is therefore proposed to be scoped out.	Noted.
The LPA agrees that with suitable mitigation secured through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), air quality as a topic in the ES can be scoped out. The LPA would, however, expect to see mitigation secured in a draft/ framework CEMP and that effort is made to agree with the relevant consultation bodies and submitted with the application. The CEMP should include measures explicitly, but not limited to, address impacts from dust during construction.	The Framework CEMP is set out within Chapter C of this ES. In addition a Construction Traffic Management Plan is included at Appendix G2, which includes measures relating to dust during construction. The document has been prepared taking into account discussions with the BC Highways Development Manager Officer (in October 2024) in relation to the movement of construction vehicles on the surrounding highway network.
<b>Ground Conditions</b>	
The LPA has reviewed the information submitted with the scoping opinion including the Phase I Desk Study. The report provides a	Noted.

<b>Summary of Information from Buckinghamshire Council (November 2024)</b>	<b>Response as part of the ES (April 2025)</b>
<p>review of potentially contaminative land uses and concludes the risks to future site users are classified as either very low or low risk. Likely effects on receptors are not considered to be significant, and therefore ground conditions and contamination can be scoped out.</p> <p>The LPA agree with this conclusion and that contamination can be scoped out.</p> <p>However, it is recommended that a discovery strategy is written and implemented which outlines how unexpected contamination will be dealt with if encountered during development.</p>	<p>A discovery strategy has been prepared by A-Squared Studio, and is submitted to accompany the Planning Application.</p>
<b>Socio-Economic and Human Health</b>	
<p>The LPA agrees that impacts to human health and socio economic impacts can be scoped out. The LPA also agrees that a number of other topics consider health as part of their assessment. Therefore, a stand-alone topic chapter is not required for the ES.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed.</p>
<b>Minerals and Waste</b>	
<p>The eastern part of the Site falls within a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA) for Alluvium (clay, silt, sand, and gravel), as defined within the Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2019). The LPA is in agreement that minerals can be scoped out. It is requested that any future application is supported by a Minerals Assessment that addresses Policy 1 of the BMWLP (2019).</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>A Minerals Resource Assessment Report, prepared by A-squared Studio accompanies the Planning Application.</p>
<p>The LPA agrees that waste does not need to be a separate chapter of the ES and that measures to minimise waste can be addressed in the CEMP. The CEMP should include as much detail as possible on on-site waste management, recycling opportunities, and off-site disposal. If off-site disposal is required, an assessment of likely significant effects including intra-cumulative effects should be included within the ES.</p>	<p>The Framework CEMP is included in Chapter C of this ES. This includes details on site waste management.</p>
<b>Landscape and Visual</b>	
<p>Applicant should provide a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) study that uses sufficient sample points to adequately demonstrate the full potential extent of the development, to the full height applied for. The assessment study area should be determined with regard to the extent of the impacts and the potential for significant effects.</p>	<p>The ZTV is included at Appendix D1 of the ES.</p>

Summary of Information from Buckinghamshire Council (November 2024)	Response as part of the ES (April 2025)
The ES should clearly present any assumptions made with regards to the height that any mitigation planting will have reached by the assessment years for purposes of generating photomontages.	Mitigation plant height assumptions over the assessment years are included within the 'assumptions and limitations' section of Chapter D.
The assessment should also consider potential effects to the Quainton Wing Hills Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL) and locally important landscapes including North Marston Undulating Claylands and Claydon Valley. In this respect, the Applicant's attention is drawn to Hogshaw Claylands and Claydon Bowl Landscape Character Assessment.	All relevant landscape planning designations, including those identified in the EIA Scoping Opinion, have been included in the assessment of the Landscape Baseline in Chapter D.
The Applicant should make effort to agree the study area and relevant representative and illustrative viewpoints for assessment with the LPA. In particular, the LPA considers that views experienced by visitors to, and residents of, Granborough and Verney Junction and surrounding properties, and the users of the public rights of way.	The study area and proposed viewpoints were included within the EIA Scoping Report for agreement, and no response has been received to date from the BC Landscape Officer. Further consultation since the scoping process was sought but no response has been received to date. Viewpoints are included from Granborough (viewpoint 22), Verney Junction (viewpoint 10) and from various PROWs and bridleways.
Consideration should also be given to the preparation of photomontages to illustrate the effects at Years, 1 and 10.	The assessment is undertaken at Years 1 and 10 within Chapter D.
In line with the guidance, the Applicant must set out the worst case impacts.	The photographic viewpoints include February 2025 winter views to ensure the worst-case scenario is assessed for each viewpoint
The LPA recommends that information relevant to the setting up and recording of data, and information on viewing distances as set out in Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TGN) on Visual Representation of Development Proposals (2012), is provided within the ES.	Chapter D confirms that the photographs for the visual assessment have been taken using a digital SLR camera with a 50mm fixed focal length lens, giving a focal length equivalent to 75mm on a 35mm film camera. The photographs were taken in accordance with guidance outlined in the document 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals - Technical Guidance Note 06/19' (Landscape Institute; 2019).
Assessment of the effects on landscape features should include the loss of any existing trees, hedgerows, and other vegetation. The LPA expect measures which include internal site planting and enhancement of field boundaries as appropriate. This should include mitigation for any existing trees lost.	This has been considered in Chapter D and trees have been retained as part of landscaping proposals where possible. Chapter C details the landscaping proposals.
The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2/19 on Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) is guidance that should be	The anticipated visual effects are not considered to be close to reaching the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold, however the RVAA guidance

Summary of Information from Buckinghamshire Council (November 2024)	Response as part of the ES (April 2025)
taken into account. If there are residential properties likely to experience significant effects to their outlook or visual amenity, an RVAA should be considered as this will provide additional information to inform the assessment, consultation bodies, and the decision-maker.	is taken into account within the Chapter as relevant.
The LPA expects that the cumulative landscape character and visual amenity effects assessment will be conducted separately. This should include residential amenity impacts. Cumulative effects must include sequential cumulative visual effects.	Cumulative landscape and visual effects are set out within Chapter J (Cumulative Impact Assessment).
The LPA seek an assessment of the development after dark, in particular with regards to changes to currently dark landscapes.	An assessment of nighttime character is undertaken within the baseline assessment and for the construction and operation phases.
<b>Ecology and Biodiversity</b>	
The LPA has stated that a separate chapter on biodiversity and ecology is not required and can be scoped out, and the application is expected to be supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment and the submission of a Biodiversity Net Gain Metric.	While the LPA has provided its view that ecology can be scoped out of the ES, an Ecology chapter remains scoped into the ES and is included at Chapter F in the interests of robustness. This includes an Ecological Impact Assessment. The statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric is submitted at Appendix F2 of the ES.
The LPA welcomes the inclusion of an assessment of effects on hedgerows and two protected species – badger and bats – to be addressed in the ES.	This is considered in Chapter F which assesses construction related habitat effects for nesting birds and badger sets, and forage habitat loss and fragmentation of linear habitat used by commuting bats.  The Proposed Development has been sited to minimise the loss of existing tree groups, tree belts, hedgerows and individual trees. Planting of new vegetation is proposed as part of the Proposed Development.
<b>Heritage</b>	
<i>Built heritage</i>	
The LPA agrees to the approach which is that the EIA will assess the cumulative scenario of built heritage only and agree that the development alone is unlikely to give rise to any significant adverse visual impacts on designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the site.  A heritage statement will be expected with any future application.	Chapter J provides the cumulative assessment (inter and intra project effects). As agreed through the EIA scoping process, a standalone built heritage ES chapter is not provided, and Chapter J includes consideration of built heritage cumulative effects in relation to other committed developments in the surrounding area. The Historic Environment Records Team for BC were consulted on the size of the study area for the cumulative effects assessment.  A Heritage Statement is submitted at Appendix J2 of the ES.

Summary of Information from Buckinghamshire Council (November 2024)	Response as part of the ES (April 2025)
<b>Archaeology</b>	
The LPA recommends that further trial trench evaluation should be undertaken. The results of the evaluation could form part of the EIA. The archaeological investigations should be undertaken by a professionally qualified archaeologist working to an agreed written scheme of investigation (WSI) based the Council online templates and briefs.	Chapter I confirms that a WSI specifying a trial trenching evaluation has been approved by the archaeological advisor for BC. Trial trenching commenced on the 10th of March 2025, and was completed by the 4th April 2025, and the Trial Trenching Report will be available on the during May 2025. Updates to this ES are likely to be required in light of the evaluation report.
The ES should provide details of the surveys used to inform the assessment including any intrusive site surveys undertaken. The ES should also explain how such surveys inform the proposed mitigation strategy.	An archaeological geophysical survey has been conducted and the results have extended the baseline data for the Site (further detail within Chapter I and Appendix I2).
<b>Noise</b>	
The LPA welcome the applicant's proposal to scope noise impacts into the EIA for the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the development.	As agreed, the Noise chapter (Chapter E) assesses construction and decommissioning noise from plant onsite, operational noise from fixed plant.
The LPA is especially concerned about the cumulative noise impacts of the development alongside other battery storage facility proposals in the vicinity of the site.	Cumulative noise impacts are assessed within Chapter J of the ES.
The LPA has concerns regarding ground-borne vibration from all phases and the ES should include the likely significant effects for these matters.	Chapter E and Appendix E1 set out justification for the exclusion of ground borne vibration from the assessment. A qualitative construction assessment has been undertaken, and ground borne vibration during construction is not specifically covered as it is assumed that any mitigation for construction noise will also apply to ground borne vibration to reduce any potential temporary effect.
<b>Climate Change and Carbon/Greenhouse Emissions</b>	
The ES should describe and assess measures incorporated to adapt to climate change. The Applicant should make effort to agree the necessary measures with relevant consultation bodies.	This has been included in Chapter H with embedded mitigation including local supply chain resourcing and energy efficiency measures during operation.
An assessment of Green House Gas (GHG) impacts is required and clarification should be provided regarding the role of the BESS in emissions saving and the quantification of the overall emissions benefits. A diagram showing the GHG emissions boundaries should be included.	Chapter H assesses GHG impacts in accordance with IEMA guidance on 'Assessing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Evaluating their significance'. Carbon saving calculations are undertaken (paragraphs H5.29-5.31), which demonstrate that the whole-life-carbon impact and overall emissions benefit of the Proposed Development.
The LPA would prefer to see a Buckinghamshire wide approach with reference to total GHG emissions. This approach means that the	The GHG emissions generated during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development have been considered in the

Summary of Information from Buckinghamshire Council (November 2024)	Response as part of the ES (April 2025)
Magnitude Criteria for GHG Impact Assessment needs to be reviewed.	context of CO <sub>2</sub> e emissions for Buckinghamshire and the wider UK carbon budgets. Magnitude Criteria is set out in Table H3.3 against Buckinghamshire's GHG carbon budget.
Given the need to achieve Net Zero Emissions by 2050 and the need for increased levels of carbon storage and sequestration, the assessment should include data in relation to fluxes of carbon based upon changes to land use over time and in comparison to a baseline scenario where the land is managed in a consistent way to present.	Chapter H defines the current baseline conditions, comprising of agricultural fields (grade 3b). Agricultural fields and farming practises have carbon storage potential. Emissions are also generated by agricultural machinery used for harvesting crops. Whilst the construction of the Proposed Development will generate carbon emissions, mainly due to upfront embodied impacts, there will be minimal biodiversity loss, as outlined in the ecological report. Additionally, the operation of the Proposed Development creates the opportunity to store renewable energies and curtail carbon emissions.
Emissions calculations should include all phases of the development. Measures should be included to promote soil and vegetation carbon storage and minimisation of emissions from the development.	Emissions have been calculated for the construction, operational and decommissioning stages of development. Mitigation measures to minimise emissions have been identified in Chapter H (Section H6.0).
<b>Traffic and Transport</b>	
The LPA agrees that traffic does not need to be assessed during operation, and can be scoped out.	Noted, this is reflected in Chapter G.
There is the potential for the proposed development to generate highway impacts during the construction phase (and the future decommissioning phase) and the applicant intends to provide an assessment of these highway impacts.	Noted, this is reflected in Chapter G.
A Transport Statement, Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and an Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) Assessment Report are to be submitted.	The requested documents are provided at the following appendices: AIL Report – Appendix G1 CTMP – Appendix G2 Transport Statement – Appendix G3
The cumulative impact of any identified schemes are to be considered as part of the assessment of the potential highway impacts during the construction phase, and the developments listed in 'Table 4.1' of the Scoping Report would provide a robust highway assessment, at that time.	Sites for cumulative assessment along these routes have been agreed with BC during the Pre-Application meetings. Chapter G provides a review of each of the potential cumulative schemes (as listed in Chapter J) and provides justification for inclusion/exclusion.
The current route for construction traffic would route along East Claydon Road, Granborough Road, Vicarage Road, the A413, and the A421 to	The CTMP at Appendix G2 confirms the proposed construction traffic route and was



Summary of Information from Buckinghamshire Council (November 2024)	Response as part of the ES (April 2025)
<p>the east and west. There is no in principle objection to the suggested route.</p> <p>The highway assessment will need to give careful consideration to the nature and condition of local roads being used and potential restrictions on larger vehicles, and appropriate mitigation will be required.</p>	<p>selected following discussions with highways officers at BC.</p> <p>The CTMP assesses each section of the proposed construction traffic route, considering information on road markings, HGV restrictions, speed limits, width restrictions, on-street parking, public rights of way, footways and road safety and the movement of HGV at specific junctions along each section.</p>
<p>The LPA require clarification over the use of AIL to be agreed prior to the application submission. Careful consideration will need to be given to their route to and from the site and will require tracking to ensure safe access.</p> <p>The condition of the local highway network must be assessed with regards to ability to accommodate this traffic, considering the need for further passing bays to be introduced. The ES should explain in full and assess how the Site will be accessed.</p> <p>The ES will need to ensure that traffic movements to and between the parcels of land are quantified and assessed where significant effects will occur.</p>	<p>An AIL report is included at Appendix G1 of the ES, which provides an assessment of the route of AIL vehicles travelling to the Site from Tilbury Docks, which are required to transport the transformers to Site. The AIL assessment considers the width and height restrictions of each road and junction to be used by the AIL vehicles as well as any bridges that would be crossed and whether it is safe to do so.</p>
<p>The ES should explain the study area for assessment and how it relates to the transport assessment including affected junctions and roads. The ES should describe and assess the potential impacts (both positive and negative) associated with any improvements/changes to the access route which are either required to facilitate construction.</p>	<p>The extent of the study area related to Chapter G is set out within section G4 (baseline). This was agreed with BC during Pre-Application meetings.</p> <p>Works required to facilitate the site accesses are described within the Chapter also.</p>

Source: Lichfields analysis – Buckinghamshire Council's EIA Scoping Opinion (14-11-2024)

## **B4.o EIA Process and Difficulties**

- B4.1 The EIA has considered the likely environmental effects based on current knowledge of the Proposed Development, the Site and its surroundings, desk top assessments, surveys and fieldwork and information available to the EIA team. Regard is given to relevant national, strategic and local planning policy and other legislation of relevance to individual topic areas.
- B4.2 The EIA has been completed with reference to best practice and relevant legislation and has addressed all those matters that could reasonably be required to assess the effects of the Proposed Development. This includes those arising from the operation of the Proposed Development as well as those temporary effects arising during the construction phase.
- B4.3 The EIA Team (as set out in Table A4.3 of this ES), compiled information to establish the baseline position for the Site for consultation and assessment of the likely impacts. The design has been produced from an iterative process of assessment and development between the design and EIA team, also taking into account consultation responses. There has been a robust process in place to embed mitigation into the Proposed Development where at all possible.
- B4.4 The project for which full planning permission is being sought incorporates those revisions or modifications that are necessary or appropriate to avoid or minimise significant adverse effects on the environment. Where embedded ('built in') mitigation is taken into account in the technical assessments, this is identified.
- B4.5 Following the Council's formal consultation on the Planning Application and associated ES, new issues may emerge, or practices identified which may affect the findings in this ES. Throughout the ES, the difficulties in compiling information and testing impacts or the assumptions that have been adopted are noted explicitly.
- B4.6 General difficulties relevant to this ES are as follows:
- 1 Availability of information to the EIA Team and the necessity to rely on reasonably available data in carrying out the EIA;
  - 2 Availability of accepted methodologies. Professional judgement, expertise and agreement of other forms of assessment have been relied as the bases of the EIA;
  - 3 Assessment of cumulative effects from the Proposed Development when considered with various other schemes in proximity to the Site is only capable of being carried out based on information available at this time;
  - 4 As explained within paragraphs B3.4-6, some of the key consultees within BC did not provide a response to the EIA Scoping Request. Efforts have been made outside of the EIA scoping process to consult with relevant stakeholders to confirm methodologies and assessment scopes, however in places the EIA has relied on reasonable assumptions and professional judgement of the expert team where consultation was not possible at the time of preparing the ES. Where this is the case this is explained within the relevant technical chapters (D-I);
  - 5 Availability and reliability of the baseline information available at the time of assessment. No independent verification of the information presented in the baseline

sources has been undertaken as part of this assessment. Furthermore, the baseline data for each technical chapter may be subject to change over time, which could lead to the assessment being subject to statistical time lag;

- 6 At the time of writing the ES, a WSI for a programme of archaeological trial trenching had approved by the Senior Archaeology Officer for BC, and the fieldwork element of the evaluation had been completed in April 2025, However the results report was not able to be completed prior to the submission of the Planning Application and ES. The ES has incorporated initial results and where necessary relied on assumptions, assessed a worst case, and recommended mitigation measures that that is considered to be appropriate based on the initial results and which will be confirmed through submission of the results report; and
- 7 Information provided by third parties (for instance baseline data). While the latest available data at the time of preparation has been used, it should be noted that many data sources are frequently updated and could be subject to change since the time of drafting or during the Planning Application process. Where any data from other sources have been used, it has been assumed that the information is correct.

B4.7 Where technical limitations and difficulties have arisen on individual topic areas, these are identified in each chapter as appropriate.

## **B5.0 Methodological Approach**

### **General Approach**

- B5.1 The EIA has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the updated 2017 EIA Regulations and with reference to best practice including that published by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment ('IEMA'). References to relevant guidance are provided throughout the ES where relevant. All information required to identify the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development, as defined by Schedule 4 of the updated 2017 EIA Regulations has been provided as part of the ES. The ES also complies with the requirements of Regulation 18(3), 18(4) and 18(5) which contain requirements for environmental statements.
- B5.2 The purpose of the ES is to ensure that information on the environmental issues associated with the Proposed Development, and any mitigation or monitoring required to address adverse effects, is set out in form to assist in decision making and for stakeholders. Consideration has been given to the effects:
- 1 During Construction – all works, activities and processes required in earthworks, preparatory works and the construction of infrastructure and buildings; and
  - 2 During Operation – impacts arising during the operation of development within the Site; and
  - 3 Decommissioning – impacts arising from decommissioning of the Proposed Development is included in the technical Chapters where relevant.
- B5.3 The potential environmental effects have been assessed for each relevant aspect by comparing the existing and likely future environmental conditions (in the absence of the Proposed Development) with the conditions that would exist if the Proposed Development is brought forward.
- B5.4 The ES has been informed by desk studies, surveys, consultation and other investigations as recorded in Chapters D to I of this ES.
- B5.5 The Proposed Development has an anticipated lifetime of 40 years. Decommissioning effects have been included in the EIA where this is relevant, and the methodology is described in the relevant technical assessment. Where relevant, assumptions have been made in regards to the lifetime of the Proposed Development, these are set out within the technical chapters D to I.

### **Proposed Development Assessed**

- B5.6 The Proposed Development assessed is described in Chapter C of this ES. Full planning permission is sought for the Proposed Development and a full set of plans and drawings supporting the application that have informed this EIA is provided at Appendix C1, Volume 2 of this ES.

### **Embedded Mitigation**

- B5.7 As EIA is an iterative process intended to inform the development of the project design, certain mitigation measures which will reduce potentially significant effects have been built

in or ‘embedded’ into the design. Chapters D to J of this ES identify specific measures arising from the assessment of each particular technical aspect that have identified any such embedded mitigation. These are then summarised in Chapter K of the ES.

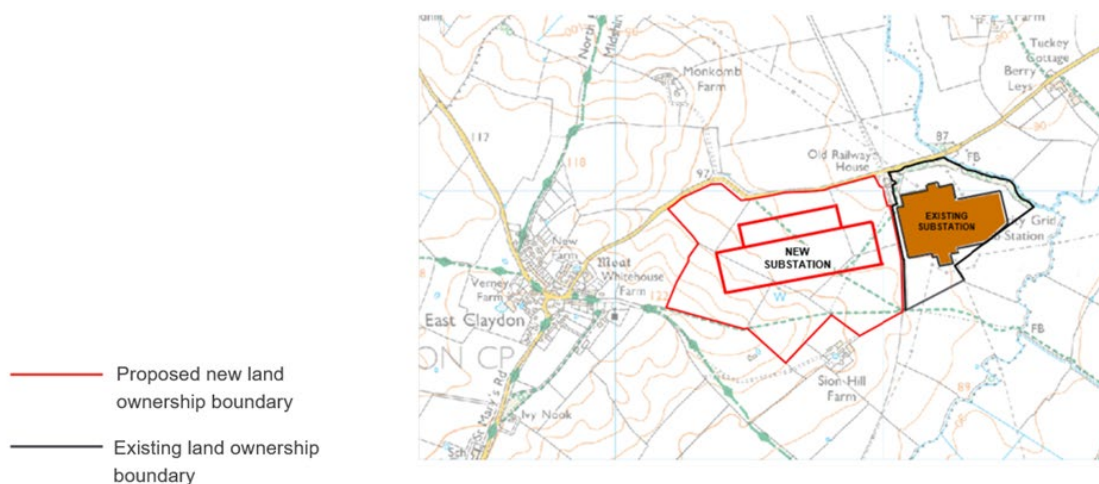
- B5.8 Best practice measures for mitigation will be followed in considering methods for dealing with the environmental effects of the Proposed Development. In addition, and where relevant, the EIA has also sought to identify opportunities for environmental enhancement.

## **Assessment of Effects**

- B5.9 The updated 2017 EIA Regulations require the identification of the likely adverse or beneficial significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development. This is based on a consideration of the magnitude of the predicted impacts and the sensitivity of the affected receptor. The process by which effects have been identified and their significance is provided as it relates to the specific methodological approach to assess each technical aspect in Chapters D to I of this ES.
- B5.10 A general description of the standard methodological approach and structure of the assessment is provided below.
- B5.11 Certain topics may have deviated from the standard methodological approach and structure of assessment in order to adhere to relevant guidance and practice. Where this is relevant, explanation is provided in Section 3 of the relevant chapter.
- B5.12 The baseline conditions for each technical topic chapter comprise those which exist at present (the date of this ES and its assessments). However Chapter A of the ES explains that the Proposed Development has secured a grid offer from the network provider to connect to the national grid, with the point of connection being a new replacement East Claydon substation (henceforth referred to as ‘the replacement substation’). It is to be located in the field further to the west of the existing East Claydon substation (henceforth referred to as ‘the existing substation’) and south of East Claydon Road. At the time of writing of the ES, a Planning Application has not been submitted for the replacement substation but consultation on the proposed location has been undertaken and is available on National Grid’s website<sup>7</sup>. Figure B5.1 below identifies the area of land which is being considered for the siting of the replacement substation. No detail is available on the design and layout of the replacement substation; however a set of parameters have been assumed for the purposes of this ES, ensuring a worst case scenario has been assessed. These are:
- The replacement substation will be the same footprint or smaller than the existing substation;
  - The replacement substation will be the same height or smaller than the existing substation;
  - The equipment used in the replacement substation will be of a similar nature and scale as the existing substation and it will include similar plant and machinery as the existing substation;
  - The replacement substation will be under construction in 2028 and 2029 and operational by 2030;

- The replacement substation will be constructed in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP);
- The existing substation will be decommissioned when construction of the replacement substation is complete; but all equipment at the existing substation will remain in situ (as a worst case scenario).

Figure B5.1 Location of replacement substation (edged in red)



Source: National Grid

- B5.13 The Proposed Development is reliant on the delivery of the replacement substation as the existing substation does not have capacity to facilitate the Proposed Development. The replacement substation must therefore be built in order that the Proposed Development can be connected to the national grid. The Proposed Development is intrinsically linked to the replacement substation and cannot be delivered without it. As a result, where relevant to the assessment, the reporting of the existing environmental conditions in the technical chapters D to I of this ES includes an assumed baseline which assumes that the replacement substation is already in place in the existing environment during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. Following the construction of the replacement substation, the existing substation will be decommissioned and for the purposes of this ES we assume will remain in situ. In order to ensure a robust assessment, each chapter identifies the worst case scenario for the purposes of defining the assumed baseline in the context of the replacement substation and provides an assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development on the basis of that assumed baseline.
- B5.14 Each technical topic chapter includes a description of a 'Future Baseline' which is what would be expected to occur in the future if the Proposed Development did not proceed. Most assessments compare the situation with the Proposed Development in place with the current baseline conditions (which also includes the assumed baseline referenced above). Certain assessments also provide an assessment against the 'Future Baseline'. Where this is the case, it is described in the relevant technical topic chapter.
- B5.15 The ES includes a clear description of the likely significant environmental effects on the environment including direct/indirect effects, secondary, cumulative, short/medium/long

term, permanent/temporary and beneficial/adverse effects arising from the Proposed Development. In particular, the assessment of impacts has had regard to the following:

- 1 The magnitude of the impact (i.e., its extent, duration, frequency and severity);
- 2 The sensitivity of a particular receptor to a given impact (i.e., including its adaptability or the degree to which it can avoid or adapt to an impact; how tolerant it is to accommodate a particular impact; how it can recover following an impact; and how valuable, rare or important a receptor may be); and
- 3 The probability or likelihood that an identified impact might occur (adopting a precautionary or worst-case approach where necessary).

B5.16 The identified effects have then been classified by reference to a common list of EIA significance criteria, comprising:

- 1 Major/Substantial<sup>2</sup> beneficial
- 2 Moderate<sup>3</sup> beneficial
- 3 Minor<sup>4</sup> beneficial
- 4 Negligible
- 5 Minor adverse
- 6 Moderate adverse
- 7 Major/Substantial adverse

B5.17 Each technical Chapter (Chapters D to I) relates the above criterion to its own specific methodological assessment approach and provides a clear statement on which are considered 'significant' in EIA terms. Generally, impacts identified as Major/Substantial or Moderate are considered significant. Where a particular aspect deviates from this, this is stated.

B5.18 Predictions of impact are based on the best available data using a combination of professional judgement, expert knowledge and modelling where needed. Assumptions or limitations made in the assessment are specifically noted in Chapters D to I; this includes an explanation of any strategies taken to address known limitations.

B5.19 Mitigation measures that are identified with specific ES Chapters, and the mechanisms for monitoring their effectiveness, are consolidated and set out in a coordinated manner in a dedicated Chapter within the ES (Chapter K). This is provided to assist the Council in forming its reasoned conclusion on the Planning Application for the East Claydon Greener Grid Park.

## Structure of Technical Assessments

B5.20 The assessment includes a consideration of relevant policy and legislation of relevance to the EIA process only as well as considering comments received by consultees during the pre-submission period.

<sup>2</sup> Major/Substantial - considerable effects (by extent, duration or magnitude) or of more than local significance or breaching identified

<sup>3</sup> Moderate – limited effects which may be considered significant

<sup>4</sup> Minor – slight, very short or highly localised effects

- 1 Each technical assessment follows a consistent approach and format:
- 2 Brief review of relevant policy and legislative context;
- 3 Confirmation of the detailed topic specific assessment methodology, consultation undertaken and confirmation on how the assessment relates to the standard significance criteria adopted for the EIA;
- 4 Consideration of Baseline Conditions including an identification of sources of information, site history, current environmental conditions and future trends/anticipated changes to current conditions that could be anticipated without the Proposed Development;
- 5 Identification of the potential effects including a summary of those resources/receptors likely to be affected, the sensitivity of those receptors to accommodate change; the degree of change resulting from the Proposed Development; the change of events or pathways linking cause to effect and a prediction of the significance of effects in terms of nature, extent and magnitude including whether it is direct/indirect, short/long term, permanent/temporary, beneficial/adverse;
- 6 The scope for incorporating mitigation measures to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for any identified effects; and
- 7 Identification of any effects remaining after mitigation.

B5.21 The effects which could arise when the Proposed Development is considered alongside other developments within the wider area. These cumulative effects are described in Chapter J of this ES. A summary is also provided in Chapter J of any residual effects which may occur due to the interrelationship between different impacts arising from the Proposed Development (or 'synergistic effects').

B5.22 Chapter K provides a summary of the main mitigation measures identified as part of the EIA process and how these can be delivered. This includes an identification of any monitoring required.



## **B6.o Consultation and Engagement**

B6.1 Consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees can play an important role as part of the process of EIA, both as a means for gathering information and also to assist in the ongoing refinement of proposals.

B6.2 Pre-application discussions have been held with BC, with written advice issued in August 2024. This has been taken into account in conjunction with the EIA Scoping Opinion in the evolution of the Proposed Development.

### **Engagement with Buckinghamshire Council and Other Key Stakeholders**

B6.3 The principle of the development and associated issues were discussed with Officers at BC at a virtual Teams meeting on 11 July 2024. This was followed by written pre-application advice on 9 August 2024 (Ref: 24/01836/COMM). This was based on a wider Site boundary but the general nature of the Proposed Development is maintained.

B6.4 The response identified policy support for the Proposed Development but that landscape character and visual impacts were significant harms to overcome. Impacts on heritage, ecology, flood risk, highways (during construction) and residential amenity required further detailed work to enable assessment of the impacts and whether they could be appropriately mitigated. The issues and potential impacts raised within the pre-application response have been considered within the EIA and wider Planning Application where relevant.

B6.5 The EIA team has, where appropriate, engaged directly with key stakeholders, statutory consultees and technical officers within BC in order to review matters relevant to the technical aspects scoped into this ES. The team has engaged with the following consultees throughout the pre-application process to inform the approach to the EIA:-

- BC's Ecology Officer was consulted in October and November 2024 to agree on the scope of ecology surveys for the EIA (during the scoping process);
- BC's archaeology team have been consulted in February 2025 regarding trial trenching and agreed to the proposed Written Scheme of Investigation on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025;
- BC's Environmental Health Officer and Planning Officer were sent a draft noise consultation letter, but no response was received. This included the noise assessment methodology;
- BC's Highways Officer has been consulted regarding the transport and access proposals during construction and operation, and agreed the approach to assessment; and
- The Lead Local Flood Authority have been consulted and their comments have been incorporated into the Proposed Development.

B6.6 An account of all technical consultation related to the EIA is also provided within Chapters D-I.

## **Public Engagement**

- B6.7 A public consultation event took place on 19 March 2025 at East and Botolph Claydon Village Hall. A letter publicising the event was sent to 1,717 local addresses including in East Claydon, Verney Junction, Granborough and the western side of Winslow. Letters have also been sent to local stakeholders.
- B6.8 A newspaper advert was placed in Bucks Herald on 12 and 19 March, and an advertisement placed in the March edition of Claydon's Parish newsletter. A radio advertisement was also broadcasted on Bucks Radio.
- B6.9 The consultation event sought the community's views on the Proposed Development to enable the Applicant to share details and information on the scheme and respond to issues and concerns. A Statement of Community Involvement setting out how the Applicant has responded to key issues is submitted with the Planning Application.

## **Relationship of Consultation to the EIA**

- B6.10 The experts preparing the technical Chapters scoped into this EIA (Chapter D to I of the ES) have worked collaboratively with the design team and planning team to ensure a coherent and co-ordinated approach to the iteration of the design of the Proposed Development. This involvement has also been important as part of the engagement process outlined above to provide emerging outcomes from assessment work for consultees, and to explain the choices made in the design solutions that have arisen from the assessment work.

## B7.0 Abbreviations & Definitions

### Abbreviations

- EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment
- ES – Environmental Statement
- EU - European Union
- IEMA – Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
- SCI – Statement of Community Involvement

### Definitions

- **Cumulative effects** – effects that arise from the combined effect of the proposed development with other committed development schemes that, individually, may be insignificant, but when combined with other impacts, may be significant.
- **Embedded Mitigation** – modifications to the location or design of the development made during the pre-application phase that are an inherent part of the project, and do not require additional action to be taken.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment** – a process of assessment of significant environmental effects leading to the preparation of an Environmental Statement as well as any consultation, publication or notification required by legislation and ensuring that any decision taken has regard to the outcomes of the process.
- **Proposed Development** – the proposals which are assessed through the Environmental Impact Assessment and for which planning permission is sought.
- **Receptor** – those features or aspects that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
- **Scoping opinion** – a document prepared by the relevant determining authority to confirm its opinion on the scope and level of detail of the information to be provided in the Environmental Statement.
- **Significant/Significance** – a measure of the importance or gravity of an environmental effect defined by the significance criteria specific to the environmental topic or aspect assessed.
- **Synergistic effects** – effects which may occur due to the relationship between different impacts arising from the proposed development.

## **B8.o      References**

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1. European Union ('EU') Directive No 2014/52/EU
2. EU Directive No 85/337/EEC
3. Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017
4. Town and Country Planning and Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
5. European Commission, (2018), Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018
6. Levelling Up and Regeneration Act
7. National Grid Infrastructure Projects - <https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/east-claydon-substation>