



High Grove Solar

Preliminary Environmental Information Report

Chapter 12 Socio-economics

April 2025

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12 Socio-economics

12.1 Introduction

- 12.1.1.1 This chapter of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) presents the findings of the preliminary assessment of the likely significant effects arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development on Socio-economics.
- 12.1.1.2 This chapter sets out the relevant legislation, policy, standards and guidance applied to the assessment process; consultation undertaken to inform the assessment; assessment methodology; the relevant baseline conditions upon which the assessment is based; embedded and good practice mitigation considered in place before the assessment is undertaken; the likely significant effects that may arise as a result of the Proposed Development considering embedded and good practice mitigation; and any further mitigation requirements to avoid or reduce the likely significant effects; the remaining residual effects following further mitigation; and any monitoring required for remaining significant effects.
- 12.1.1.3 The following matters have been assessed as part of this chapter:
- Local economy, employment opportunities and supply chain during construction, operation and decommissioning;
 - Skills and employment opportunities during construction, operation and decommissioning; and
 - Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and recreational routes during construction and decommissioning.
- 12.1.1.4 With the agreement of the Planning Inspectorate via the Scoping Opinion the following matters have been scoped out of the assessment:
- Construction
 - Amenity effects related to the local population
 - Land Use – potential indirect effects on commercial receptors, community facilities and development land
 - Land Use – Development land and allocations (including mineral resources)
 - Operation
 - Amenity effects related to the local population
 - Land Use – PRoW and recreational resources
 - Land Use – potential indirect effects on commercial receptors, community facilities and development land
 - Land Use – Development land and allocations (including mineral resources)
 - Decommissioning
 - Amenity effects related to the local population

- Land Use – potential indirect effects on commercial receptors, community facilities and development land
- Land Use – Development land and allocations (including mineral resources)

12.1.1.5 The Proposed Development would not have any direct effects on commercial or community receptors and the potential for such effects is not considered further as part of this assessment.

12.1.1.6 Understanding intra-project effects between topics is an integral part of the EIA process and have been considered within this chapter. The conclusions of the following topic assessments are considered relevant to the receptors considered within this assessment, and as such are taken into account in the overall assessment for Socio-economics:

- Chapter 5 Agricultural Land and Soils;
- Chapter 10 Landscape and Visual;
- Chapter 11 Noise and Vibration; and
- Chapter 13 Traffic and Transport.

12.1.1.7 This chapter is supported by the following Figures:

- Figure 12.1 Site Location Plan and Study Areas
- Figure 12.2 Public Rights of Way

12.2 Relevant legislation, policy, standards and guidance

12.2.1.1 This section identifies the relevant legislation, planning policy, standards and guidelines which have informed this assessment, including the methodology and identification of mitigation.

12.2.2 Legislation

12.2.2.1 There is no legislation specific to the assessment of socio-economic effects arising as part of the Proposed Development. Where relevant, legislation specific to elements of the assessment such as the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) [1] are referenced.

12.2.3 Policy

Table 12-1 Socio-economics – Policy

Policy	Relevance to assessment
Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (NPS EN-1), 2024 [2] Sets broad national policy approach. Section 4.1 sets out the general policies for the submission and assessment of applications relating to energy infrastructure. Paragraph 4.1.5 considers the weighting of adverse impacts and benefits, including the contribution to job creation and any long-term or wide benefits. Section 5.11 addresses land use outlining approach to assessment of impacts and determining requirement for mitigation (if required), including the need to provide appropriate mitigation to address adverse effects on National Trails and other rights of way, and to consider what opportunities there are to improve or create new access. Section 5.13 addresses socioeconomics, outlining approach to assessment of impacts and determining requirement for mitigation (if required), including the following paragraphs of relevance: • Paragraph 5.13.4 which considers potential relevant socio-economic impacts such as the creation of jobs and training opportunities, the contribution to the development of low-carbon industries the provision of additional local services and improvements, local supply chains and effects on tourism. • Paragraph 5.13.5 states the need for applicants to describe the existing socio-economic conditions in the study area, and how any impacts correlate with relevant local planning policy. • Paragraph 5.13.6 states that applicants are encouraged to demonstrate that local suppliers have been considered in the supply chain and paragraph 5.13.7 states that applicants should consider developing accommodation strategies.	This PEIR chapter provides an outline of the existing baseline conditions, both socio-economic and recreational in section 12.6. The proposed mitigation measures for impacts on PRoWs and the Peddars Way National Trail are considered within Table 12-7. Furthermore, potential impacts on other socio-economic factors including jobs and training opportunities is considered within section 12.8. The provision of local services, improvements and supply chains and consideration of these is addressed throughout the assessment.

Policy	Relevance to assessment
NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), 2024 [3] Establishes policy specific to renewable energy schemes, including solar in Section 2.10. EN-3 aims to streamline the consenting process for large-scale solar developments by allowing decisions on solar applications to be made under section 104 of the Planning Act 2008. Solar energy is considered low carbon infrastructure and crucial for achieving net-zero goals, therefore designated Critical National Priority infrastructure under 2.17, 2.18, and Section 3. Therefore, provided assessment principles and legal requirements are met, and the mitigation hierarchy has been applied to avoid, reduce and mitigate significant adverse effects, the benefits [of the infrastructure] will generally be considered to outweigh residual effects. Paragraph 2.2.7, which provides guidance on the factors influencing site selection and design including community considerations for determining a feasible route between initiating and terminating points of a proposed electricity line. Paragraphs 2.10.40 to 2.10.45 set out an approach for keeping PRow, as far as is practicable, open, for preventing, as far as possible, visual and amenity impacts on PRow and exploring opportunities for enhancement and utilising an outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan. Additionally, paragraph 2.10.69 identifies the need for Applicants to establish what will be removed or remain in situ as part of decommissioning, specifically where there may be socio-economic benefit in retaining infrastructure such as permissive paths after the operational life.	Mitigation and design principles have been considered throughout the assessment, and appropriate mitigation has been applied as discussed throughout this chapter. Community considerations have and will continue to be taken into account as the design of the Proposed Development evolves, as referenced in Chapter 3 Alternatives and Design Iteration. Table 12-7 addresses impacts to PRow, setting out an approach for keeping them open and referencing the outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (oPRoWMP) to be submitted as part of the DCO application. A draft oPRoWMP is also available as part of this statutory consultation. Sections 12.8.1 and 12.8.3 present the residual effects following implementation of the mitigation strategy.
National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024 [4] The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England how these should be applied. Although the NPPs provide the primary policy framework for the Proposed Development, the policies in the NPPF may still be considered important and relevant. The assessment should therefore look at key parts of the NPPF such as, paragraph 8 which outlines the three objectives (economic, social and	Economic, social and environmental factors have been considered throughout the assessment in section 12.8. Economic factors are assessed in terms of employment and local supply chains. Social factors are considered in terms of community disruption and local skills and engagement. Environmental factors are considered in terms of PRow and community facilities.

Policy	Relevance to assessment
environmental) that support achieving sustainable development, Section 6 on building a strong, competitive economy (paragraphs 85, 87 and 88) Section 8 on promoting healthy and safe communities (paragraph 98) and Section 12 on achieving well designed places.	
Norfolk Access Improvement Plan, December 2019 [5] The Norfolk Access Improvement Plan sets out the management procedure for PRoW, and in paragraph 5.3 sets out the legal process for engaging with PRoW realignment. Chapter 1 also identifies the statement of actions for PRoW in Norfolk, which guarantees the protection of environment, that the network must be maintained for local communities, and that it must be well connected. [5]	This has been addressed through section 12.8.1.15, where setting out how to keep PRoWs open where practicable, alongside providing diversions ensure that the PRoW network maintains the required actions as identified in the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan.
Breckland Local Plan, 2023, Breckland Council [6] The Proposed Development is located within the administrative boundary of Breckland Council. Policy ENV 10 Renewable Energy Development notes the council supports proposals for new renewable energy development subject to its impact. Policy COM 02 Healthy lifestyles sets out policy to ensure appropriate steps to “<i>avoid/mitigate potential negative effects on the health of the population</i>” including “<i>safeguarding and enhancing green infrastructure</i>”. Policy EC01 Economic Development sets out that the distribution of new employment allocation, reflecting sustainability principles. COM 04 Community Facilities sets out that “<i>The creation, enhancement and expansion of community facilities will be supported where this would enhance the existing offer, benefit the local economy and be of a suitable scale and type for its location and in locations in close proximity to the area that they will serve.</i>”	Policy COM 02 is complied with through the mitigation of PRoW disruption, as shown in section 12.8.1.15. Policy EC01 is considered within the employment section of Chapter, and supported by the minor beneficial effect the proposed development is likely to have. The creation and expansion of accessibility to community facilities is indirectly considered within this assessment through the proposal of permissive paths as part of the Proposed Development, and the Applicant’s proposal of a Community Benefit Fund, as described in paragraph 12.12.1.2.

12.2.4 Standards and guidance

Table 12-2 *Socio-economics - Standards and guidance*

Standards	Relevance to assessment
Planning Practice Guidance (last updated 2023), Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities [7] Paragraph 013 which sets out relevant planning considerations for solar farms Paragraph 155 with particular reference to guidance on planning and the economy and the potential future needs of the population in terms of economic development, jobs and employment opportunities.	Paragraph 013 is addressed throughout this PEIR chapter. Paragraph 155 is addressed within the future baseline aspect of the assessment in section 12.6.2. This is then considered in section 12.8.3.
Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation, HM Treasury, 2022 [8] Chapter 5 sets out an approach for Social Cost Benefit and Cost Effectiveness Analysis for assessing the impact of different options on social welfare.	This is considered within the employment section (paragraph 12.8.1.1), taking into account leakage, additionality and multiplier effects.
Breckland Design Guide, 2024, Breckland Council [9] Provides design guidance for the integration of development with nature (Section 3).	This is addressed within the opportunities for enhancement section (section 12.12) which considers the provision of permissive paths to enhance recreational connectivity across the Proposed Development.
Additionality Guide (4th edition), 2014, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) [10] Provides guidance for assessing additionality for projects, and provides methodology for calculating dead weight and additionality.	This is addressed throughout Section 12.8 with reference to construction employment and decommissioning employment.

- 12.2.4.1 Presently there is no industry-wide guidance available which establishes a methodology for the assessment of socio-economic effects of a solar farm and so, in addition to the above, previous professional experience has been utilised.

12.3 Consultation

12.3.1 Scoping opinion

- 12.3.1.1 An EIA Scoping Report was submitted to PINS on 6 September 2024, and a Scoping Opinion was published by the Planning Inspectorate on 17 October 2024. A summary of the key comments received and how these have been addressed in this assessment or will be addressed in the ES is presented below:

- The Planning Inspectorate agreed that amenity effects related to the local population during construction, operation and decommissioning were unlikely to be significant and has therefore been scoped out of further assessment.
- The Planning Inspectorate confirmed that impacts to PRow should be assessed when the impact first arises, and any impacts (such as diversions or closures) that would last beyond the construction phase must clearly be identified in the ES. Access to PRow will be maintained during the Operational stage of the Proposed Development, therefore this assessment considers impacts to PRow during the construction and decommissioning stages of the Proposed Development.
- The Planning Inspectorate agreed that indirect effects to commercial receptors, community facilities and development land can be dealt with through cross-referencing to other assessment chapters.
- The Planning Inspectorate agreed that indirect effects to development land allocations can be dealt with through cross referencing to other assessment chapters. It was also agreed that impacts mineral deposits can be scoped out of further assessment.
- In response to the Planning Inspectorate's request that static socio-economic receptors are mapped out onto a figure. The PRow that could potentially be affected by the Proposed Development are shown on Figure 12.2.

- 12.3.1.2 Full responses to comments received as part of the Scoping Opinion will be provided as part of the Environmental Statement (ES) submitted with the application for development consent.

12.3.2 Stakeholder engagement

- 12.3.2.1 The Norfolk County Council PRow officer will be engaged with regards to proposed diversions, management and mitigation measures and further enhancement, as detailed within the oPRowMP, to be secured via the dDCO.

12.4 Study area

12.4.1.1 The study area for socio-economics changes for different receptors, based on professional judgement from previous work on solar farms. The Proposed Development is situated entirely within the Breckland District Local Authority boundary. The scale and geographic distribution of the Proposed Development means that its effects have the potential to impact a wide geographic area and the associated population. As such the areas set out below have been considered the study areas for Socio-economic impacts.

- Potential economic effects may be felt over a wide area given the somewhat specialist nature of some of the construction and operational works. The study area for consideration of economic effects is therefore broken into 2 categories, local and wider. Local includes the region of Breckland. Wider includes the whole Norfolk county. Significant impacts are unlikely to be felt beyond this as agreed through the Scoping Opinion, due to the size of the wider labour market. These are shown on Figure 12.1.
- Potential effects on the PRoW network focus on the draft Order Limits as agreed in the Scoping Opinion but extend beyond the draft Order Limits where indirect effects are identified, as seen in Figure 12.2.

12.5 Assessment methodology

12.5.1 Baseline sources of information

Desktop sources

12.5.1.1 The following desktop sources have been used to inform the existing baseline conditions of the study areas:

- Review of aerial imagery and mapping of the draft Order Limits and surrounding areas.
- Office for National Statistics data (including 2021 Census data). [11]
- Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) data. [12]
- PRoW data from Norfolk County Council. [13]
- Breckland Council Local Plan. [6]

Surveys

12.5.1.2 No surveys are required in respect of potential socio-economic effects.

12.5.2 Receptors

12.5.2.1 The receptors identified and considered in this preliminary assessment are:

- Local economy, employment opportunities and supply chain during construction, operation and decommissioning;
- Skills and employment opportunities during construction, operation and decommissioning; and
- PRow and recreational routes during construction and decommissioning.

12.5.3 Assigning receptor sensitivity

- 12.5.3.1 As there is no definitive guidance on the assessment of socio-economic effects, the assessment draws on industry accepted practice and methodology as described in Table 12-2 **Error! Reference source not found.**, which has been tested through a number of previous and comparable projects, as detailed within the remainder of this section. The focus of the assessment is on determining whether effects would change patterns of activity, social or economic.
- 12.5.3.2 Significance is determined as a function of the sensitivity or value of receptors affected, and the magnitude of the impact. Appropriate sensitivity and magnitude criteria have been developed, based on professional judgement and industry best practice.
- 12.5.3.3 Table 12-3 provides definitions of the sensitivity criteria used in the assessment, based on industry best practice.

Table 12-3 Sensitivity or value of receptors

Sensitivity	Definition of sensitivity
High	• Businesses, individuals, groups of individuals, or other receptors possessing very significant economic, social and/or community value. • These receptors are considered very likely to incur a significant loss or gain as a result of potential changes in the environment, with little to no potential for substitution. For example: residential properties, a regional or national trail, directly affected business premises or community facilities.
Medium	• Businesses, individuals, groups of individuals, or other receptors possessing some significant economic, social and/or community value. • These receptors are considered likely to incur some loss or gain as a result of potential changes in the environment, with limited potential for substitution. For example: a footpath or bridleway or land associated with a residential or business receptor.
Low	• Businesses, individuals, groups of individuals, or other receptors possessing some economic, social and/or community value. • These receptors are not considered likely to incur a loss or gain as a result of potential changes in the environment, with potential for substitution. For example: a permissive trail.
Negligible	• Little or no change to business, individuals, groups of individuals or other receptors.

12.5.4 Assigning magnitude of impact

12.5.4.1 Table 12-4 provides definitions of the magnitude of impact criteria used in the assessment.

Table 12-4 Magnitude of impact

Sensitivity	Definition of sensitivity
High	An adverse or beneficial change that would be likely to result in total loss of an individual receptor or permanent changes to baseline situation for a large number of businesses, individuals or groups of individuals.
Medium	An adverse or beneficial change that would be very likely to result in partial changes to baseline situation for a moderate number of businesses, individuals or groups of individuals.
Low	An adverse or beneficial effect that would be likely to result in minor changes to baseline situation for a small number of businesses, individuals or groups of individuals.
Negligible	An adverse or beneficial effect that would be likely to result in little or no change to baseline situation for businesses, individuals or groups of individuals.

12.5.5 Significance criteria

12.5.5.1 Table 12-5 illustrates how the sensitivity and magnitude criteria are used to assess significance. Typically, those effects that are moderate and major, are considered significant, minor and negligible effect are not significant, however, professional judgment is applied in defining the effects

Table 12-5 Significance of effects

		Sensitivity of receptor			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of impact	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

12.5.6 Assumptions and limitations

12.5.6.1 The Socio-economic assessment relies largely on secondary data which is published by various third-party providers. The assessment is therefore based on data and a baseline situation at a point in time.

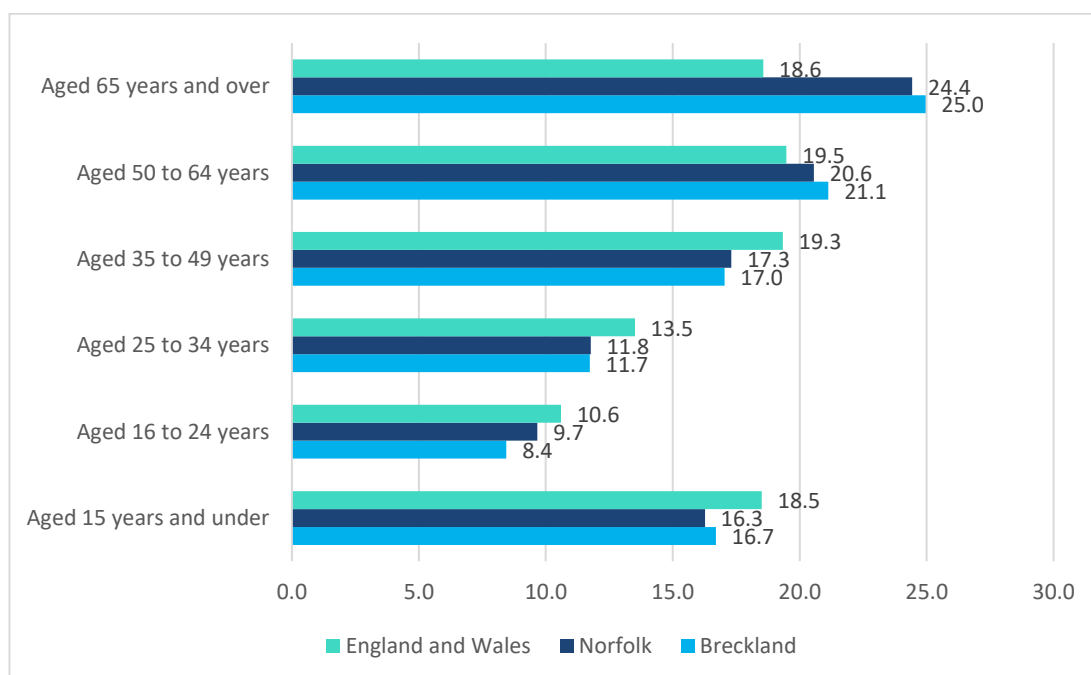
12.6 Baseline conditions

12.6.1 Existing baseline conditions

Population and employment

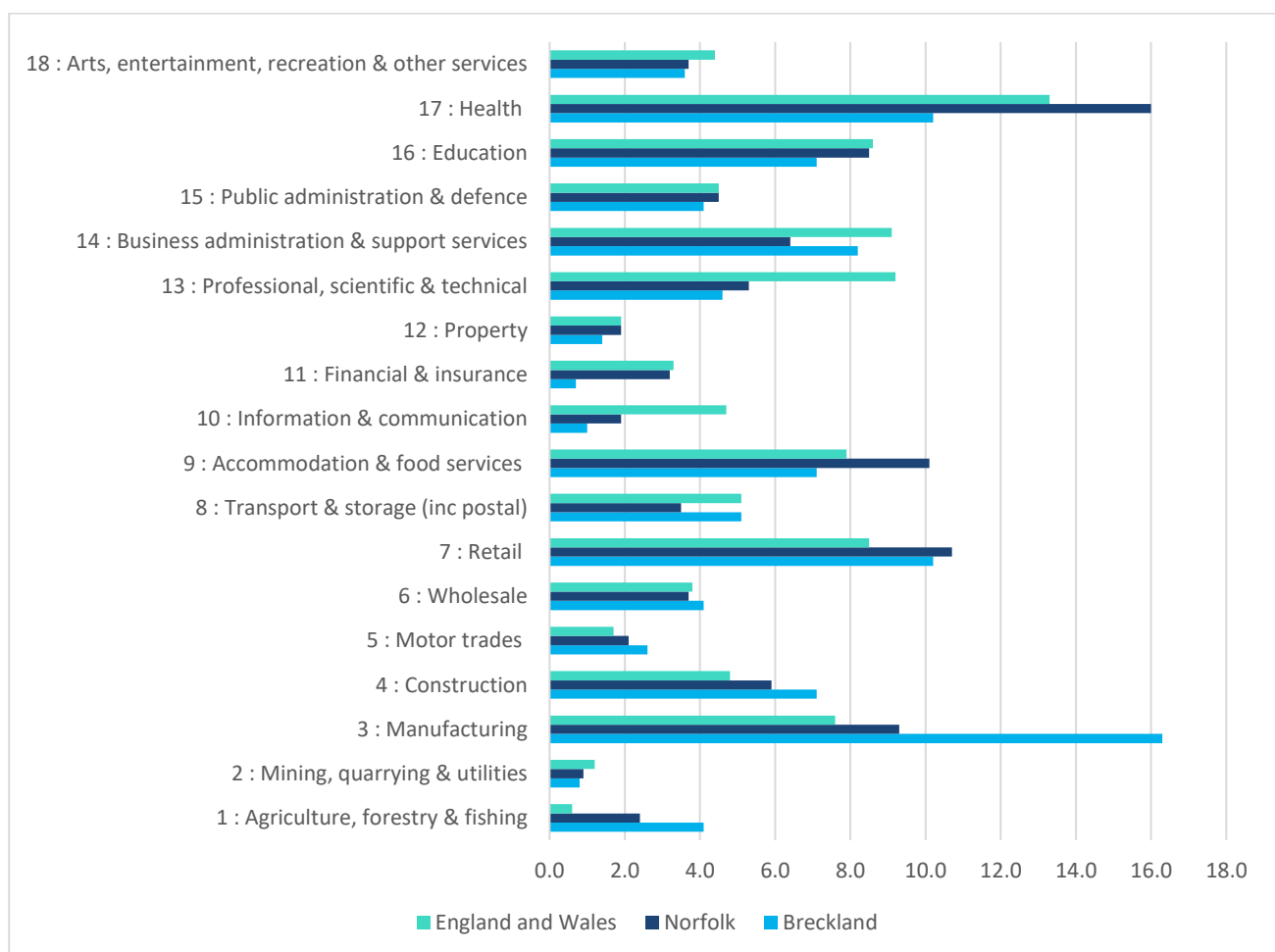
- 12.6.1.1 The local study area of Breckland supports a resident population of 142,200 people with 64,000 (45%) defined as economically active in 2024 [14]. Breckland has seen its population grow by 8.4% and nearby areas of South Norfolk and King's Lynn and West Norfolk have grown by around 14.4% and 6.2% respectively between 2011 and 2021 [15] [16]. The wider Norfolk region (wider study area) has a total population of 918,500 with 449,800 (49%) defined as economically active. The region has a slightly higher proportion of people who are economically inactive compared to England and Wales as a whole, where 57% of the population are economically active.
- 12.6.1.2 The East of England region saw the largest population increase between 2011 and 2021 within the UK, growing by around 8.3% or 488,000 more residents. [15]
- 12.6.1.3 The age profile in Breckland shows that it has a slightly older population than Norfolk, with 25% of its residents aged 65 years and older, compared to 24.4% for Norfolk and much higher than the national average of 18.6% in England and Wales, as shown in Inset 12-1. This also demonstrates that Breckland's age profile is largely comparable with the age profile of Norfolk as a region, but has a higher proportion of people over the age of 50, with it being around 46% and 45% respectively, compared to only 38% for England and Wales.

Inset 12-1 Age profile of Breckland, Norfolk, England and Wales (Census, 2021) [11]



- 12.6.1.4 According to the BRES in 2022 [12], the largest sectors in Breckland were manufacturing (16.3%), retail (10.2%), healthcare (10.2%) and construction (7.1%), as shown in Inset 12-2. Wholesale, transport and professional services accounting for a significant share of employment, with the financial, IT, and business service sectors under-represented compared with regional or national averages [17]. The high number of jobs in manufacturing and construction will support the proposed development construction work, which will require an average of 250+ workers across the project, as described in Chapter 2: The Proposed Development, of this PEIR.
- 12.6.1.5 The proportion of the population working in manufacturing is much higher in Breckland than both the Norfolk average (9.3%) and England and Wales average (7.6%). Similarly, there is a higher proportion of jobs in construction within Breckland (7.1%) in comparison to Norfolk (5.9%) and nationally (4.8%). Breckland does however have a far lower proportion of the population working in the professional services sector (4.6%) compared to the England and Wales average (9.2%), as well as in the information and communication and financial services sectors.

Inset 12-2 Sector distribution of jobs in Breckland, Norfolk, England and Wales [11]

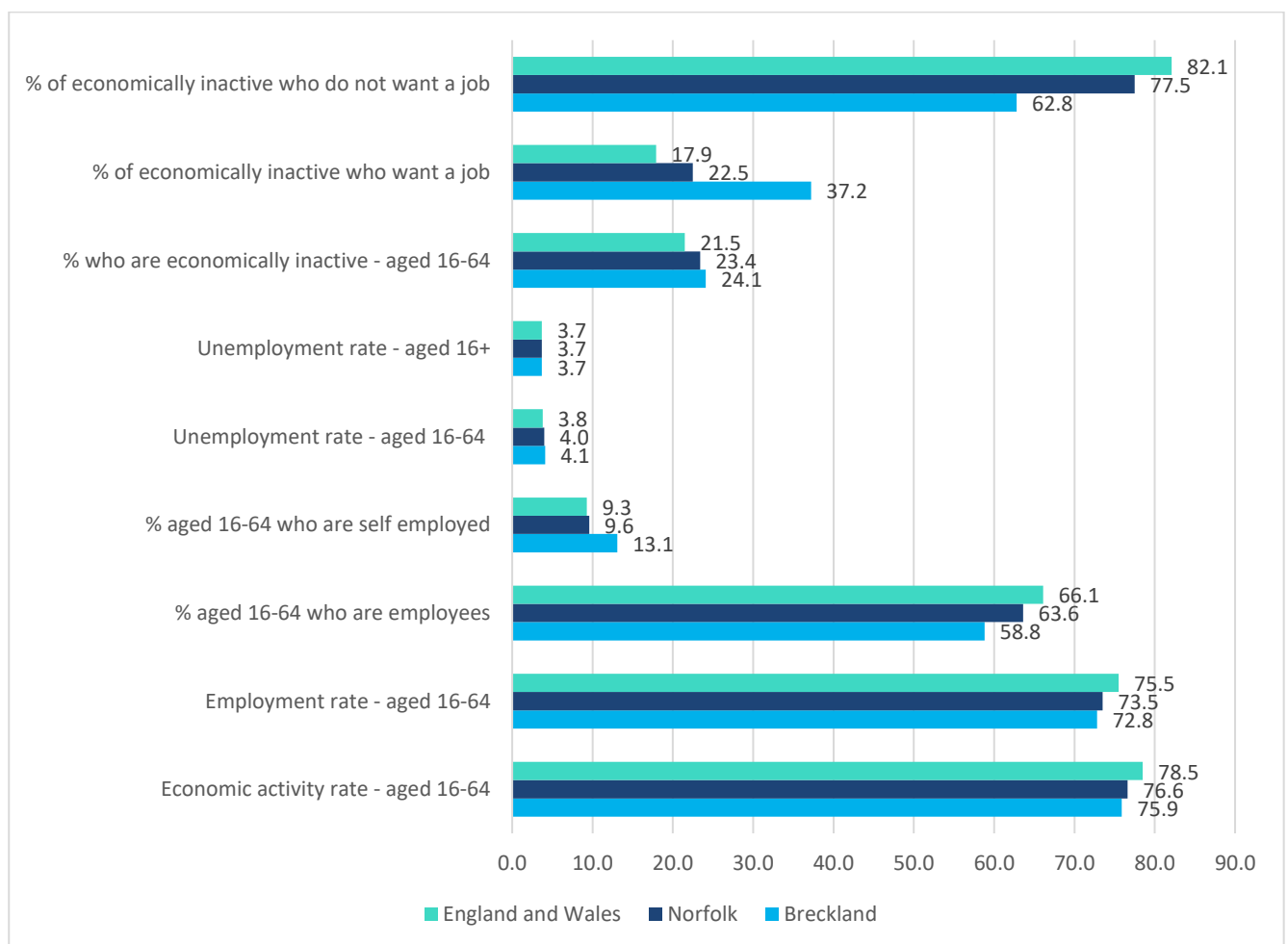


- 12.6.1.6 Inset 12-3 shows Economic activity for Breckland is in line with the averages both in Norfolk and across England and Wales, with the unemployment rate directly

comparable at 3.7% for all three. The main difference in economically inactive population is those who are retired, as in Breckland that is 21% of the population, compared to 15% in Norfolk and 18.6% in England and Wales.

- 12.6.1.7 The main difference between Breckland and Norfolk as well as England and Wales is in the percentage difference of those who are economically inactive but seeking a job. In Breckland the figure is 37.2%, which is much higher than the 22.5% for Norfolk and the 17.9% nationally, which suggests that there is potential for upskilling within the population.

Inset 12-3 Economic Activity in Breckland, Norfolk, England and Wales in the 12 months preceding June 2024 [11]



- 12.6.1.8 The Gross Value Added (GVA) per head in 2015 for Breckland was £19,761, which is less than the GVA per head of the East of England region (£23,970) and England as a whole (£26,159) [14].
- 12.6.1.9 As a region, Breckland is below the regional and national average on GVA and economic activity. With a growing population and strong desire from the economically inactive who want a job. However, the potential of the Proposed Development to support a rise in employment proportional to the population exists. The sectoral distribution of workers within the Breckland region also suggests that there is potential for upskilling in the region, and the opportunity

brought by the Proposed Development should be leveraged to ensure this reinvestment in local people.

Skills

- 12.6.1.10 23% of the adult population in Breckland has the highest level of qualification at 4+ or higher, comparable to a university degree. This can be compared with the regional Norfolk average of 27% and national average of 33% [11]. This shows that the district has an average skills level that is slightly lower than the surrounding region and lower still than the country as a whole, so any likely specialist expertise could need to be brought in from outside the local area.
- 12.6.1.11 This skills gap links to the lack of relative employment in professional/financial services, as well as in information and communication.

Deprivation

- 12.6.1.12 Breckland is ranked 183rd most income deprived out of the 316 national boroughs in the English Indices of Deprivation [18], with around 10% of the population living in income deprivation.
- 12.6.1.13 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score for Breckland is 19.6, which ranks it at 142 out of the 316 national boroughs in England [18]. Norfolk as a whole has an average of 21.2 and England averages 21.7, showing that Breckland is directly comparable, though slightly more deprived than its surrounding area. It is worth noting that the Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA) of Swaffham, where the Proposed Development is partly located is identified as one of being within the top 20% of most deprived neighbourhoods in England and Wales.

Public Rights of Way

Parish of Swaffham

RB60	RB68	BR8	RB55
BR39a	RB40	RB54	FP14
RB2	RB39b	FP14	RB3
FP13			

Parish of Sporle with Palgrave

FP10	BR5	BR4	BR8
BR9			

Parish of Beachamwell

FP4	BR2	BR1	BR5
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Parish of Narborough

RB7a	RB9	RB10	
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Parish of Ashill

RB11	FP7	FP8	
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Parish of Scarning

BOAT8

National Trails and National Cycle Routes

Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path

National Cycle Route (NCN) 13

- 12.6.1.14 The draft Order Limits have been refined since the EIA Scoping Report was submitted. Therefore, the proposed list of PRoW that could potentially be affected by the Proposed Development has been reduced. Listed below are the PRoW that interact with the study area (defined in 12.4.1.1), which have been selected for assessment in this chapter. These are also shown in Figure 12-2.
- 12.6.1.15 It is important to note that whilst the identified PRoW below all interact with the identified study area, this does not mean that they will all be directly affected by the Proposed Development. Further information is in Table 12-7, which identifies the PRoW that will be directly impacted by the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development, respectively.

12.6.2 Future baseline

- 12.6.2.1 The future baseline for socio-economics is expected to change in the long term in the absence of the Proposed Development. The Local Authority area of Breckland is anticipated to grow by about 21,000 people between 2020 and 2040 according to the Breckland Local Plan [6]. Of the surrounding areas, South Norfolk is projected to grow the most, with a forecasted increase of 14.8%. Broadland, King's Lynn and West Norfolk's populations are all also projected to increase. This may have an impact on the Proposed Development due to the increase in working population, as well as future impact on energy demand. The future baseline was not considered within the assessment, as socio-economic changes will be ongoing from now, and are unlikely to materially change the baseline conditions. The future baseline changes would not materially change the assessment results for the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development.
- 12.6.2.2 Due to the short time period between assessment and probable construction if consent is granted there is unlikely to be a notable change in the baseline conditions before construction commences.
- 12.6.2.3 In accordance with the methodology set out in Chapter 15 Cumulative Effects Assessment of this PEIR, the following developments are relevant to this assessment and have been considered present in the future baseline:
- Norfolk Vanguard (EN010079)
 - Norfolk Boreas (EN010087)
 - East Bilney Quarry (FUL/2023/0030 / C/3/2010/3028)
 - Land to South of Field Lane (FUL/2023/0029)
 - East Bilney Quarry (FUL/2023/0031)
 - Land South of B1108 (FUL/2024/0041 / FUL/2020/0050)
 - Dudgeon Onshore Substation (3PL/2012/0703/F)
 - Land to the South of Lynn Road (FUL/2023/0047)

12.7 Design Principles, embedded and good practice measures

12.7.1 Design Principles

12.7.1.1 The Proposed Development is being designed with regard to a set of design principles, as described in the draft Design Approach Document.

12.7.2 Embedded and good practice measures

12.7.2.1 Embedded measures are modifications to the design of a scheme, made during the pre-application phase, that are an inherent part of the design and do not require additional action to be taken. Good practice measures are standard approaches and actions undertaken to avoid or reduce environmental impacts in line with best practice guidance and legislative requirements.

12.7.2.2 The Proposed Development is currently evolving through an iterative design process. Measures for the Proposed Development relevant to Socio-economics already committed to include:

- Existing access to community facilities/assets to be maintained at all times or a suitable equivalent provided.
- Enhancement of existing PRoW and new permissive paths as presented in the Outline Environmental Masterplan.
- An appropriate buffer of at least 10m will be maintained between properties and construction works which have the potential to generate vibration and lighting.
- Wherever possible, local employment and supply chain to be used throughout the lifetime of the Proposed Development.

12.7.2.3 In addition, a suite of management plans will be in place for the Proposed Development. Those relevant to Socio-economics include:

- Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP)
- Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP)
- oPRoWMP
- Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP)

12.7.2.4 These management plans incorporate good practice measures, as well as any further mitigation identified during the EIA.

12.7.2.5 Draft outline versions of these management plans are provided with this PEIR for review during statutory consultation. These will be updated and submitted with the DCO application to secure the commitments contained within. Appropriate Requirements will be included in the DCO application to ensure these management plans will be developed to full versions and submitted to the relevant planning

authority for approval. This will take place prior to the commencement of relevant works and measures described in them are implemented.

12.8 Assessment of effects

12.8.1 Construction

- 12.8.1.1 The following section estimates gross construction employment arising from the Proposed Development and then takes into account leakage, displacement and multiplier effects (to assess indirect and induced employment) in order to assess net impacts on the sub-regional economy.

Local economy, employment opportunities and supply chain

- 12.8.1.2 Construction of the Proposed Development is expected to take up to 2.5 years. Temporary employment opportunities would be created during the construction activities. This will create a positive economic impact that can be estimated as a function of the scale and type of construction activities. The direct expenditure during construction would lead to increased output generated in the wider study area.
- 12.8.1.3 The average daily number of gross direct construction workers over the preliminary 2.5-year construction period has been estimated at approximately 265 workers, with a daily peak of 350 workers for limited peak periods.

Leakage

- 12.8.1.4 Leakage effects refer to the proportion of jobs within a study area which are filled by residents living outside of that area (i.e. outside of the wider study area, in this case districts within Norfolk County Council area, which are Breckland District, Broadland District, Great Yarmouth Borough, King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough, and Norwich City).
- 12.8.1.5 A high leakage figure has been considered as appropriate to account for the construction phase, based on other renewable energy projects of a similar scale. HM Treasury additionality guidance [10] suggests a high rate of leakage of 50%, as examined in Table 12-6. Therefore a 50% discount is applied to the estimated 265 jobs per year, and such it is estimated that 132.5 jobs will be from outside of the study area, and 132.5 jobs will be supported by employment from within the study area during the construction period.

Displacement

- 12.8.1.6 Displacement measures are the extent to which the benefits of a project are offset by reductions of output or employment elsewhere. Any additional demand for labour cannot be treated as a net benefit, as it removes workers from other posts, such as other construction projects, and the net benefit is reduced to the extent that this occurs.

- 12.8.1.7 Overall, it is assumed that due to the flexibility of a typical construction workforce (i.e. it is possible for workers to move from project to project) displacement effects are considered to be low. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Additionality Guide [10] suggests using 25% as a 'ready reckoner' for low levels of displacement, for example when there are expected to be some displacement effects, although only to a limited extent. Applying this low level of displacement to total gross direct employment results in 66 jobs displaced. This results in net direct employment of 199 jobs per year.

Multiplier effect

- 12.8.1.8 In addition to the direct construction employment generated by the Proposed Development, indirect and induced effects of the construction activity would be felt through supply chain benefits, as well as non-local construction staff staying and spending locally, bringing wider benefits to the construction supply chain, local accommodation and service providers.
- 12.8.1.9 Construction employment is assessed with a multiplier of 1.5 using reckoner figures from the HCA Additionality Guide. Applying the multiplier of 1.5 generates an additional 99 indirect and induced jobs in the study area arising from the Proposed Development during the construction period. It is worth noting that these jobs are likely to be temporary during the construction period.

Net Construction Employment

- 12.8.1.10 Based on the gross construction worker requirements for construction of the Proposed Development and additionality factors outlined above, approximately 298 net construction jobs would be generated, of which 149 would be from within the study areas, as set out in Table 12-6.
- 12.8.1.11 The sensitivity of the labour market receptor is considered as **medium**. This is as a result of taking into account the size of the labour pool of construction workers in the study areas, which was 3,500 at the time of the census in 2021 [11]. Therefore, the gross direct employment within the study areas required during the construction phase of the Proposed Development would account of around 5% of the existing construction workforce. The Proposed Development is also likely to require highly skilled construction workers from outside the study areas. The magnitude of impact of the Proposed Development on construction employment within the region is therefore medium, due to the change in the baseline level of construction employment within the local and wider study area.
- 12.8.1.12 Therefore, the direct, indirect and induced employment created by the construction phase of the Proposed Development is likely to have a Minor Beneficial short-term effect on both study areas, which is **Not Significant**.

Table 12-6 Net Construction Employment Estimate

	Local Study Area	Wider Study area	Total
Employment	132.5	132.5	265
Displacement	-33	-33	-66
Indirect and Induced	49	49	99
Net Construction Employment	149	149	298

Skills and Employment

- 12.8.1.13 Due to the size of the Proposed Development, and the number of approximately 265 (average, across the construction period) gross construction jobs sustained during the construction phase, the Applicant proposes to provide an Outline Skills and Employment Plan provided alongside the DCO application. This could lead to training for roles at the Proposed Development.
- 12.8.1.14 The sensitivity of the skills and employment receptor is anticipated to be low due to size of the Proposed Development relative to the labour market of the study areas. The magnitude of the impact is anticipated to be medium however, as it will create a beneficial change for businesses and individuals involved in the skills and employment plan. This is therefore anticipated to have a Minor Beneficial effect during the construction phase, which is **Not Significant**.

Public Rights of Way

- 12.8.1.15 It is anticipated that there would be a requirement for local management and/or short- term, temporary closures of some PRow to facilitate the construction of the Proposed Development. The nature of these short-term, temporary closures are dependent on the final construction methodology to be employed by the contractor but will follow the hierarchy as outlined in the oPRowMP, which will be updated and subject to agreement with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in advance of the construction stage of the Proposed Development. Powers will be sought through the DCO to enable the stopping up and diversion of PRow.
- 12.8.1.16 In the context of the oPRowMP, the appointed contractor will seek to keep access open throughout the construction stage wherever it is safe and practicable to do so.
- 12.8.1.17 The potential effects of construction of the Proposed Development on the PRow network in the area surrounding the Proposed Development is considered further in the Table below.

Table 12-7 PRow affected during construction

PRow Reference	Extent of impacts	Mitigation required	Significance of effect
Beachamwell BR1	Interaction with the draft Order Limits	Local management including signage / information.	Receptors are of medium sensitivity and magnitude of impact, with mitigation is considered to be negligible. Negligible effect which is Not Significant in EIA terms.
Beachamwell FP4	Connection onto BR1	Management as proposed for BR1	
Beachamwell BR2	BR runs into the Western Panel Area.	Local management including signage / information.	
Swaffham RB3	PRow runs through a proposed Cable Corridor and therefore likely need for temporary stopping up.	Limited opportunity for mitigation but users have options to utilise other PRow within the surrounding areas.	Receptors of medium sensitivity and magnitude of impact is low given short-term and temporary nature of closure. Minor Adverse effect which is Not Significant in EIA terms.
Narborough RB9	PRow runs through a proposed Cable Corridor and therefore likely need for temporary stopping up.	Limited opportunity for mitigation but users have options to utilise other PRow within the surrounding areas.	
Narborough RB10	PRow runs through a proposed Cable Corridor and therefore likely need for temporary stopping up.	Limited opportunity for mitigation but users have options to utilise other PRow within the surrounding areas.	
Swaffham RB2	BR runs adjacent to Cable Corridor.	Local management including signage / information.	Receptors are of medium sensitivity and magnitude of impact, with mitigation is considered to be negligible. Negligible effect which is Not Significant in EIA terms.
Narborough RB7a	BR intersects with other PRow adjacent to the Cable Corridor.	Local management including signage / information.	
Swaffham RB60	BR lies adjacent to the Central Panel Area.	Local management including signage / information.	

PRow Reference	Extent of impacts	Mitigation required	Significance of effect
Swaffham FP13	Runs through the Central Panel Area and would be stopped up temporarily to facilitate construction.	Opportunity for a permissive path in the north of the Panel Area to provide ongoing east-west access.	Receptor is of medium sensitivity and magnitude of impact, with mitigation is low given short-term and temporary nature of closure. Minor Adverse effect which is Not Significant in EIA terms.
Swaffham FP14	Runs outside of the draft Order Limits but meets Swaffham FP13	Local management including signage / information.	Receptor is of medium sensitivity and magnitude of impact with mitigation is negligible. Negligible effect which is Not Significant in EIA terms.
Sporle with Palgrave BR5	BR runs through the Central Panel Area and would be subject to a temporary stopping up to facilitate construction.	Opportunities exist to stage construction to allow continued east-west connectivity.	Receptor is of medium sensitivity and magnitude of impact, with mitigation is low given short-term and temporary nature of closure. Minor Adverse effect which is Not Significant in EIA terms.
Sporle with Palgrave BR4	BR runs adjacent to the Central Panel Area.	Local management including signage / information.	Receptor is of medium sensitivity and magnitude of impact with mitigation is negligible. Negligible effect which is Not Significant in EIA terms.
Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail	Trail runs adjacent to the draft Order Limits to the east of the Central Panel Area. Trail crosses Cable Corridor C-C2 and may require a temporary diversion to facilitate cable laying.	Temporary diversion into land either side of the trail, within the draft Order Limits.	Receptor is of high sensitivity and magnitude of impact, with mitigation in the form of a temporary diversion is low. Moderate Adverse effect which would be short term and temporary but Significant in EIA terms.

PRow Reference	Extent of impacts	Mitigation required	Significance of effect
Swaffham RB54	BR carries the National Trail and would require temporary diversion to facilitate cable laying.	Temporary diversion into land either side of the RB, within the draft Order Limits.	Receptor is of medium sensitivity and magnitude of impact, with mitigation is low given short-term and temporary nature of closure. Minor Adverse effect which is Not Significant in EIA terms.
Swaffham RB55	Restricted Byway runs through the Central Panel Area and would be subject to a temporary stopping up to facilitate construction.	Opportunities exist to stage construction to allow continued east-west connectivity.	Receptor is of medium sensitivity and magnitude of impact, with mitigation is low given short-term and temporary nature of closure. Minor Adverse effect which is Not Significant in EIA terms.
Swaffham RB68	BR runs adjacent to Central Panel Area.	Local management including signage / information.	
Swaffham RB39b	BR runs adjacent to Central Panel Area.	Local management including signage / information.	
Swaffham RB40	BR runs adjacent to Central Panel Area.	Local management including signage / information.	Receptors are of medium sensitivity and magnitude of impact, with mitigation is considered to be negligible.
Sporle with Palgrave BR9	BR runs adjacent to Central Panel Area.	Local management including signage / information.	Negligible effect which is Not Significant in EIA terms.
Scarning BOAT8	BOAT runs adjacent to the Eastern Panel Area.	Local management including signage / information.	
Ashill RB11	BR runs adjacent to the Southern Panel Area.	Local management including signage / information.	

PRoW Reference	Extent of impacts	Mitigation required	Significance of effect
Ashill FP7	FP located within Cable Corridor and therefore may be temporarily stopped up to enable cable laying.	Limited opportunity for mitigation.	Receptors of medium sensitivity and magnitude of impact is low given short-term and temporary nature of closure.
Ashill FP8	FP located within Cable Corridor and therefore may be temporarily stopped up to enable cable laying.	Limited opportunity for mitigation.	Minor Adverse effect which is Not Significant in EIA terms.
NCN 13	Likely need for short term, temporary stopping up where NCN is crossed by proposed cable route.	Diversion options are being explored and will be reported further at ES stage.	Receptor is of medium sensitivity as a promoted route and magnitude of impact is low given short-term and temporary nature of closure. Minor Adverse effect which is Not Significant in EIA terms.

- 12.8.1.18 In summary, the assessment has identified a total of 16 PRoW that would require local management measures to retain access and safe use during construction of the Proposed Development. The sensitivity of the PRoW is medium and magnitude of impact negligible. This leads to Negligible effects on those PRoW which are **Not Significant** in EIA terms.
- 12.8.1.19 A further 10 PRoW or sections of them have been identified as potentially being stopped up for short periods of time during construction to either facilitate panel installation or cable laying. The sensitivity of the PRoW is medium, and the magnitude of impact low given the short-term, temporary nature of the effects. This leads to Minor Adverse effects which are **Not Significant** in EIA terms.
- 12.8.1.20 A short section of the National Trail would require temporary stopping up with a local diversion in order to facilitate cable laying. The sensitivity of the National Trail is high and the magnitude of impact given the short term nature of the effect would be low. This would lead to a Moderate Adverse effect which is **Significant** in EIA terms.

12.8.2 Operation

Local economy, employment opportunities and supply chain

- 12.8.2.1 During the operational phase of the Proposed Development there would be a minimal amount of maintenance required, with occasional visits to site. It is considered likely that the workforce would comprise part of a wider national team that are responsible for the maintenance of a number of solar farms across the UK. Some replacement of components is also expected during the operational stage, either due to service life (BESS and transformers) or due to unexpected faults. This work would be carried out by a small number of specialist contractors on a required basis.
- 12.8.2.2 The sensitivity of the local labour market is considered to be low due to the volume of the study area labour market, and the magnitude of impact during the operational phase is considered to be negligible, leading to a Negligible effect which is **Not Significant**.

Skills and Employment

- 12.8.2.3 With a workforce which comprises part of a national operation and maintenance team, the Applicant does not intend to provide an Outline Skills and Employment Plan during operation.
- 12.8.2.4 The sensitivity of the skills and employment receptor is negligible due to size of the Proposed Development relative to the labour market of the study area. The magnitude of the impact is negligible as well, as it will create no noticeable change to local employment. This is therefore anticipated to have a Negligible effect during the operational phase, which is **Not Significant**.

12.8.3 Decommissioning

Local economy, employment opportunities and supply chain

- 12.8.3.1 It is considered that the effects on socioeconomic receptors during decommissioning of the Proposed Development will be in the region of 50-75% of the construction stage due to their similar nature with regards to duration, and type and location of activity, with a slightly reduced workforce required. This assumption is based on the Applicant's experience constructing other solar schemes in the UK and judgements regarding the relative level of effort and activities required to decommission them.
- 12.8.3.2 On the basis of this assumption and having considered leakage, displacement and multiplier effects within the construction assessment, it is concluded that the magnitude of impact during decommissioning would be low, on a receptor which has a low sensitivity to change, leading to a Negligible effect, which is **Not Significant**.

Skills and Employment

- 12.8.3.3 Due to the size of the Proposed Development, and the number of approximately 168 - 225 (average, across the decommissioning period) gross jobs sustained during the decommissioning phase, the Applicant proposes to provide an Outline Skills and Employment Plan provided alongside the DCO application. This could lead on to training for roles during the decommissioning of the Proposed Development.
- 12.8.3.4 The sensitivity of the skills and employment receptor is anticipated to be low due to size of the Proposed Development relative to the labour market of the study area. The magnitude of the impact is anticipated to be medium however, as it will create a beneficial change for businesses and individuals involved in the skills and employment plan. This is therefore anticipated to have a Minor Beneficial effect during the decommissioning phase, which is **Not Significant**.

Public Rights of Way

- 12.8.3.5 A PRoWMP will be developed for the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development's life cycle. It is the intention of the Applicant to, wherever possible, keep the PRoW network open during the decommissioning phase, with appropriate management and safety measures put in place. Where this is not possible, any temporary closures will be carefully managed to minimise disruption. Similar to the construction phase, an updated PRoWMP will be prepared and agreed with the LPA prior to the decommissioning phase, detailing mitigation measures.
- 12.8.3.6 Due to the temporary nature of the anticipated impact, the magnitude of impact on the receptors is therefore considered to be low, which when combined with a medium sensitivity would lead to a Minor Adverse effect which is **Not Significant**.

- 12.8.3.7 It is assumed that the underground cables would be left in situ after the operational phase of the Proposed Development and will therefore not be removed as part of the decommissioning activities. Therefore, the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail, which whilst is afforded a high sensitivity, the magnitude of change is considered to be negligible, which would lead to a Minor Adverse effect which is **Not Significant**.

12.9 Additional mitigation

- 12.9.1.1 Additional mitigation are actions that require additional site and project specific activity to achieve a reduction in effect, and/or anticipated outcome.
- 12.9.1.2 One significant effect has been identified on the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail during the construction phase of the Proposed Development, owing to the potential need for a temporary diversion. The Applicant will engage with Natural England on this matter and provide an update at ES stage.
- 12.9.1.3 No other significant effects have been identified through assessment and therefore no additional mitigation has been identified as required.

12.10 Residual effects

12.10.1 Construction

- 12.10.1.1 No further mitigation has been proposed that would reduce the impacts reported, therefore the residual effects remain as assessed in Section 12.8.

12.10.2 Operation

- 12.10.2.1 No further mitigation has been proposed that would reduce the impacts reported, therefore the residual effects remain as assessed in Section 12.8.

12.10.3 Decommissioning

- 12.10.3.1 No further mitigation has been proposed that would reduce the impacts reported, therefore the residual effects remain as assessed in Section 12.8.

12.11 Monitoring

- 12.11.1.1 No additional monitoring is required as no additional mitigation has been identified.

12.12 Opportunities for enhancement

- 12.12.1.1 Opportunities for enhancement include the use of an Outline Skills and Employment Plan (to be submitted with the DCO application) to consider the

opportunities throughout the construction and decommissioning stages of the Proposed Development. Key opportunities for the implementation of the plan are:

- Local employment commitments, where the Applicant prioritises the employment of local people, and use of local supply chains wherever possible.
- Engagement with local skills programmes and educational institutions to help ensure the Proposed Development is an opportunity to upskill local people in construction and engineering.

12.12.1.2 The Applicant is committed to providing a Community Benefit Fund during the operational stage of the Proposed Development. The Community Benefit Fund will be administered by a third party following approval of the DCO (if granted), but previous projects delivered by the Applicant have ensured that the funds are spent on things such as accessible footpaths, new native planting, improved highway safety, outdoor play areas, picnic benches, community orchards, rooftop solar for community buildings and funding for other local sustainable initiatives. It is, however, recognised by the Applicant that the Community Benefit Fund will be delivered on a voluntary basis and is not appropriate to secure via the DCO.

12.12.1.3 The Applicant is proposing to provide permissive paths as part of the Proposed Development, which would provide additional recreational routes for the public to use through the operational stage of the Proposed Development. These are shown on the Outline Environmental Masterplans, available as part of this statutory consultation. Permissive paths will up to 5m in width, grass with wildflower margins.

12.13 Summary

12.13.1.1 Table 12-8 presents a summary of the Socio-economics assessment, detailing further mitigation requirements and residual effects.

Table 12-8 Socio-economics - Preliminary assessment summary

Receptor	Embedded and good practice measures	Description of sensitivity, impact and magnitude	Significance of effect	Additional mitigation	Residual effect
Construction					
Local economy, employment opportunities and supply chain	Local employment and supply chain opportunities wherever practicable, outlined by the Outline Skills and Employment Plan to be provided alongside the DCO application.	Temporary, medium sensitivity, medium magnitude, minor beneficial	Not significant	None required	Not significant
Skills and employment	Local skills and employment to be bolstered through use of the Outline Skills and Employment Plan to be provided alongside the DCO application.	Temporary, low sensitivity, medium magnitude, minor beneficial	Not significant	None required	Not significant
PRoW – requiring management measures	Provision of PRoW management, secured by the oPRoWMP.	Temporary, medium sensitivity, negligible magnitude, negligible adverse	Not significant	None required	Not significant
PRoW – requiring temporary diversions	Provision of PRoW management, secured by the oPRoWMP.	Temporary, medium sensitivity, low magnitude, minor adverse	Not significant	None required	Not significant

Receptor	Embedded and good practice measures	Description of sensitivity, impact and magnitude	Significance of effect	Additional mitigation	Residual effect
PRoW – National Trail	Provision of PRoW management, secured by the oPRoWMP.	Temporary, high sensitivity, low magnitude, moderate adverse	Significant	None required	Significant, temporary
Operation					
Local economy, employment opportunities and supply chain	Proposed Development to use local employment and supply chain opportunities wherever practicable, outlined by the Outline Skills and Employment Plan to be provided alongside the DCO application.	Temporary, low sensitivity, negligible magnitude, negligible	Not significant	None required	Not significant
Skills and employment	Local skills and employment to be bolstered through use of the Outline Skills and Employment Plan to be provided alongside the DCO application.	Temporary, negligible sensitivity, negligible magnitude, negligible	Not significant	None required	Not significant
Decommissioning					
Local economy, employment opportunities and supply chain	Proposed Development to use local employment and supply chain opportunities	Temporary, low sensitivity, low magnitude, negligible	Not significant	None required	Not significant

Receptor	Embedded and good practice measures	Description of sensitivity, impact and magnitude	Significance of effect	Additional mitigation	Residual effect
	wherever possible, outlined by the Outline Skills and Employment Plan to be provided alongside the DCO application				
Skills and employment	Local skills and employment to be bolstered through use of the Outline Skills and Employment Plan to be provided alongside the DCO application.	Temporary, low sensitivity, medium magnitude, minor beneficial	Not significant	None required	Not significant
PRoW	Provision of PRoW management, secured by a future decommissioning oPRoWMP.	Temporary, medium sensitivity, low magnitude, minor adverse	Not significant	None required	Not significant
PRoW – National Trail	Provision of PRoW management, secured by a future decommissioning oPRoWMP.	Temporary, high sensitivity, negligible magnitude, minor adverse	Not significant	None required	Not significant

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