

Planning Department
North Somerset Council
By email

7737 Kitland Solar Scheme Screening Request
10th August 2023

Request for an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion- Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, as amended

Dear Sir/Madam,

LDA Design are writing on behalf of Statkraft (the Applicant), to determine whether or not the proposals described in this letter for a solar photovoltaics (PV) and battery energy storage system (BESS) scheme (to be known as 'Kitland Solar Farm') at Lower Stock Farm, Langford, BS40 5HT (Grid Reference 345929 (easting) 161938 (northing)) constitute Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development.

The following information is submitted as part of this EIA Screening Opinion Request, as set out in Regulation 6(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, as amended, hereafter referred to as the 'EIA Regulations':

- a) a plan to identify the land;
- b) a description of the development, including in particular –
 - i. a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development and, where relevant, of demolition works;

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- ii. a description of the location of the development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected;
- c) a description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;
- d) to the extent the information is available, a description of any likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from –
 - i. the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant; and
 - ii. the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity; and
- e) such other information or other representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make, including any features of the Proposed Development or any measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.

1 Application Site and Site Context

The Site comprises land totalling approximately 73ha connected via an underground cable route to the Point of Connection. The cable connection would be established by the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) and would be installed under their permitted development powers. The cable route is shown on the Site boundary plan for illustrative purposes, provided at the end of this letter.

The Site comprises of 14 agricultural fields (comprising both pasture and arable) interspersed with scattered mature trees and crossed by a 132kV overhead line (OHL).

The Site topography gently slopes from approximately 15m AOD on the southern edge of the Site to approximately 24m AOD on its northern boundary.

The Site is located between the settlements of Wrington (500m to north-east), Langford (250m to the south-east) and Congresbury (1.3km to north-west).

To the west of the Site there is an existing sub-station (approximately 250m away) and an 8MW solar farm (approximately 400m away) which was consented in 2013 (planning reference: 13/P/2382/F).

Access to the Site would be achieved from Stock Lane (B3133), taken from an access point on the north-western boundary of the Site. A secondary access from Half Yard, which abuts the Site's eastern boundary, would be required to access the easternmost parcel of the Site.

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The A370 is located approximately 2.4km north-west of the Site which can be accessed via Stock Lane at Congresbury. The A38 is located approximately 870m south of the Site, which can also be accessed via Stock Lane. The M5 is located approximately 7.4km west of the Site, which can be accessed via the A370, between Congresbury and Weston-super-Mare.

2 Planning and Environmental Designations

The Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations or assets that relate to biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage.

The Site is bordered by a belt of mature woodland to the north with the Congresbury Yeo River beyond, the Langford Brook and farmland to the east, and farmland to the south and west.

The Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 2km to the south of the Site.

Within 2km of the Site, lie King's Wood and Urchin Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and North Somerset and Mendip Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to the north, and Dolebury Warren SSSI to the south.

There are no other sensitive sites (as defined by the EIA Regulations) within or immediately adjacent to the Site.

The Site is crossed by a number of Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpaths. PRoW footpaths AX14 59/10, 59/20, 59/30 and 59/40 cross the north-western boundary between Rich Farm, Stock Lane and the belt of mature woodland on the Site's northern boundary, in a general north-east – south-westerly alignment.

PRoW footpath AX14 57/10 routes in a general north-south direction through the western extent of the Site, before joining Stock Lane.

Generally parallel to PRoW footpath AX14 57/10, at a distance of approximately 300m, is PRoW footpath AX14 60/40, which routes in a general north-south direction through the centre of the Site.

Routing generally east – west between Stock Lane and Lower Stock Farm is PRoW footpath AX14 60/30, from which routes PRoW footpath AX14 56/10, which runs generally north – south on the eastern edge of the village of Stock.

PRoW footpath AX14 67/10 and 67/20 cross the southern extent of the Site to the south of Lower Stock Farm, in a general east – west alignment.

PRoW footpath AX 14 54/10 and 66/20 cross the southernmost field of the Site in a general north-west – south-east alignment, joining PRoW footpath AX14 66/30 and 53/10, which cross the same field in a north-east – south-west alignment.

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All development will be located within Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning, which is an area classed as having a low risk of flooding from rivers and sea.

An Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Assessment was conducted in August 2022 across the Site. The soil grade of the Site comprises Subgrade 3a (Good) and Subgrade 3b (Moderate) in the northern and eastern extents of the Site, and Grade 4 (Poor) agricultural land in the southern extent of the Site. Further details of the percentage breakdown of each soil grade is provided in the '*Agriculture and Soil*' section of this letter.

The Site boundary plan is appended to this letter.

3 Proposed Development

The Proposed Development is for the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of a ground mounted solar farm (to be called 'Kitland Solar Farm') with an export capacity of up to 49.99 MW for distribution to the national grid. Provision is also provided for a BESS which would be utilised to reinforce the power generation of the solar farm. The Proposed Development would operate for a temporary time period of approximately 40 years.

The main components of the Proposed Development comprise:

- Solar photovoltaic panels, ground mounted to a piled anti-reflective frame made of galvanized steel or aluminium. The posts would be pile-driven (like a fence post) into the ground;
- Inverter/transformer stations distributed evenly across the solar arrays housed within containers;
- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) comprising battery containers housed in shipping containers, or similar;
- A security-fenced enclosed substation and switchgear compound;
- Underground cabling to connect the panels, inverters/transformer stations and BESS to the proposed on-site substation and control room;
- Security deer type fencing and gates to enclose the Site. The deer fencing will include badger/small mammal-friendly access points;
- Security and monitoring CCTV/infra-red cameras mounted on fence posts typically between 3-6m in height, along the internal perimeter of the Site;
- Relevant communications and monitoring equipment;
- Site access from the public highway;

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- Compacted internal crushed stone tracks to allow vehicular access between fields; and
- Landscape planting, biodiversity enhancements and surface water attenuation measures (to be designed as part of the evolving design).

Generated electricity will be exported from the Site via a trenched cable to the existing substation (located approximately 200m north-west of the Site) under the permitted development powers of the DNO. The indicative cable route is shown on the Site boundary plan, which is appended to this letter.

The Proposed Development would require the diversion of the PRow within the Site, which would generally be diverted to create routes around the perimeter of the existing fields.

3.1 Solar Panels and Mounting Frames

The solar PV panels would be installed at a fixed angle to the horizontal and orientated south to optimise daylight absorption, would be fixed in place and have variable lengths. The solar PV panels would be coated with an anti-reflective coating to maximise daylight absorption and minimise glare potential. At their lower edge panels would be approximately 0.8m from the ground and up to approximately 3m at their higher edge. The distance between each row of solar array ranges from 2.8 – 6.25 metres.

The mounting frames would likely be made of either aluminium or galvanised steel and would have a rough matt finish.

The frames which the solar PV panels would be mounted to would either be pile driven or screw anchored into the ground to a typical depth of approximately between 1-3m, subject to ground conditions. The option to install concrete blocks known as “shoes” may also be considered, avoiding the need for driven and screw anchored installation, therefore minimising ground disturbance.

3.2 BESS Compound

The BESS compound will be located within the northern extent of the Site, measuring approximately 7,462m² and will comprise a layout of containers. These will contain the equipment necessary for the BESS. Most of the containers will contain the battery cells but there will also be containers holding the power conversion equipment (which converts the electricity between AC and DC) and transformers to step-up the voltage.

The BESS compound may include external lighting that might be required for the emergency system and maintenance visits, but it will not be routinely lit.

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3.3 *Grid Connection and Cabling*

Grid connection into the distribution network will be achieved within the northern extent of the Site, in a DNO/Customer HV compound, adjacent to the BESS compound.

The compound will contain electrical equipment and control building, likely to be in the form of a prefabricated building or masonry. The compound may include external lighting but it will not be routinely lit.

The rows of solar PV panels would be connected by cables which run through electrical conduits in each of the mounting frames. The PV arrays would be connected via DC cables, which would be buried in underground trenches and backfilled. Beyond the inverter/transformer stations, AC cables would be placed in underground trenches which would be backfilled.

3.4 *Transformer Stations*

Transformer stations would be distributed across the Site. Transformer stations would be prefabricated and installed on level concrete base and would have a typical maximum height of approximately 3m.

3.5 *Security Fencing*

The security fencing would be formed typically by Deer fencing and would be installed around the perimeter of the Site at a typical maximum height of approximately 3m. The entrance gate would be of similar construction and height as the perimeter fencing.

Access points will be included within the fencing to permit the passage of wildlife (i.e. small mammals).

3.6 *Security Cameras*

For security purposes, motion sensor closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras would be erected around the Site perimeter on poles at a typical height of between 3-6m to allow offsite monitoring of the Site. The security cameras would use passive infra-red (PIR) technology, which would avoid the need for night-time lighting at the Site.

3.7 *Access*

Access to the Site would be achieved from Stock Lane (B3133), taken from an access point on the north-western boundary of the Site. A secondary access from Half Yard, which abuts the Site's eastern boundary, would be required to access the easternmost parcel of the Site.

The preferred Site access to the strategic highway, would be taken from the A370 from the north, from which construction traffic would follow the B3133 generally

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southward before reaching the Site access point. Further detail on Site access is provided in the '*Transport and Access*' section below.

The internal permanent access track would typically be made of permeable surfacing material.

3.8 Landscaping

- The Proposed Development will propose landscape planting and would incorporate landscape enhancement and mitigation in the form of management and reinforcement of field and Site boundaries, which would help to screen the Site and respond to locations and views accessible to surrounding visual receptors. Trees and hedgerows will be retained and treated with a typical buffer of 5-10m, as part of the landscape proposals. Existing field access points would be utilised for the internal access track as much as possible, so as to minimise removal of sections of hedgerows for the means of access. A Tree Survey will be prepared and submitted to inform the Site layout and to support the planning application.

As part of the landscape proposals, sensitively located landscaped setbacks will be provided along the western boundary where residential properties are located in proximity to the Site. This will provide suitable buffers between residential properties and the Proposed Development, to maintain visual amenity for adjacent properties. Suitable landscaped setbacks and landscape planting will also be provided on the north-eastern boundary to provide visual screening from potential receptors to the north-east in the vicinity of Wrington.

Furthermore, landscape planting will be included to provide visual screening to users of the PRowS which will be diverted through the Site.

The proposed landscaping, as it becomes established, would help integrate the Proposed Development into the surrounding landscape by strengthening the existing structure of hedges and trees.

New planting would be managed in accordance with a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), which would be submitted to support the planning application.

3.9 Construction

No demolition works would be required at the Site in advance of construction activities taking place. The construction of the Proposed Development is anticipated to take approximately nine months.

A temporary construction compound would be required during the construction phase of the Proposed Development, which would house site offices, welfare facilities and areas for storage of construction materials, tools and equipment.

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The temporary construction compound would be removed after completion of the construction phase and would be infilled with solar PV arrays.

3.10 Operation

Once operational, the Site would be monitored remotely and would not require staff to be permanently located onsite. Routine site visits would, however, be required for the purposes of Site maintenance.

The vegetation beneath the solar PV panels would be managed by the contractor by either routine cutting or grazing.

The Proposed Development would have an operational lifetime for which the planning permission is sought for 40 years.

3.11 Decommissioning

At the end of the operational period, the Proposed Development and associated infrastructure would be decommissioned, dismantled, and removed and the Site would be returned to the landowner's control.

Decommissioning is anticipated to take approximately six months and would be undertaken in accordance with the implementation of best practice measures as secured by a Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP).

4 EIA Regulations and Screening Criteria

Development constitutes EIA development by either being:

- Schedule 1 development – whereby EIA is mandatory in all cases; or
- Schedule 2 development – whereby the Proposed Development exceeds the size threshold for that class of development **AND** is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of its characteristics, location and nature of potential impact.

The Proposed Development does not fall within the description of development listed in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations and would not be classified as Schedule 1 development.

As defined within the EIA Regulations, Schedule 2 development means development of a description mentioned in column 1 of the table in Schedule 2 where:

- a) any part of that development is to be carried out in a sensitive area; or
 - b) any applicable threshold or criterion in the corresponding part of column 2 of the table in Schedule 2 is respectively exceeded or met in relation to that development.
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With respect to part (a) above, the Site does not fall within a sensitive area as defined by the EIA Regulations, which includes:

- land notified under section 28(1) (sites of special scientific interest) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
- a National Park within the meaning of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949;
- the Broads;
- a property appearing on the World Heritage List kept under article 11(2) of the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage;
- a scheduled monument within the meaning of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979;
- an area of outstanding natural beauty designated as such by an order made by Natural England under section 82 (areas of outstanding natural beauty) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as confirmed by the Secretary of State; and
- a European site.

With respect to part (b), the Proposed Development would fall under Schedule 2 Part 3 (a) 'Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1)' of the EIA Regulations. The threshold for this type of development is set out in Column 2 of Schedule 2 (3) Part (a) as "*the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare*".

The area of the Proposed Development (approximately 73ha) exceeds this 0.5ha threshold, and therefore it constitutes a Schedule 2 development.

It is important to note that Schedule 2 development does not require EIA to be undertaken in all cases and EIA will only be required where the Proposed Development is likely to have significant effects on the environment. The online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) explains that "*only a very small proportion of Schedule 2 development will require an EIA*" (Paragraph 018, Reference ID: 4-018-20170728).

Paragraph 057 (Reference ID: 4-057-2070720) of the PPG provides further guidance on when projects may require EIA. The indicative thresholds and screening criteria set out in the PPG for projects under Schedule 2 Part 3(a) of the EIA Regulations are as follows:

- thermal output of more than 50MW; and
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- small stations using novel forms of generation should be considered carefully.

The Proposed Development will not produce a thermal output of more than 50MW and PV solar technology is not considered as a novel form of generation. The PPG further provides 'key issues to consider' for this class of development which include: *"Level of emissions to air, arrangements for the transport of fuel and any visual impact."*

The EIA Regulations include, within Schedule 3, the selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 developments. These criteria are used to determine whether a development would result in likely significant effects. In determining whether an EIA is required, particular regard is given, inter alia, to:

- Characteristics of development (e.g. size, cumulative with other existing/approved development, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution, nuisance, risk of accidents, and risk to human health);
- Location of development (e.g. environmental sensitivity of the area effected by development); and
- Types and characteristics of the potential impact (e.g. impact of development (with particular regard to magnitude and spatial extent, nature, transboundary nature, intensity and complexity, probability and duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact, cumulation of impact with impact of other existing and/or approved development and possibility of effectively reducing the impact).

5 Potential Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Development

This section of the EIA Screening Report provides an evaluation of the potential for likely significant effects to arise as a result of the Proposed Development on the following:

- Landscape and Visual Resources;
 - Ecology and Nature Conservation;
 - Heritage and Archaeology;
 - Transport and Access;
 - Hydrology and Flood Risk;
 - Geology and Ground Conditions;
 - Air Quality and Climate;
 - Noise and Vibration;
 - Socio-economics and Community Effects;
 - Agriculture and Soil;
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- Human Health; and
- Interrelationships and Cumulative Effects.

5.1 Landscape and Visual Resources

The Site is not subject to any statutory landscape designations (i.e. AONB or National Park). The Mendip Hills AONB is located approximately 2km south of the Site. The Site is located within a predominantly agricultural landscape. Evidence of other energy infrastructure (i.e. solar arrays, electrical sub-station) is also present within the vicinity of the Site. The Site topography gently slopes from approximately 15m AOD on the southern edge of the Site to approximately 24m AOD on its northern boundary.

The Site wholly lies within the Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges National Character Area (NCA 118) which is characterised by a low-lying, shallow vales that contrast sharply with high, open downland ridges as the varied landform reflects the complex and underlying geology. Additionally, NCA 118 is influenced by the commercial, industrial and residential areas of Bristol, and major roads (M4 and M5).

The Site is wholly located in the 'J2: River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland' Landscape Character Area (LCA) (per North Somerset Council's Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), September 2018). Key characteristics of the LCA include:

- Presence of the River Yeo running from east to west through the area plus numerous tributaries, drainage channels, small ponds;
- Rural pastoral landscape with sheep, cattle and horses grazing;
- Irregular medium sized fields of medieval enclosure along the river and on the hill sides;
- Full hedgerows and frequent hedgerow trees;
- Riverside trees of willow and oak and modest bridge;
- Presence of small farm orchards; and
- Scattered farmsteads plus large villages on higher ground at the base of the ridges and along major routes.

Potential visual receptors with views of the Site include: users of the PRow which route through and adjacent to the Site; properties adjacent to the Site; and properties fronting and users of Stock Lane, Redshard Lane, Maysmead Lane, Blackmoor, Half Yard, Butts Batch and Bakers Lane. There may also be views available from the commercial and agricultural premises at Lower Langford located approximately 100m south of the Site.

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There may be some limited views of the Site from elevated locations of the Mendip Hills AONB, located approximately 2km south of the Site; however, these views are likely filtered by the existing vegetation within and surrounding the Site.

Views may be available from locations within the Barley Wood Grade II Registered Park and Garden, which is located approximately 1.6km north-east of the Site and separated by the existing development at Wrington. However, views are likely to be limited due to the level of existing vegetative screening within the Barley Wood Registered Park and Garden and intervening development and vegetation between the Site and the Registered Park and Garden.

5.1.1 Operational Effects

Suitable setbacks and landscape planting, in accordance with a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), will be provided on the boundaries of the Site including where PRowS are diverted through the Site, which will increase visual screening and reduce views into the Site to PRow users. The purpose of providing areas of landscaping would be to screen the Proposed Development from residential properties in proximity to the Site boundary (namely adjacent to the western boundary of the Site) and to potential visual receptors in the north-east of the Site, in the vicinity of Wrington. The LEMP will be submitted to support the planning application.

The location and topography of the Site and presence of mature hedgerows and trees within and surrounding the Site would provide a level of visual containment for the low-lying nature of the Proposed Development and therefore would help to integrate the Proposed Development into the surrounding landscape. The proposed landscape planting, as it establishes over time, would increase visual screening to surrounding visual receptors.

In terms of operational landscape effects, there would be some temporary loss of openness as a result of the Proposed Development; however, the retention of the existing hedgerows, with the exception of removal of sections for the purposes of access (should this be required), would limit the change to the character of the landscape. The Proposed Development would also be seen in the context of similar solar development in the surrounding landscape. As such, it is not anticipated that the Proposed Development would result in significant effects to the landscape resource.

5.1.2 Construction and Decommissioning Effects

The construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development would be relatively short-term and the activities would be well contained by the existing vegetation within and bordering the Site. Hedgerows would be retained with the exception of the removal of sections required for access, should this be required. The

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removal of hedgerow for the widening of access point, if required, would be reinstated on completion of the construction phase. The implementation of new planting at the construction phase would be managed in accordance with the LEMP. As such, it is unlikely that there would be significant adverse effects to landscape resource and visual receptors during the construction and decommissioning phases.

5.1.3 Conclusion

Overall, effects to landscape resource and views as a result of the Proposed Development are considered to be not significant.

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be prepared and submitted to support the planning application.

A Glint and Glare assessment will be prepared and submitted to support the planning application.

5.2 Ecology and Nature Conservation

The Site is not subject to any international or national statutory ecological designated sites.

There is one internationally designed site within 2km, North Somerset and Mendip Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is located approximately 1.3km north of the Site; and a further four internationally designed sites within 10km of the Site, comprising:

- Mendip Woodlands SAC – located approximately 5.5km south of the Site;
- Mendip Limestone Grassland SAC – located approximately 5.9km south of the Site;
- Severn Estuary SAC – located approximately 8.1km north-west of the Site; and
- Severn Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) – located approximately 8.1km north-west of the Site.

In terms of nationally designated sites, there is one Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and six Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located with 3km of the Site, including:

- King's Wood and Urchin Wood SSSI – located approximately 1.3km north of the Site;
 - Dolebury Warren SSSI - located approximately 2km south of the Site;
 - Bourne SSSI – located approximately 2.1km south-east of the Site;
 - Cheddar Valley Railway Walk LNR – located approximately 2.4km west of the Site;
 - Goblin Combe SSSI – located approximately 2.7km north of the Site;
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- Burrington Combe SSSI – located approximately 2.7km south of the Site; and
- Biddle Street, Yatton SSSI – located approximately 2.8km north-west of the Site.

There are 11 non-statutory designed ecological sites within 2km of the Site:

- Congresbury Yeo, Adjacent Land and Rhynes Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) – located adjacent to Site’s northern boundary;
- • Burrington Combe Fan Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS) – located approximately 500m east of the Site;
- Pierchay RIGS – located approximately 1.1km north-east of the Site;
- Simshill Wood SNCI – located approximately 1.1km north of the Site;
- Littler Plantation SNCI – 1.4km north-east of the Site;
- Ball Wood and Corporation Woods SNCI – located approximately 1.2km north of the Site;
- Disused Quarry near Wrington RIGS – located approximately 1.3 north of the Site;
- Prestow Wood and Shippenhays Wood SNCI – located approximately 1.4km north-east of the Site;
- Tucker’s Grove and Whitley Coppice SNCI – located approximately 1.8km north-east from the Site.
- Mendip Lodge Wood SNCI – located approximately 1.8km south of the Site; and
- Dolebury Warren Avon Wildlife Trust Reserve – located approximately 1.9km south of the Site; and

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken for the Site identified that the Site is dominated by improved grassland (currently grazed) and arable fields, which are of limited ecological value. The Site also comprises of poor semi-improved grassland, dense scrub, scattered scrub, standing water, ponds, ditches, watercourses, species-rich and species-poor hedgerow and trees.

The Site has the potential to support bats, badger, great crested newt, dormouse and breeding birds and boundary features at the Site may support reptiles. Otter and water vole are also likely to be present within 2km of the Site. The Site is considered sub-optimal for wintering birds and of limited value for invertebrates and botanical interest.

5.2.1 Operational Effects

The Site is dominated by improved grassland and arable fields, such that the Proposed Development would directly impact habitat of limited ecological value. The Site is

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however, subdivided by a series of hedgerows, treelines and ditches of higher ecological value habitats, which would be retained and managed in accordance with a LEMP.

- Hedgerows and other boundary features (ditches, watercourses) will be retained where possible and treated with a buffer of rough grassland habitats (typically with a buffer of 5-10 m). Where minor breaches in hedgerows are required, these would be limited to the minimum possible width, and the habitat would be reinstated after completion of the works.

Ponds will also be retained and those supporting great crested newts will be treated with an appropriate buffer of 50m.

A 10m buffer of retained and newly planted vegetation will be provided to the adjacent Congresbury Yeo and Langford Brook watercourses.

Furthermore, habitat enhancement would be provided through management of grassland habitat of higher floral diversity and higher structural diversity than currently present, and through the provision of bat boxes on trees to be retained to enhance roosting opportunities at the Site for bats.

The operation of the Proposed Development may give rise to impacts upon foraging bats due to the change in intensity of the grazing regime, which influences the abundance of beetles, a food source for bats, associated with cattle dung. However, the Site is likely to continue to be grazed by sheep during the operational phase, such that the change in grazing regime is not anticipated to be significant.

Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, it is not anticipated that risk of pollution or noise disturbance or impacts on air quality on ecological features would give rise to significant effects during the operational phase of the Proposed Development.

In terms of operational air quality effects, the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) LA105, includes that SSSI sites designated for their ecological importance within 200 metres of roads as part of the Proposed Development need to be considered for air quality impacts. The DMRB sets out criteria for air quality effects from increases in traffic movement. Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, traffic movement generated within 200 metres of the SSSI is not likely to meet the criteria set out in the DMRB. As such, it is not likely that air quality effects to the SSSI would be significant.

The creation of new habitat areas and enhancement of retained areas would be managed in accordance with a LEMP, which would be secured via a planning condition, should planning consent be granted. As such significant operational effects to ecology and nature conservation are considered not likely.

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5.2.2 Construction and Decommissioning Effects

Prior to construction commencing, all construction working areas would be checked by a qualified ecologist where suitable habitat is present. Any construction activities that have the potential to affect suitable bird nesting habitat would be timed to commence outside the breeding season (March to August inclusive). Any active nests identified during this time would be protected by implementation of a 5m buffer to ensure that the area would not be disturbed during Site construction, and would remain in place until young birds have fledged and left the nest.

Any trees proposed to be retained at the Site would be protected using calculated Root Protection Areas and buffer techniques in line with best practice measures. If any trees (including dead trees) are to be felled, the wood would be retained onsite in large pieces to provide dead-wood habitat. If any trees are to be removed, survey and potentially mitigation for roosting bats and breeding birds may be required and appropriate licences sought and secured prior to works commencing.

Fences would be designed in such a way to avoid wildlife (particularly badgers, hedgehog and brown hare) becoming trapped.

Any badger sets identified onsite would be treated with a 30m buffer zone. Any sett closures, if required, will be in accordance with a Natural England licence. Protection measures during the construction phase will also be adopted to avoid badgers (and other mammals) becoming trapped in excavations.

Construction lighting will be minimised to avoid light spill on to hedges or trees which could be used by foraging bats.

A precautionary approach to reptiles and a non-licences precautionary approach to dormouse is likely to be required for any limited hedgerow works that might be unavoidable, with vegetation cleared using handheld tools under supervision by a licenced ecologist.

Ponds supporting great crested newts will be treated with an appropriate buffer (i.e. a 50m radius where digging and storage of materials will be avoided). Habitat enhancement works in these areas will be supervised by a suitably experienced ecologist. Works beyond 50m from breeding ponds may require a precautionary approach to avoid impacts on individual animals. If works are required in close proximity to breeding ponds, then a licence from Natural England will be sought and secured.

Noise generating activities and pollution control measures would be undertaken at the Site in accordance with standard best practice measures which would control impacts to a negligible level.

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Air quality effects from dust, generated during the construction and decommissioning phases, would be effectively managed and controlled by standard mitigation measures, as set out by the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM)¹. Construction dust effects to habitats would therefore be controlled to a negligible level.

- Impacts from pollution of surface water, groundwater or soils from fuel spillages and other runoff would be controlled in accordance with construction best practice measures to mitigate significant effects to wet heath and mire habitats within nearby designated ecological sites.

These measures would be set out in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP), which would be secured by a suitable planning condition. As such with mitigation measures in place, construction effects to ecology are not likely to be significant.

5.2.3 Conclusion

Overall, with the mitigation measures in place, effects to ecology and nature conservation as a result of the Proposed Development are considered to be not significant.

5.3 Heritage and Archaeology

The Site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory heritage designations. There are no scheduled monuments or World Heritage Sites within the Site or immediately adjacent to the Site boundary. The nearest scheduled monument is the Congresbury Village Cross, located approximately 2.3km north-west of the Site.

Barley Wood Grade II Registered Park and Garden is located approximately 1.6km north-east of the Site, separated by the existing development at Wrington.

There are no listed buildings within or immediately adjacent to the Site. There are 14 Grade II listed buildings within 1km to the south of the Site at Langford - the closest being the Grade II listed Maysmead Place, located approximately 250m south of the Site.

To the north-west, there is only one Grade II listed building, Bow Bridge, located within 1km of the Site, located between Congresbury and Iwood. To the north-east, there are 21 Grade II listed buildings, one Grade I listed building (Church of All Saints), and one Grade II* listed building (Alburys), all located within 1km of the Site at Wrington.

¹ Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) (2014) Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction. Version 1.1.

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The North Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER) does not identify any finds within or in the immediate vicinity of the Site.

There are no Conservation Areas within the Site, or immediately adjacent to the Site boundary.

5.3.1 Operational Effects

- The Proposed Development would not result in any direct impacts on designated built heritage assets.

Views towards the Proposed Development from heritage assets are likely to be limited due to the landform, distance from the Site and existing intervening vegetation and built form. Any views from heritage assets towards the Site would be reduced once the new landscape planting on the boundaries of the Site matures, further screening views to the Proposed Development. Any potential views of the Proposed Development from heritage assets would be seen in the context of the surrounding commercial and agricultural development at Lower Langford and the existing energy infrastructure in the vicinity of the Site. The operational impacts would be fully reversible on decommissioning.

Suitable setbacks and landscape planting, in accordance with a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), will be provided on the boundaries of the Site which will increase visual screening and reduce views into the Site from heritage assets. The LEMP will be submitted to support the planning application.

As such, significant effects to the settings of built heritage assets are not considered likely.

The operation of the Proposed Development is not anticipated to generate significant effects to buried archaeology as this would be dealt with and managed at the construction phase.

5.3.2 Construction and Decommissioning Effects

Similarly to the operational phase, due to the limited visibility of the Site from built heritage assets and low-lying nature of the Proposed Development, it is not anticipated that the construction and decommissioning of the Proposed Development would result in significant effects to the settings of heritage assets.

In terms of potential archaeological effects, the Proposed Development could result in some physical impact on potential archaeological features within the Site; however, due to the nature of the Proposed Development, the extent of ground disturbance will be limited. Physical impacts to heritage assets within the Site will be minimised through the design of the Proposed Development, any remaining impacts to below

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ground archaeology during the construction phase could be mitigated through a programme of further investigation which could be carried out prior to the commencement of the construction phase and could be agreed via a pre-commencement condition. As such impacts to archaeology are unlikely to be significant at the construction phase.

- No significant effects to buried archaeology are anticipated during the decommissioning phase as impacts would have been addressed during the construction phase.

5.3.3 Conclusion

Overall, effects to heritage assets and buried archaeology as a result of the Proposed Development are considered to be not significant.

A Heritage Assessment will be prepared and submitted to support the planning application.

5.4 Transport and Access

The Site has direct access to the B3133 (Stock Lane) on its western boundary via an existing field gate. Stock Lane is subject to a 40mph speed limit and is currently used by articulated heavy duty vehicles (HGVs). A secondary access from Half Yard, which abuts the Site's eastern boundary, would be required to access the easternmost parcel of the Site. Half Yard is subject to the national speed limit and is currently used by farm vehicles.

The A370 is located approximately 2.4km north-west of the Site which can be accessed via Stock Lane at Congresbury. The A38 is located approximately 870m south of the Site, which can also be access via Stock Lane. The M5 is located approximately 7.4km west of the Site, which can be accessed via the A370, between Congresbury and Weston-super-Mare.

The preferred Site access to the strategic highway would be taken from the A370 from the north, as this route is considered less constrained than that taken from the A38 to the south.

Access from the A370 would be taken via the signal-controlled junction at Congresbury with High Street. The signalised junction is considered a sufficient size to accommodate HGV traffic (and abnormal loads, should these be required). The B3133 at Congresbury continues southwards as Brinsea Road at a road width of approximately 6m. Further south the B3133 becomes Stock Lane and remains approximately 6m width before reaching the Site access point. The B3133 has a

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generally straight alignment with sweeping bends. The Site access location is located on the outside bend of section of the B3133, which maximises sight lines.

5.4.1 Operational Effects

The operational phase of the Proposed Development would result in negligible vehicle movements associated with routine maintenance and cleaning of the panels by the Site operatives. These would typically be made by a light van or 4x4 vehicles. As such, effects from increased traffic movements to and from the Site are considered not significant.

5.4.2 Construction and Decommissioning Effects

There would be temporary construction and decommissioning traffic generated by the Proposed Development. Construction traffic movements would be managed in accordance with best practice measures to ensure that significant effects do not occur. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be submitted in support of the planning application, and a Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan (DTMP) would be prepared to manage the decommissioning phase. The aim of the CTMP and DTMP is to minimise the effects of construction traffic on the highway network and would include measures to manage and coordinate delivery movements, manage the timings of deliveries, the cleaning of vehicles departing the Site and measures to manage the impacts on PRowS and their users.

5.4.3 Conclusion

Overall, effects to transport and access as a result of the Proposed Development are considered to be not significant.

5.5 Hydrology and Flood Risk

The Congresbury Yeo River abuts the north-eastern boundary of the Site and Langford Brook forms the eastern boundary of the Site. Ditches and five scattered ponds are present across the Site.

The majority of the Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability), which is considered to be an area of low probability of flooding. The eastern extent of the Site fall within an area of Flood Zone 2 and 3 (which are classed as areas of medium and high risk of flooding, respectively), associated with the Yeo River.

The Site is predominantly subject to very low risk of surface water flooding (less than 0.1% chance of surface water flooding) with areas located in low to high risk of surface

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water flooding in the north-eastern, eastern, central and southern extents of the Site, associated with the surface water features (watercourses, ponds and ditches).

The north-eastern, eastern and southern extents of the Site are also identified as being at risk from flooding from reservoir failure, which is associated with the Blagdon reservoir, located approximately 4.2km south-east of the Site.

5.5.1 Operational Effects

The ground beneath the solar panels will continue to be permeable and planted with grass, which is considered to offer a betterment in terms of run off rates in comparison to the current agricultural regime. Options for semi-permeable surfacing (e.g. gravel) would be explored in the design and adopted at the Site, where possible, to ensure that the risk of flooding is not increased at the Site or elsewhere.

The layout of the Proposed Development would respond to surface water flood extents to ensure that infrastructure is located outside areas of deep surface water flooding. Critical infrastructure of the Proposed Development (i.e. BESS and substation) would also be located outside the flood extents of reservoir failure.

5.5.2 Construction and Decommissioning Effects

In terms of water quality, proposed sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) would include measures to remove any potential suspended sediment caused by soil erosion during the construction phase. As such, effects to water quality as a result of the Proposed Development are anticipated to be not significant.

The construction phase would include drainage measures to ensure that the rate of runoff is controlled without increasing the flood risk elsewhere.

The Proposed Development would likely require a Flood Evacuation Plan to be prepared to ensure the safety of construction staff and minimise adverse effects in the unlikely event of flooding from reservoir failure.

5.5.3 Conclusion

Overall, effects to hydrology and flood risk as a result of the Proposed Development are considered to be not significant.

A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Plan will be prepared to support the planning application.

5.6 Geology and Ground Conditions

There is one statutory geological designated site within 3km of the Site, Bourne SSSI, which is located approximately 2.1km south-east of the Site and is notified for its

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geological interest – a north Mendip Pleistocene alluvial fan representing a considerable period of Pleistocene time.

From British Geological Survey (BGS) maps at 1:50,000 scale, the land at the Site is underlain by the Mercia Mudstone Group (mudstone and halite-stone) and the Arden Sandstone Formation (sandstone).

The Site is characterised by High to Medium groundwater vulnerability and is not located within the Source Protection Zone (SPZ).

The Site is wholly located within an area of Low risk from Unexploded Ordnance (UXO).

5.6.1 Operational Effects

Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, it is unlikely that there would be any likely spillage incidents to generate significant pollution effects. As such, it is not anticipated that the operation of the Proposed Development would result in significant effects to ground conditions.

5.6.2 Construction and Decommissioning Effects

Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, no significant or large foundations would be required. As such, the Proposed Development is not considered to give rise to significant effects on the geology and ground conditions at the Site.

The risks of spillage during the construction phase would be controlled through the implementation of best practice measures as secured by the CEMP and DEMP. Therefore, effects from pollution to geology and ground conditions is considered to be not significant.

5.6.3 Conclusion

Overall, effects to geology and ground conditions as a result of the Proposed Development are considered to be not significant.

5.7 Air Quality and Climate

The Site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The nearest AQMA is in Keynsham, Bristol, located over 20km north-east of the Site.

5.7.1 Operational Effects

During the operational phase, the Site would be largely unmanned and would be monitored remotely with occasional routine maintenance visits. These visits would not generate significant traffic emissions or impacts on air quality. The Proposed

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Development itself would not generate any emissions during its operation and therefore would not impact on local air quality. It is important to note that the renewable electricity generated by the Proposed Development would contribute to displacing carbon dioxide emissions associated with fossil fuel energy production. Therefore, the Proposed Development would contribute positively to legally binding climate requirements and operate in accordance with North Somerset Council's commitment to reducing emissions to reduce the impact of climate change.

5.7.2 Construction and Decommissioning Effects

Impacts to air quality are likely to be limited to dust and vehicle emissions generated by the construction phase. Dust would be effectively controlled through best practice measures in accordance with IAQM guidance, to reduce dust impacts to a negligible level. In terms of construction emissions, guidance from Environmental Protection UK (EPUK) states that construction traffic impacts on air quality are likely to require assessment for large, long-term construction sites that would generate large heavy goods vehicles (HGV) flows (more than 200 movements per day) over a period of a year or more. The Proposed Development would not fall into this category. There are no other activities during the construction phase that are likely to give rise to significant air quality and climate change effects.

5.7.3 Conclusion

Overall, effects to air quality and climate as a result of the Proposed Development are considered not significant.

5.8 Noise and Vibration

There are a number of residential properties and agricultural buildings located adjacent to the northern and western boundary of the Site. The nearest potential noise sensitive receptors include: residential properties in the vicinity of Stoney Croft House, which abut the Site's northern boundary; houses in the vicinity of Stock Farm, which abut the Site's western boundary, fronting Stock Lane, with dwellings beyond on Duck Lane, within 500m of the Site boundary; residential and agricultural premises at the village of Stock on the Site's western boundary, and commercial and agricultural premises at the Langford House business park/complex.

There are fewer noise sensitive receptors to the west of the Site, with the nearest comprising residential properties fronting Maysmead Lane, Greenwell Lane, Blackmoor and Half Yard; the closest of those being located approximately 200m from the Site.

5.8.1 Operational Effects

Operational noise generated by the Proposed Development would be limited and would be associated with low-level noise from onsite inverters and transformer stations, and the BESS. The BESS will be positioned sensitively to respond to nearby noise sensitive receptors, including residential receptors. The inverter and transformer stations would be sensitively located to minimise the impact on the nearest offsite noise sensitive receptors. Therefore, it is not likely that the Proposed Development would generate significant noise effects to surrounding receptors.

5.8.2 Construction and Decommissioning Effects

The Proposed Development would generate temporary noise during the construction and decommissioning phases (should decommissioning be required), associated with construction vehicle movements to and from the Site and onsite activities. The construction traffic generated by the Proposed Development is anticipated to be limited and would be managed in accordance with standard good practice measures in accordance with a CTMP and DTMP. Noise from construction/demolition works would be controlled to a negligible level through the implementation of construction/demolition best practice measures which would be secured through the CEMP and DEMP, which will be secured via planning condition. As such, noise effects from the construction phase of the Proposed Development are considered to be not significant.

5.8.3 Conclusion

Overall, effects from noise and vibration as a result of the Proposed Development are considered not significant.

A Noise Assessment will be prepared and submitted to support the planning application.

5.9 Socio-economics Effects

5.9.1 Operational Effects

The Proposed Development would be largely unmanned during its operation and therefore would not generate a long-term source of employment. As such, significant operational employment effects are not considered likely.

The PRoWs that route through the Site would be retained with a suitable separation buffer from the proposed boundary fencing to the Proposed Development. There may be some need for PRoW diversions within the Site, which would aim to positively respond to amenity by routing the PRoW along existing field boundaries, which

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would be treated with new landscaping. The Proposed Development would therefore not affect accessibility of existing PRow. Therefore, the Proposed Development is not likely to generate significant effects to community resources.

5.9.2 Construction and Decommissioning Effects

Some temporary employment would be generated during the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development which may result in a beneficial effect to the local economy. However, due to the nature and scale of the Proposed Development, this effect is considered to be not significant.

PRowS would be retained and would continue to be operational during the construction phase, with only minor short-term closures or diversions potentially required in the interest of safety. As such, significant effects to community resources are not considered to be likely.

5.9.3 Conclusion

Overall, significant effects to socio-economics and community resources are not considered likely as a result of the Proposed Development.

5.10 Agriculture and Soil

An Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) report, which presents the findings of the detailed ALC surveys, was completed for the Proposed Development in August 2022. The ALC report identified that the Site comprises soils grouped predominantly in the Brockhurst 2 Association, with a pocket of soil in the Compton Association flanking Langford Brook in the north-east of the Site, and some soils in the Whimple 3 Association in the eastern extent of the Site.

Soils of the Brockhurst 2 Association consists of typical stagnogley soils, in fine loamy drift over mudstone and are slowly permeable. The Compton Association consists of clayey, severely waterlogged soils developed in reddish and greyish river alluvium. The Whimple 3 Association has seasonally waterlogged reddish fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils.

The quality of the agricultural land comprises 28.7% of Subgrade 3a (Good), 50.6% of Subgrade 3b (Moderate) and 20.7% of Grade 4 (Poor). The Site therefore includes a small portion of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land (Grade 3a (28.7%)) as defined by Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

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5.10.1 Operational Effects

The operation of the Proposed Development will not generate any further impacts to the soil resource, beyond those within the construction phase, and therefore the operational effect is not significant.

5.10.2 Construction and Decommissioning Effects

The Proposed Development would result in a temporary (long-term but fully reversible) impact as a result of the loss of improved grassland and arable land. However, the Proposed Development will continue to be managed either by sheep grazing or mowing, therefore; its agricultural function will not be entirely lost. The removal of parts of the Site from intensive agricultural use will enable the soils to recover, by allowing them to improve their structure.

There will be an impact on soils through temporary onsite tracks (where any kind of temporary planking or matting is not used) and areas of hardstanding, although this will be limited due to the nature of the Proposed Development. To reduce the impact during the construction phase, principles of good practice in soil handling and restoration would be adhered to in accordance with relevant guidanceⁱ to minimise damage to soil resource.

The installation of the Proposed Development is reversible, i.e. the agricultural land can be returned to its agricultural productivity once the generation of renewable electricity has ceased, and the solar panels and associated infrastructure is removed.

As such, the operational effects on agricultural land and soil are considered not significant.

5.10.3 Conclusion

Overall, effects to agricultural land and soil resource is not considered to be significant as a result of the Proposed Development.

5.11 Human Health

Due to the nature of the Proposed Development and the information set out under each of the environmental topics within this letter, potential effects on Human Health are considered to be limited and not significant.

5.11.1 Risk of Major Accidents and/or Disasters - Fire

All materials at the Site would comply with the relevant standards, regulations and guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Fire protection equipment, and suitable fire alarm systems would be adopted at the Site, which would be regularly

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serviced and logged and accompanied by appropriate fire notices. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the Proposed Development would generate a significant fire risk.

The spacing of BESS containers will be based on National Fire Protection Association standard NFPA855 (standard for the installation of stationary energy storage systems). NFPA855 is a commonly applied and well-practiced standard for batteries in the UK.

No other likely foreseeable major accidents and/or disasters have been identified to significantly affect the Proposed Development.

5.12 Interrelationships and Cumulative Effects

Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations 2017, states that characteristics of development must be considered with particular regard to, amongst other things, the cumulation with other existing development and/or approved developments.

An initial review of North Somerset Council's planning application register indicates that there are a number of planning applications within 3km of the Site:

- 19/P/1893/NMA - Non material amendment application to reserved matters permission 18/P/2691/RM (reserved matters application pursuant to Outline Consent 16/P/1291/O (Outline planning permission for the erection of up to 59 dwellings with access for approval. Appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for subsequent approval) for Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale for the erection of 55 no. residential dwellings) to allow amendment to site layout following submission of section 38 application and internal layout and external appearance of some of the proposed dwellings (as listed in submitted schedule 20 August 2019). Approved 29/11/2019. This application site is located approximately 480m east of the Site and construction works have commenced.
- 21/P/0019/OUT - Outline application for redevelopment of Gatcombe Farm Industrial Estate entailing demolition and site clearance; construction of 38 No. dwellings (class C3) and 450sq.m offices (class E) in 2 No. buildings. Associated works including internal road network, car parking, drainage, open space and play area. Full details provided for access, layout, scale and landscaping. Matters of appearance reserved for subsequent approval. Approved 22/12/2021. This application site is located approximately 1km north of the Site. Construction works have not commenced.
- 22/P/1450/FUL – Proposed development of a 49.9MW solar farm and associated infrastructure. Validated 15th July 2022 and awaiting determination. This application site is located approximately 2.6km west of the Site.

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- 23/P/0448/OUT – Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except access) for demolition of existing buildings and site clearance (including vegetation removal) to allow mixed use development comprising up to: 100 dwellinghouses (Class C3); 60 co-living workers accommodation units (Sui Generis 1,400 sqm of new flexible employment floorspace (Class E(g), B2 and/or B8); 830 sqm of new employment floorspace associated with existing mushroom farm operation (casing, machinery and packing stores)(Class B2/B8); 420 sqm of childrens day nursery floorspace (Class E); and 200 sqm of café coffee shop floorspace (Class E). Development to include associated provision of car parking, landscaping and tree works, public open space and local equipped area for play (LEAP), drainage infrastructure, acoustic bund, enhancements to existing vehicle vehicular access to Stock Lane and connections to the existing footpath network. This application is non-EI and is awaiting decision. This application site is located to the immediate west of Stock Lane (B3133), opposite the Site access point for the Proposed Development.

Approved planning application 19/P/1893/NMA is currently under construction and located approximately 480m east of the Site. Visual receptors that may experience intervisibility of the Site and planning application 19/P/1893/NMA may be limited due to the landform and screening provided by the intervening vegetation and existing built development at Wrington. Visual receptors at the existing commercial estate adjacent to planning application 19/P/1893/NMA, on the western side of Havyatt Road, may experience separate views of the Site and planning application 19/P/1893/NMA; however, due to the orientation of the commercial estate, intervisibility of both sites from a single view within the commercial estate is unlikely. Additionally, visual receptors within the commercial estate would likely be of low sensitivity and as such, significant cumulative visual effects are not anticipated.

Approved planning application 21/P/0019/OUT is located approximately 1km north of the Site and is not currently under construction. Due to the distances and intervening screening (i.e. vegetation and built development) present between the sites, intervisibility would be limited and significant cumulative visual effects are not anticipated.

Planning application 22/P/1450/FUL is located approximately 2.6km south-west of the Site and due to distance, topography and existing intervening development, significant cumulative visual effects are not anticipated.

Planning application 23/P/0448/OUT is located to the west of the Site, on the western side of Stock Lane (B3133). Receptors (properties) to the immediate west of the Site boundary, fronting Stock Lane, as well as users travelling along Stock Lane, may have intervisibility of both the Proposed Development and application Site 23/P/0448/OUT, being located between the two sites. The Proposed Development will include a

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landscaped setback on the western extent of the Site, to limit impacts to visual amenity for adjacent properties. From review of application 23/P/0448/OUT, the proposals include a considerable offset of green infrastructure to the west of Stock Lane. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment prepared for application 23/P/0448/OUT concluded that the proposals could be successfully accommodated within the existing landscape pattern and could be assimilated into the surrounding landscape without causing any long-term harm to the landscape character or visual amenity, and that any visual impact associated with the development of the brownfield elements of the application site, will be limited due to its previously developed nature. As such, significant cumulative landscape and visual effects are not anticipated.

In terms of cumulative effects to landscape resource, the Proposed Development, as previously identified, it not anticipated to give rise to significant landscape effects. Planning application 19/P/1893/NMA and the Proposed Development fall within the same Landscape Character Area (LCA) 'J2: River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland'. Planning application 19/P/1893/NMA would be seen in the context of the existing settlement pattern at Wrington, as identified in the according Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted to support that planning application, which determined that no significant landscape effects were likely.

Planning application 21/P/0019/OUT falls within a different LCA to the Proposed Development, 'E6: Cleeve Ridges and Combes' and therefore the landscape is characterised differently to that of the Proposed Development. The LVIA submitted as part of the suite of documents supporting planning application 21/P/0019/OUT also identified that landscape effects would be non-significant.

Planning application 22/P/1450/FUL falls predominantly within a different LCA to that of the Site and other identified application sites above, within 'A4: Locking and Banwell Moors' and only a small proportion of the Site falls within 'J2: River Yeo Rolling Valley Farmland'. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted to support the application for 22/P/1450/FUL concluded that the greatest visual impacts would be experienced from short distances, namely when walking close to or within the application site, with limited impacts identified on the wider surrounding landscape.

By ensuring the landscape proposals of the Proposed Development, in accordance with the LEMP, are in-keeping with the underlying landscape character, this would help to integrate the Proposed Development into the landscape and would further help to minimise effects on landscape character. The nature of the Proposed Development means that the development is fully reversible and as such, landscape effects would be largely attributed to the permanent development types of the applications identified above. Therefore, a significant cumulative effect to landscape resource is not likely.

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Overall, in light of the above conclusions, significant cumulative effects to landscape resource are not anticipated.

As identified previously, the Proposed Development is not anticipated to generate significant vehicle movements during its construction, operation and decommissioning phases. The Transport Assessment completed for planning application 21/P/0019/OUT determined that development proposals are acceptable in highway terms and would be subject to a Construction Transport Management Plan to reduce effects. The Transport Assessment submitted as part of the suite of documents for planning application 19/P/1893/NMA concluded that the proposal generates a minimal impact to the operation of the surrounding highway network.

Due to the nature of planning application 22/P/1450/FUL, it would likely generate similar vehicle movements to that generated by the Proposed Development. Planning application 22/P/1450/FUL is supported by a Construction Transport Management Plan, which would minimise adverse construction phase effects upon traffic and highways.

As such, in considering the above, significant cumulative effects upon traffic and highways is not anticipated.

The Proposed Development itself is identified as unlikely to generate significant effects to air quality, noise, hydrology and flood risk, geology and ground conditions and human health, with the implementation of standard industry best practice measures. In the unlikely event that the construction phase of the Proposed Development coincided with the construction of planning applications 19/P/1893/NMA, 21/P/0019/OUT, 22/P/1450/FUL and 23/P/0448/OUT, it is not considered that the Proposed Development would make a significant contribution to such cumulative effects.

In terms of cumulative socio-economic effects, in the unlikely event that the construction phases of the Proposed Development and planning applications 19/P/1893/NMA, 21/P/0019/OUT, 22/P/1450/FUL and 23/P/0448/OUT coincided, there would be some local employment benefit; however, due to the nature of the Proposed Development, it is not anticipated to significantly contribute to this beneficial effect. The Proposed Development and above identified planning applications are not of nature or type to generate significant employment effects during their operational phases. As such, significant cumulative operational socio-economic effects are not considered likely.

No other potential impacts have been identified to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

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6 Conclusion

This report identifies that the Proposed Development does not constitute Schedule 1 development and is considered to be Schedule 2 development, as defined by the EIA Regulations.

The likely effects as a result of the Proposed Development have been discussed and the mitigation measures identified, which would control and minimise impacts to an acceptable level.

Overall, the Proposed Development is not considered to constitute EIA development in accordance with the EIA Regulations.

- Landscape and Visual Resources – Non-EIA;
- Ecology and Nature Conservation – Non-EIA;
- Heritage and Archaeology – Non-EIA;
- Transport and Access – Non-EIA;
- Hydrology and Flood Risk – Non-EIA;
- Geology and Ground Conditions – Non-EIA;
- Air Quality and Climate – Non-EIA;
- Noise and Vibration – Non-EIA;
- Socio-economics Effects – Non-EIA;
- Agriculture and Soil – Non-EIA;
- Human Health – Non-EIA; and
- Interrelationships and Cumulative Effects – Non-EIA.

We would be grateful if you could confirm whether or not the Proposed Development constitutes EIA development, so that preparation and submission of the planning application can proceed.

The following reports would be submitted to accompany the planning application:

- Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP);
 - Ecological Appraisal Report;
 - Biodiversity Net Gain calculation;
 - Tree Survey;
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA);
-

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- Glint and Glare Assessment;
- Heritage Assessment;
- Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP);
- Noise Assessment;
- Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Plan; and
- Agricultural Land Classification Report.

If you would like to discuss any part of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Anna Gillespie

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CC. Tim MacKellar (Statkraft)

Ed Salter (LDA Design)

ⁱ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) (2000) Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils.



Project Name:
Kitland

Date:
10/08/2023

Title:
Kitland Overview

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Indicative Cable Route

0 50 100 Meters
1:2,500 on A1

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