

# Appendix B1

## East Claydon Greener Grid Park EIA Scoping Report (August 2024)

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## **Directorate For Planning, Growth And Sustainability**

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14 November 2024  
Our Ref: 24/02556/SO

Email to: nancy.stuart@lichfields.uk

Dear Ms Stuart,

### **Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (As Amended)**

#### **Proposal: The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 - Request for a Scoping Opinion**

#### **At: Land North of East Claydon Substation, East Claydon Road, Buckinghamshire**

I am writing in response to your enquiry dated 23 August 2024, in which you requested an EIA Scoping Opinion from the Local Planning Authority under Part 4, Regulation 15 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The proposed development falls within the scope of these regulations, and the submitted Scoping Report outlines the topics to be scoped in and those to be scoped out. Please find below the Scoping Opinion from the Local Planning Authority.

A number of comments are raised, which would need to be addressed as part of any future planning application for the site. Please also note that under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 Part 4, Regulation 15(9) and 25, the Local Planning Authority is not precluded from requiring additional information in connection with any statement that may be submitted as an environmental statement in connection with an application for planning permission.

No indication of the likely success of an application for planning permission for the development is implied in the expression of this EIA Scoping Opinion.

The applicant is advised to notify the Council if there are significant changes to the proposed scheme, as a revised EIA Screening / Scoping Opinion may be required.

# **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**

### **(Environmental Impact Assessment) (ENGLAND AND WALES) Regulations 2017 (As Amended)**

#### **1. Introduction**

Statkraft UK Limited (the Applicant) is preparing to submit a planning application for the development of a Greener Grid Park which will include a battery storage facility, associated infrastructure, access, and landscaping on land located at land north of the East Claydon substation ('the Site'). The proposed development will be known as the East Claydon Greener Grid Park Project.

The Local Planning Authority (LPA) considers that the proposed development falls within Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the 'EIA Regulations'). The Council believes that the proposed development is likely to result in significant environmental impacts. Therefore, in exercising the powers granted by Regulation 6(6) of the EIA Regulations, the Council has determined that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for the development to ensure that any potential significant environmental impacts are taken into consideration when assessing the planning application.

A formal Scoping Opinion Request has been submitted, along with information to assist Buckinghamshire Council in forming a Scoping Opinion. This request was prepared by Lichfields to help the LPA provide a Scoping Opinion under Regulation 15 of the 2017 Regulations.

The Scoping Opinion will consider:

- The environmental topics or areas of which there are likely to be potential impacts which will need to be addressed in the Environmental Statement (ES)
- The geographical area and timeframe over the potential likely impacts.
- Methods to be used to determine the likely significant environmental effects that will arise as a result of the construction and operational phases and cumulative impacts.
- The potential impacts to be scoped out as not being likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.

#### **2. Information Provided**

In line with Regulation 15(2) of the 2017 Regulations the following has been provided:

- A plan sufficient to identify the land (Appendix 1).
- A brief description of the nature and purpose of the development, including its location and technical capacity (Section 4, SO Report).
- An explanation of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment (Section 5-11 SO Report).
- Such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make (Section 12-13 SO Report).

### **3. Consultation**

In line with the Regulations 15(4), the LPA has consulted the following bodies on the Scoping Opinion Request.

#### **External Consultees**

- Environment Agency – Response Received
- Natural England – Response received
- Network Rail

#### **Internal Consultees**

- Biodiversity and Ecology Officer - Response received
- Climate Change and Sustainability
- Economic Development - Response received
- Environmental Health - Response received
- Heritage - Response received
- Highways and Transport - Response received
- Landscape and Urban Design Officer -
- Lead Local Flood Authority - Response received
- Public Rights of Way Officer - Response received

Responses received to date by the Local Planning Authority can be viewed on the online Planning Portal under ref: 24/02556/SO. Any additional comments received will be forwarded separately for information.

### **4. The LPA's Scoping Opinion**

The Scoping Opinion will consider:

- The environmental topics or areas of which there are likely to be potential impacts which will need to be addressed in the Environmental Statement
- The geographical area and the timeframe of the potential likely impacts
- Methods to be used to determine the likely significant environmental effects that will arise as a result of the construction and operational phases including cumulative impacts
- The potential impacts to be scoped out as not being likely to give rise to significant environmental effects

The Scoping Opinion takes into account the information provided by the applicant about the proposed development, the specific characteristics of the proposed development, the type concerns, and the environmental features likely to be significantly affected by the development, as required by Regulation 15(6).

## **5. The Development Proposals and Alternatives**

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.

National Planning Practice Guidance states that the 2017 Regulations do not require an applicant to consider alternatives. However, where alternatives have been considered, paragraph 2 of [Schedule 4](#) requires the applicant to include in their Environmental Statement a description of the reasonable alternatives studied (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.

## **7.Consultation as part of the EIA process**

The Applicant is consulting the LPA as part of the EIA process. Consultee comments received by 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.

## **8. Geographical Scope**

The proposed EIA will include the physical extant 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.

## **9. Temporal Scope**

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.

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.

## **10. Cumulative Scope**

The Scoping Report identifies the following 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:

- Tuckey Farm, East Claydon Road, Winslow, Buckinghamshire
  - Description: Ground mounted solar farm (25MW), ancillary infrastructure, and associated works including the diversion of PROW.
  - Potential Impact: Landscape and visual and highways.
- Rookery Farm, Granborough, Buckinghamshire, MK18 3NJ
  - Description: Development of a 500MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) by Statera, connected to the National Grid.
  - Potential Impact: Landscape and visual and highways and noise impacts (if approved).
- Land to the East of Fox Covert, Great Horwood, Buckinghamshire
  - Description: Construction of a 22MW solar farm.
  - Potential Impact: Landscape and visual
- Wings Farm, Marston Road, Granborough, MK18 3JX
  - Description: EIA Screening Opinion for a proposed 49.9MW solar farm with associated works.
  - Potential Impact: Full application yet to be submitted.
- Adison Road, North of Calvert, Buckinghamshire
  - Description: NSIP - Rosefield Solar Farm. Solar generating station with a gross output of over 50 MW.
  - Potential Impact: Landscape, visual, noise, highways and heritage.
- East West Rail Line
  - Description: The rail line will run 600m-725m north from the Site.
  - Potential Impact: Highways
- Land from The South West of Quainton to The North Of Grendon Underwood, Doddershall, Quainton, Buckinghamshire
  - Description: Part of HS2 development. Realignment of Edgcott Road Overbridge and associated earthworks and other works associated with land within the Network Rail Marylebone to Claydon railway line.
  - Potential Impact: Highways
- National Grid East Claydon Substation

- Description: National Grid has published news of its intention to develop a replacement substation (with the preferred option shown to be to the immediate west of the existing substation).
- Potential Impact: Noise, Highways, Landscape
- Old Brickyard Farm, Great Horwood Road, Winslow, Buckinghamshire, MK18 3LY
  - Description: Erection of up to 120 dwellings with all matters reserved, public open space, landscaping, and sustainable drainage system.
  - Potential Impact: Highways
- Land Off Great Horwood Road, Winslow, Buckinghamshire
  - Description: Residential development of 198 dwellings. Original outline 215 dwellings.
  - Potential Impact: Highways
- Land Adjacent To Verney Road, Winslow
  - Description: Residential development of 247 dwellings.
  - Potential Impact: Highways

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.

## **11. Vulnerability of the proposed development to major accidents or disasters that are relevant to the development**

Fire risk is identified as the only potential relevant accident and disaster for batteries.

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.

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. 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.

## **12. Planning Policy Context**

The Proposed Development will need to be considered in accordance with relevant policies and

guidance at local and national levels.

Reference to the Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2019) may be relevant in relation to specific environmental topics and the ES should include such reference where relevant.

Appropriate reference to the relevant policies within the VALP (2021) must be made in the ES.

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.

### **13. Environmental Topics considered in the EIA Scoping Process**

The Scoping report has considered what topic areas can be scoped out and these are listed as follows:

- Water Resources and Flood Risk
- Ground Conditions and Contamination
- Agricultural Land Resources
- Air Quality
- Socio-Economics
- Human Health
- Risk of Major Accidents and Disasters / Project Vulnerability
- Waste and Minerals
- Light
- Arboriculture and Trees

**The LPA have considered the topics and can respond accordingly:**

#### **Agricultural Land Resources and Land Use**

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.

#### **Air Quality**

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 Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). During the construction phase, any dust or transport emissions will be adequately managed through the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). As such, there will be no significant effects arising from air quality and this topic is therefore proposed to be scoped out.



In addition, the Traffic and Transport section states that during the operational phase, the site will be unmanned, so very limited traffic will be generated by the proposed development. Operational traffic will predominantly relate to scheduled monthly maintenance visits and an annual maintenance visit which typically lasts for a week.

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.

### **Ground Conditions**

The LPA has reviewed the reviewed the information submitted with the scoping opinion including the Phase I Desk Study which has been included within Appendix 9 of the Scoping Report. The report provides a review of potentially contaminative land uses and concludes the risks to future site users are classified as either very low or low risk. It also states that the likely effects on receptors are not considered to be significant, and therefore ground conditions and contamination can be scoped out.

A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will also be implemented to minimise impacts during construction which will include a construction vehicle routing plan. The routes will seek to avoid routing HGVs through sensitive residential areas.

The LPA agree with this conclusion and that contamination can be scoped out. However, it is recommended that a discovery strategy is written and implemented if the which outlines how unexpected contamination will be dealt with if encountered during development.

### **Socio-economic and Human Health**

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.

### **Minerals and Waste**

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).

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.

## **Major Accidents and Project Vulnerability**

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. 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.

## **Landscape and Visual**

The LPA agree that the LVIA of the development should be scoped in for both the construction and operational phases of the development.

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.

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.

Whilst there may be no landscape planning designations within the scheme boundary, the Applicant should take into consideration relevant landscape planning designations within the study area. The assessment should also consider potential effects to the Quanton 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.

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.

Consideration should also be given to the preparation of photomontages to illustrate the effects at Years, 1 and 10. The Applicant should make effort to agree the viewpoints for photomontages with the LPA. In line with the guidance, the Applicant must set out the worst case impacts.

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. The Applicant should seek to agree the detailed methodology for the preparation of the photomontages and any wirelines with relevant consultation bodies.

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 to context. This should include mitigation for any existing trees lost. The design of the Proposed Development should also seek to retain existing landscape features and consider set back from existing roads and other routes with public access. The potential for enhancement of field boundaries to provide greater connectivity in landcover patterns at the Site should also be considered. Mitigation measures will need to take account of the requirements of National Grid in proximity to their existing infrastructure.

The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2/19 on Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) is guidance that should be 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.

With regard to cumulative landscape character and visual amenity effects, the LPA expects that the assessment will be assessed separately. The ES should clearly show the locations of viewpoints on a supporting plan, at a scale which enables them to be located on site. Cumulative effects must include sequential cumulative visual effects (where repeated views of the proposal will be seen whilst along a route and the combined visual effect of the Proposed Development in the context of existing and consented development in the area.

The LPA seek an assessment of the development after dark, in particular with regards to changes to currently dark landscapes.

### **Ecology and Biodiversity**

The LPA agrees that a separate ES chapter relating to biodiversity and ecology features is not required and this can be scoped out. The application is expected to be supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment and submission of the Biodiversity Net Gain Metric in accordance with the statutory requirements under the Environment Act 2024. The LPA welcome the inclusion of the assessment of effects on hedgerows and two protected species - badger and bats as matters to be addressed in the ES.

### **Heritage**

The LPA agrees there is the potential of the development to have likely significant impact on built heritage and agree with the inclusion of both above ground and below ground impacts in the ES.

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.

The LPA recommends that further trial trench evaluation should be undertaken. The results of the evaluation could form part of the EIA. 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. The archaeological investigations should be undertaken by a professionally qualified archaeologist working to an agreed written

scheme of investigation based the Council online templates and briefs.

### **Noise and Vibration**

The LPA welcome the applicant's proposal to scope noise impacts into the EIA for the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the development. 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.

There are concerns that ground-borne vibration from the construction, operation and decommissioning would result from the proposal. The LPA cannot agree to scoping these matters out and the ES should include the likely significant effects associated with these matters.

### **Water Resources and Flood Risk**

The LPA is in general agreement that the water resources and flood risk can be scoped out. Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy will be submitted as standalone documents within the planning application submission. The general approach to this appears to be reasonable.

### **Climate Change and Carbon/Greenhouse Emissions**

The ES should clearly describe and assess measures incorporated to adapt to climate change. The measures should be developed in light of predicted extreme weather events, precipitation, temperature, and wind patterns. The Applicant should make effort to agree the necessary measures with relevant consultation bodies.

An assessment of the Green House Gas (GHG) impacts is required. The LPA require clarification regarding the role of the BESS in emissions savings and the quantification of the overall emissions benefits. A diagram showing the GHG emissions boundaries should be included.

The LPA would prefer to see a Buckinghamshire wide approach with reference to total GHG emissions. The development will feed power into the local grid and would be accounted for as part of Net Zero Emissions targets for Buckinghamshire. It will impact on the local distribution network as managed by UKPN. More importantly, the development will impact on local people and the local environment and therefore it should be able to define its benefits and risks in line with those of the community in which it is situated. This approach means that the Magnitude Criteria for GHG Impact Assessment needs to be reviewed.

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.

It would be useful to see these again once the generation and emissions figures have been clarified. With this in mind and given the oversight of the soil carbon and the need for improvements and carbon sequestration, we do not feel it is sufficient to rely on the emissions savings during operation instead of ensuring the emissions from construction, operation and

decommissioning are properly targeted and managed. In addition, the UK Net Zero Emissions target means it is even more important that the construction, operation, and decommissioning emissions arising from the development are minimized as much as possible as the GHG benefits of the site will diminish over time.

In relation to the points above and also the local significance of this development the LPA consider that additional mitigation measures should be put in place to ensure that soil and vegetation carbon storage is improved and the emissions arising from the development are minimised.

## **Traffic and Transport**

The LPA agrees that increases in traffic during operation of the Proposed Development are likely to be minimal and significant effects associated with operational transport are unlikely to occur. Therefore, the LPA agrees that this matter can be scoped out.

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. A Transport Statement, Construction Traffic Management Plan and an Abnormal Indivisible Load Assessment Report are to be submitted, which will provide further assessment of the proposed construction access strategy, the likely impacts on the surrounding highway network, and any proposed mitigation. The applicant proposes that the scope of these documents will be agreed with Buckinghamshire Council as a separate exercise to the EIA scoping request, and there is no objection to this approach.

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 planning applications and developments listed in 'Table 4.1 Schemes Proposed for Consideration within the Cumulative Assessment' would provide a robust highway assessment, at the current time.

The current route for construction traffic would route along East Claydon Road, Granborough Road, Vicarage Road, the A413, and the A421 to the east and west. There is no in principle objection to the suggested route, as it is the most direct route to and from the site and utilises classified roads. The highway assessment will need to give careful consideration to the nature and condition of surrounding local roads being used for construction traffic and potential restrictions on larger vehicles, and appropriate mitigation will be required.

The LPA require clarification over the use of abnormal indivisible loads (AIL) to be agreed prior to the submission of the application. Careful consideration will need to be given to their route to and from the site and will require tracking to ensure that any oversize vehicles can access the site safely. The condition of the local highway network must be assessed with regards to its ability to accommodate this level of traffic and consider the need for further passing bays to be introduced to allow opposing vehicles to pass. The ES should explain in full and assess how the Site will be accessed. Furthermore, 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.

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 of the Proposed Development or are required for restoration purposes on completion of the works.

Do we want to summarise here what does need to be scoped into the ES?

Just going through the list of matters scoped out by the Applicant. Do we want to make sure we've responded on all those for consistency. Im aware we haven't concluded on Light, Arb and Trees - are we saying this will be covered by the LVIA and separate standalone documents to support the application?

Insert signature/sign off here?