

Preliminary Environmental Information Report

Calderdale Energy Park

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Volume 1, Chapter 7: Methodology for the Preliminary Environmental Information Report

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7 Methodology for the Preliminary Environmental Information Report

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 As outlined in **Chapter 1: Introduction** and **Chapter 2: Environmental Impact Assessment**, this Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) presents a preliminary assessment of likely significant environmental effects. As the environmental information available at this preliminary stage is still evolving, there will be additional surveys, technical assessments and refinement of mitigation measures that will be undertaken following statutory consultation and presented in the Environmental Statement (ES) with the Development Consent Order (DCO) Application. Therefore, this PEIR has followed a draft ES format, though it presents preliminary assessments and is tailored for certain aspects / effects and / or elements of the Proposed Development, where further work is ongoing.
- 7.1.2 The ES will build upon this PEIR, presenting a comprehensive and finalised assessment of likely significant environmental effects, including any updates arising from consultation feedback and technical work.
- 7.1.3 By publishing this PEIR, the Applicant seeks to provide the information reasonably required to inform consultees and stakeholders of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development as understood at this preliminary stage and to obtain feedback before the DCO Application is submitted.
- 7.1.4 The approach and methodologies adopted for the preliminary assessment of likely significant effects of the Proposed Development during the construction, operational and maintenance and decommissioning phases vary across the technical aspects assessed within the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, largely due to technically specific legislation, policy, standards and guidance and good practice. Therefore, **Chapters 8 – 23** sets out the specific technical assessment methodologies. However, there are several overarching elements across the EIA process. These elements are discussed below with the aim of identifying any key nuances and how these have been accommodated within the approach.
- 7.1.5 The approach and methodology for the assessment of cumulative effects (including intra-project effects and inter-project effects) is outlined in **Chapter 24: Cumulative Effects**.

7.2 Adoption of Good Practice

- 7.2.1 As noted above, this PEIR has been prepared in line with the requirements of The Infrastructure Planning (EIA) Regulations¹ (the ‘EIA Regulations’) alongside specific legislation, policy, standards alongside guidance and good practice. Further details are provided in **Chapters 8 – 23**.
- 7.2.2 The ES will be prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations alongside legislation, policy and guidance, good practice guidelines and the PINS Advice Notes, including Advice Note Seven: Environmental Impact Assessment: process, preliminary environmental information and environmental statements².

7.3 Constraints Analysis and the Design Process

- 7.3.1 As part of the EIA and design process, the relevant environmental baseline conditions of the PEIR Boundary and additional wider study areas specific to technical aspect have and will continue to be used to identify any environmental constraints and opportunities relevant to the technical assessments. This has enabled design principles to be created to support the evolution of the Proposed Development and to help ensure that important environmental considerations are taken into account during the design development process. The inputs from this process are presented in **Chapter 5: Alternatives and Design Evolution**.

7.4 Scope of the EIA

- 7.4.1 As noted in **Chapter 1: Introduction**, a Scoping Opinion was adopted by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on 10 October 2025.
- 7.4.2 The feedback received through the Scoping Opinion has informed this PEIR, in particular the sources of information consulted, data collected and the scope of the EIA. Responses to specific comments / points within the Scoping Opinion, detailing how they have been / will be addressed within the EIA process, are presented in **Chapters 8 - 23**.
- 7.4.3 To confirm, the technical aspects ‘scoped in’ following the Scoping Opinion are summarised as follows:
- **Chapter 8: Biodiversity;**
 - **Chapter 9: Ornithology;**

¹ The Infrastructure Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017 No. 572. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/572/contents>.

² PINS (2025) Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects - Advice Note Seven: Environmental Impact Assessment: process, preliminary environmental information and environmental statements.

- **Chapter 10: Hydrogeology, Hydrology, Geology and Peat;**
- **Chapter 11: Carbon and Climate Change;**
- **Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual;**
- **Chapter 13: Historic Environment;**
- **Chapter 14: Transport and Access;**
- **Chapter 15: Noise and Vibration;**
- **Chapter 16: Air Quality;**
- **Chapter 17: Socio-Economics and Tourism;**
- **Chapter 18: Human Health;**
- **Chapter 19: Aviation and Radar;**
- **Chapter 20: Major Accidents and Disasters;**
- **Chapter 21: Shadow Flicker;**
- **Chapter 22: Materials and Waste; and**
- **Chapter 23: Other Environmental Matters (Agricultural Land and Land Contamination).**

7.4.4 To confirm, the technical aspect 'scoped out' following the Scoping Opinion is:

- Transboundary effects.

7.4.5 Since the submission of the Scoping Report in September 2025, the following has been undertaken:

- The design and strategies that underpin the Proposed Development have been further developed;
- Additional technical studies have been completed; and
- Engagement with consultees has been undertaken.

7.4.6 The description presented in **Chapter 4: The Proposed Development** supersedes that in the Scoping Report and reflects the proposed design at this stage. Changes to the development as described in the Scoping Report are not considered to have materially changed the project that was the subject of the EIA Scoping process (i.e. a wind farm).

7.4.7 Where appropriate, the technical aspect and / or effect titles, sensitive receptors or phases for assessment considered have been altered or updated from the Scoping Report, these alterations / updates are presented in **Chapters 8 - 23**. For example, decommissioning phase effects have been considered in response to comments from PINS in the Scoping Opinion.

7.5 Defining the Study Area

7.5.1 For all technical aspects, baseline data has considered the PEIR Boundary, as defined in **Figure 3-1**. Study areas have been defined individually for each technical aspect, taking into account the geographic scope of the potential impacts relevant to that aspect, specific technical guidance where available and the information required to assess those impacts. The proposed study areas are described in **Chapters 8 – 23**.

7.6 Baseline

7.6.1 Baseline conditions (i.e. the existing conditions) need to be established to assess the likely significant environmental effects arising from the Proposed Development and to identify the most appropriate environmental measures to be employed to avoid or minimise any likely significant adverse effects.

7.6.2 For this PEIR, baseline data have been collected through the following means (where relevant / required):

- Desk-based studies;
- Site visits and surveys;
- Review of existing site-specific information or public literature;
- Modelling;
- Review of relevant national and local planning policies; and
- Consultation and stakeholder feedback.

7.6.3 Baseline information activities completed to date are described in **Chapters 8 - 23**.

7.6.4 Throughout the EIA, the origin of all third-party data, the dates of surveys and the dates when data sources have been accessed have been clearly outlined within the relevant **Chapters 8 - 23**, alongside any limitations or assumptions.

7.6.5 The focus of the baseline data collection activities has been on the Turbine Area to date, with a more high-level set of technical baseline data collected for the Access Routes and Bradford West Cable Corridor. This is due to the programme / timing

for detailed data collection activities alongside the extent of such works (e.g. in part within existing highway corridors) and the likelihood of significant effects occurring.

- 7.6.6 It is understood that the majority of the Turbine Area has been subject to ongoing land management during baseline data collection activities outlined in **Chapters 8 - 23**. While such management practices directly influence the 'baseline' of the majority of the PEIR Boundary, there are unlikely to be any material influences on the overall prevailing environmental conditions as recorded due to the limited nature of such practices.
- 7.6.7 It also recognised that there have been a number of projects under construction in the vicinity of the PEIR Boundary during the collection of baseline data. These have influenced / contributed to the overall baseline conditions as recorded within the baseline data collected and that being collected for the EIA process.
- 7.6.8 In line with the EIA Regulations, consideration has been given to future baseline conditions, in particular how the baseline will likely evolve in the future due to natural change, but without the Proposed Development in place.
- 7.6.9 The likely evolution of the baseline conditions has been described within each technical aspect chapter of the ES based on a qualitative appraisal, with details provided in **Chapters 8 – 23**.
- 7.6.10 The majority of the preliminary assessments presented in this PEIR are based on the existing baseline conditions and the predicted future baseline conditions are presented for information purposes only. The existing baseline conditions are primarily used to inform the assessment of likely significant effects, given that these provide the 'before development' scenario, allowing the identification of changes arising from a development and there are uncertainties associated with the future baseline. However, the predicted future baseline has been used in some technical assessments in line with relevant technical guidance, for instance, with respect to future estimated base traffic flows in **Chapter 14: Transport and Access**.
- 7.6.11 The baseline conditions utilised within the technical assessments are presented in **Chapters 8 – 23**.

7.7 Identification of Sensitive Receptors

- 7.7.1 In accordance with the EIA Regulations, the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development have been identified and outlined in **Chapters 8 - 23**.
- 7.7.2 Where relevant, this has included future sensitive receptors (i.e. future PRoW users, etc.). This has ensured that the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development are considered throughout all stages.

7.8 Information to Inform the Technical Assessments

- 7.8.1 While the design of the Proposed Development has not been finalised and continues to evolve, a written description is provided in **Chapter 4: The Proposed Development**. This forms the basis of the preliminary assessment of likely significant effects presented in this PEIR alongside **Figures 4-1** and **4-2**.
- 7.8.2 Due to the level of design work undertaken to date, there is a greater level of information for the Turbine Area compared with the Access Routes and the Bradford West Cable Corridor, albeit there are elements that are still being developed (e.g. construction methodologies). Where further detail will be provided in the ES, this is noted in **Chapter 4: The Proposed Development**.

7.9 Use of the Rochdale Envelope

- 7.9.1 PINS Advice Note Nine on the 'Rochdale Envelope' provides guidance for handling applications for development consent under the Planning Act 2008. It recognises that during the early stages of scheme design, certain aspects may remain subject to change. The advice note also states that a DCO application should therefore ensure that it contains a level of detail that enables a proper assessment of the environmental effects to be made. The extent of flexibility needed depends on the design progress when the DCO Application is made. In line with the Rochdale Envelope approach, the Applicant will be seeking flexibility in the design of the Proposed Development.
- 7.9.2 At this stage, only preliminary environmental information is being provided, as the design of the Proposed Development and the flexibility sought as part of the DCO Application have not been finalised. However, the design envelope (including the development principles and assumptions) that is currently envisaged to apply (and which is considered within this PEIR) is presented in **Chapter 4: The Proposed Development**. This has allowed a reasonable 'worst case' to be used in the preliminary assessments of the likely significant effects reported in this PEIR.

7.10 Assessment of Development Phases

Overview

- 7.10.1 The EIA has considered effects arising from the following phases of the Proposed Development:
- Construction Phase;
 - Operational and Maintenance Phase; and
 - Decommissioning Phase.

7.10.2 These are discussed in turn below.

Construction Phase

7.10.3 An indicative construction programme for the Proposed Development is presented in **Chapter 4: The Proposed Development**. This includes all stages of construction, including activities such as site establishment, onsite internal site access tracks, cabling works and onsite substation works.

7.10.4 For the construction phase, the preliminary assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development has taken a reasonable worst-case scenario for each technical aspect. For example, for **Chapter 14: Transport and Access** this includes the peak in traffic when there are the maximum movements of vehicles on the local road network. The reasonable worst-case assumptions made during the final assessments will be detailed in the ES.

7.10.5 It is noted that expenditure associated with pre-construction activities and the construction phase has been included in the preliminary assessment of economic impacts presented in **Chapter 17: Socio-Economics and Tourism**. This has been to ensure that the full impacts are accounted for. This is termed the 'Development and Construction Phase' for clarity.

Operational and Maintenance Phase

7.10.6 The EIA has and will continue to assess the maximum development parameters (or the parameters that represent the reasonable worst-case for likely significant environmental effects should that be different). The effects of the completed Proposed Development have been and will be assessed and documented within the ES, both for the first full year of operation and where there will be more substantial maintenance activities within the operational period of the Proposed Development. A further assessment scenario for the operational period where mitigation has been established will also be set out for technical aspects, including Landscape and Visual and Historic Environment, where relevant.

Decommissioning Phase

7.10.7 Within this PEIR, there has been a preliminary assessment undertaken of the likely significant effects arising from the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development. For this PEIR, the decommissioning assessment has been based on an assumption that the Proposed Development will be operational for approximately 35 years.

7.10.8 It is noted that, at the time that decommissioning would take place, the regulatory framework, good industry practices and the baseline conditions may have altered. As noted in **Chapter 4: The Proposed Development**, the Applicant will implement

a Decommissioning and Environmental Management Plan (DEMP), with an outline DEMP (oDEMP) to be submitted with the DCO Application, which will be secured via a DCO requirement. The oDEMP will set out the measures in place to reduce the likelihood of significant effects as far as is reasonably possible.

Further Assessment Scenarios

7.10.9 A number of other technical aspect / effect specific assessment scenarios have been and will be considered as part of the EIA process. Further details on these will be provided in the ES.

7.11 Application of Mitigation

7.11.1 In accordance the EIA Regulations, the Applicant's EIA process has utilised the 'mitigation hierarchy' which seeks to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if practicable, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment.

7.11.2 As outlined above, the design process has been informed by technical studies so that potential effects are well understood and the design has evolved to take account of the environmental constraints and opportunities within the PEIR Boundary and technical study areas. In tandem, standard practices / environmental management measures that can be controlled via management plans (e.g. the oCEMP)) have been identified / defined. Collectively these are referred to as 'environmental measures'.

7.11.3 **Chapters 8 - 23** have considered these environmental measures for all of the construction, operational and maintenance and decommissioning phases, where relevant, prior to undertaking a preliminary assessment of likely significant effects. Following the conclusion of effects, any further mitigation measures (inclusive of monitoring arrangements) or enhancement measures have been identified as 'additional mitigation' and this has informed the residual effects reported.

7.11.4 The environmental measures and additional mitigation measures identified to date are set out in **Appendix 4-1: Commitments Register**.

7.11.5 It is acknowledged that there are further measures to be defined, developed and refined at this stage, such as ecological compensation and mitigation. Where appropriate, these are outlined in **Chapters 8 - 23**. A final set of measures will be presented within the ES and in associated documents, such as the full Commitments Register.

7.12 Prediction of Likely Effects and Determining Significance

7.12.1 In determining the likely significant environmental effects, an aspect or effect-specific approach and the methodologies adopted are detailed within the aspect

specific chapters (see **Chapters 8 - 23**). However, overarchingly, the focus in reporting the conclusions of the preliminary assessments has been on whether the effect is significant or not significant to provide consultees and stakeholders with a view on the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development. Where, at this stage, significant effects cannot be ruled out, this is set out (or equivalent wording is utilised).

- 7.12.2 Where relevant to the technical aspects / effects being assessed, the effects and their significance have been considered based on the following:
- Identification of the sensitivity (or importance, etc.) of the receptor / receiving environment, considering elements such as value, tolerance to change, adaptability or recoverability from a change. A range of scales has been used across this PEIR to accord with the relevant technical standards or guidance; and
 - The magnitude of change / impact (or impact magnitude, etc.), considering the change from the baseline conditions and / or against prescribed thresholds / criteria. This has accounted for elements, such as probability, complexity, frequency and reversibility, where relevant. A range of scales has been used across the PEIR to accord with the relevant technical standards or guidance.
- 7.12.3 Technical aspect specific definitions of the above are provided within **Chapters 8 - 23**, where relevant.
- 7.12.4 Where considered appropriate, in line with specific technical guidance, the above have been combined and used to assign significance. Where matrices have been used as a tool to inform this, alongside professional judgement, these are provided in **Chapters 8 – 23**.
- 7.12.5 Where relevant, other factors such as feedback from consultees and stakeholders, relevant legislation, international / national / regional / local standards, policy and guidance have also been considered in defining the effects, where appropriate. As with the above, the specific methodology adopted is provided within **Chapters 8 - 23**, where relevant.
- 7.12.6 Where effects have been determined, at this preliminary stage, to be significant or not significant in EIA terms, this has been based on professional judgement and / or relevant guidance and standards, where applicable.
- 7.12.7 A summary of effects is provided at the end of **Chapters 8 - 23**.
- 7.12.8 Where relevant, effects have also been described as direct or indirect, short / medium / long-term and temporary or permanent.

7.12.9 Further detail on the approach to determining significance will be provided in the ES.

7.13 Limitations and Assumptions

7.13.1 Where the preliminary assessments have encountered limitations in compiling the required information or are based on assumptions, these limitations and assumptions and the main uncertainties involved have been clearly identified within the relevant Chapter.

7.14 Coordination with the Habitats Regulations

7.14.1 As the PEIR Boundary is located within the South Pennines Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and South Pennines Phase 2 Special Protection Area (SPA), the relevant requirements of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations') apply and a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) is being undertaken for the Proposed Development.

7.14.2 While EIA and HRA are separate impact assessment regimes, there is a requirement within the EIA Regulations to ensure coordination between the two. Further details on how coordination has been achieved will be provided within the ES.

7.15 Next Steps

7.15.1 The overarching next steps are as follows:

- Statutory consultation and engagement with consultees and stakeholders;
- Further baseline data collection activities;
- Development and refinement of the design of the Proposed Development; and
- Development and refinement of mitigation and compensation proposals.

7.15.2 Technical aspect-specific next steps are set out in **Chapters 8 – 23**.

