REPORT

Boston Alternative Energy Facility – Environmental Statement

Chapter 6 Approach to Environmental Impact Assessment

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6 Approach to Environmental Impact Assessment

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This chapter describes the methodology used throughout the Environmental Statement (ES) chapters for the Boston Alternative Energy Facility ('the Facility').

6.2 The EIA Process

6.2.1 The process of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for projects falling under the Planning Act 2008 (the Act) is governed by the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, the "EIA Regulations". The EIA Regulations implement EC Directive 2011/92/EU (European Parliament, 2011), as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (European Parliament, 2014), into UK legislation.

6.2.2 The Facility falls within Schedule 2 Part 3a of the EIA Regulations, which identifies industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water. Given the location, scale and nature of the proposed development, and notwithstanding the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations, it is considered that the Facility may have the potential to give rise to significant effects on the environment.

6.2.3 The EIA Regulations set out the requirements for undertaking an EIA, and Regulation 14 and Schedule 4 detail the required information for inclusion in an ES.

6.2.4 The preliminary findings of the EIA process were detailed in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), which was produced in June 2019 to support consultation under Section 42 of the Act. Feedback from this consultation has informed the design and impact assessment of the Facility which is detailed within this ES (see **Chapter 7 Consultation** for further information).

6.2.5 The EIA identifies and assesses the likely significant effects in respect of the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Facility. A summary of the EIA process is provided below.

EIA Screening

6.2.6 Given the nature and scale of the Facility, it was decided that an EIA Screening Opinion would not be sought from the Planning Inspectorate. A decision was made by the Applicant to undertake an EIA process and produce an ES which forms part of the DCO application suite of documents.

EIA Scoping

6.2.7 A Scoping Report was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in May 2018 (Royal

HaskoningDHV, 2018). The Scoping Report provided an outline of the proposed approach to assessment and the potential environmental effects. A Scoping Opinion was received from the Planning Inspectorate in July 2018 (The Planning Inspectorate, 2018) (additional details are provided in **Chapter 7 Consultation**). The Scoping Opinion has been considered and used to inform the focus of the EIA for the purposes of this ES. Each technical chapter has a section detailing how the Planning Inspectorate's comments have been addressed.

PEIR

6.2.8 The PEIR considered the comments and direction provided by the Scoping Opinion and presented an analysis of the likely significant environmental effects and key issues relevant to the decision-making process to enable stakeholder engagement.

6.2.9 The PEIR was consulted on in June 2019 under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 (Royal HaskoningDHV, 2019). Feedback received has been used to inform the final design and impact assessment for the Facility. Section 42 consultation responses specific to individual chapter topics have been included and addressed within the relevant topic chapter.

Habitat Mitigation Area

6.2.10 Following both the scoping phase and the PEIR, a Habitat Mitigation Area has been incorporated in to the proposed development, as identified on **Figure 1.1** and described in **Chapter 5 Project Description**. Some of the technical assessments within this ES relate to the Principal Application Site only, whilst others consider the Application Site in its entirety (i.e. including the Habitat Mitigation Area). Justification for the extent of the Application Site considered are included in each technical chapter.

Impact Assessment

6.2.11 The assessment of likely significant effects presented in the ES was guided by both EIA professionals and technical specialists using available data, new data, experience and, where appropriate, expert judgement. A matrix approach was used to provide a consistent framework and system of common tools and terms, unless topic-specific guidance documents provided alternative methodologies for the determination of the significance of effects. Where different assessment methodologies were employed in the ES, these are described in the relevant technical chapters.

6.2.12 The impact assessment steps are detailed below.

Characterisation of the Existing Environment

6.2.13 The first stage of the assessment process is to establish the baseline conditions in the area covered by the Facility and relevant surrounding study areas, which are specific to each technical topic and detailed in the relevant chapters. Any identifiable trends in the baseline conditions have also been included in the relevant chapters where appropriate. The impact assessment will then consider effects in relation to baseline conditions. The following steps were followed for each technical topic:

- Study areas were defined for each receptor based on the relevant characteristics of the receptor (e.g. mobility/range);
- Review of available information;
- Review of likely or potential effects that might be expected to arise from the Facility;
- Determination of whether sufficient data are available to make the EIA judgements with sufficient confidence;
- If further data were required, data were gathered in a targeted manner to answer key questions and fill data gaps; and
- Review of information gathered to ensure the environment can be sufficiently characterised in adequate detail and the data are suitable to make the EIA judgements with sufficient confidence.

6.2.14 The specific approach to establishing a robust baseline is set out under each chapter within this ES. This approach is based on feedback in the Scoping Opinion (The Planning Inspectorate, 2018), feedback on the PEIR, and subsequent discussions and agreements on the scope of the assessment with statutory stakeholders and The Planning Inspectorate. The approach was also adapted as new data were collected and the design of the Facility was advanced, including the incorporation of the Habitat Mitigation Area.

Impact Identification

6.2.15 The approach to assessment mainly uses the conceptual 'source-pathway-receptor' model. The model identifies potential impacts resulting from the proposed activities on the environment and sensitive receptors within it. This process provides an easy to follow assessment route between impact sources and potentially sensitive receptors ensuring a transparent impact assessment. The aspects of this model are defined as follows:

- Source – the origin of a potential impact;

- Pathway – the means by which the effect of the activity could impact a receptor; and
- Receptor – the element of the receiving environment that is impacted.

6.2.16 In general, the impact assessment will use this model when considering the potential impacts arising during the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Facility. In some cases, it is appropriate to use other computer simulation modelling or an alternative approach for assessment, and where this is required, the approach is defined in the relevant topic chapter.

Determination of Receptor Sensitivity and Value

6.2.17 Receptor value considers whether the receptor, for example:

- Is rare;
- Has protected or threatened status;
- Has importance at a local, regional or national scale; and / or
- Has a key role in ecosystem function (in the case of biological receptors).

6.2.18 To assess receptor sensitivity, the ability of the receptor to adapt to change, tolerate and/or recover from potential impacts is considered. The time required for recovery of receptors is key in determining receptor sensitivity. Therefore, overall receptor sensitivity is determined by considering a combination of value, adaptability, tolerance and recoverability and the application of professional judgement and/or past experience.

Predicting the Magnitude of Impacts

6.2.19 The magnitude of an impact is predicted through establishing the scale and probability of the impact through consideration of:

- Scale or spatial extent;
- Duration (short-term to long-term);
- Frequency; and
- Nature of change relative to the baseline.

Evaluation of Significance of Effect

6.2.20 After the sensitivity and magnitude have been established, the effect significance will be predicted. To aid assessment of effect significance, a matrix, such as the one in **Table 6-1,** will be used where possible. Definitions of the significance of effects are provided in **Table 6-2**.

6.2.21 For each section of the ES, best practice methodology (based on the latest

available guidance) was followed and, where relevant and appropriate, an alternative approach to the matrix may be used. The alternative approach will be defined in the relevant topic chapter where this is the case.

6.2.22 To ensure that the definition of effects is specific to each topic, a description of the approach to impact assessment and the interpretation of significance levels was provided within each technical chapter of the ES.

6.2.23 The general approach taken in this ES is that effects which will be determined to be of major or moderate significance are considered to be 'significant' under the EIA Regulations. It is possible that a moderate effect may not be considered significant under the EIA Regulations; however, in these cases, a justification and rationale was provided in the impact assessment text.

Table 6-1 Effect Significance Matrix

		Adverse effect				Beneficial effect			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Low	Medium	High
Sensitivity	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Moderate	Major	Major
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Moderate	Major
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Minor	Minor	Moderate
	Negligible	Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Minor	Minor

Table 6-2 Definitions of Effect Significance

Effect Significance	Definition
Major adverse	Very large or large change in receptor condition, which are likely to be important considerations at a regional or district level because they contribute to achieving national, regional or local objectives, or, could result in exceedance of statutory objectives and/or breaches of legislation.
Moderate adverse	Intermediate change in receptor condition, which are likely to be important considerations at a local level.
Minor adverse	Small change in receptor condition, which may be raised as local issues but are unlikely to be important in the decision-making process.
Negligible	No discernible change in receptor condition.
Minor beneficial	This effect is of minor significance but has been assessed as having some environmental benefit.
Moderate beneficial	This effect is assessed as providing a moderate gain to the environment.
Major beneficial	This effect is assessed as providing a significant positive gain to the environment.

Confidence

6.2.24 Once an assessment of likely significant effect is made, it is necessary to provide a confidence value to the assessment. This is based on a simple scale of high-medium-low, where high-confidence assessments are made based on robust evidence, with lower confidence assessments being based on, for example, extrapolation and use of proxies.

Mitigation

6.2.25 Schedule 4, paragraph 7 of the EIA Regulations require an ES to contain: "*a description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment".* To reduce significant environmental effects to acceptable levels, or to enhance the environment, mitigation measures will be proposed and discussed with the relevant authorities.

6.2.26 Mitigation takes many forms and can be identified as follows:

- Embedded mitigation – this type of mitigation can best be described as modifications to the location or design of the development made during the pre-application/design phase that are an inherent part of the Facility and do not require additional action to be taken. Examples include amendments to site layout and massing to reduce visual effects, or identifying a key habitat or feature that should remain unaffected by the development's layout and operation e.g. retaining an un-improved grassland area in situ as part of an open space strategy; and
- Secondary mitigation – this type of mitigation can best be described as actions that will require further activities to achieve the anticipated outcome. An example includes describing certain lighting limits which will be subject to the submission of a detailed lighting layout as a condition of approval.

6.2.27 The ES has identified the proposed mitigation measures for the main or significant effects identified in each topic chapter. This includes embedded mitigation, which has been identified within the relevant chapter.

Assessing Residual Effects

6.2.28 Once mitigation measures are identified, effects are re-assessed taking account of the proposed mitigation and the residual effects described. Each technical chapter contains a description of the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures. An explanation of why an effect cannot be reduced by the implementation of mitigation measures will be provided where impacts are identified as still having a significant effect on the receptor taking into account any

mitigation that can be applied to it.

Cumulative Impact Assessment

6.2.29 A Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) forms part of the EIA process. This considers the cumulative impacts of other developments alongside the impacts of the proposed scheme. Plans and projects which should be considered in the CIA, according to the staged approach (assigned as tiers of certainty) identified in Planning Inspectorate Advice Note 17 version 2 (The Planning Inspectorate, 2019), include, where relevant to the location and type of scheme:

- 'Tier 1 projects
  - Projects that are under construction;
  - Permitted applications, not yet implemented;
  - Submitted applications, not yet determined;
- 'Tier 2 projects'
  - Projects on the Planning Inspectorates Programme of Projects where a scoping report has been submitted;
- Tier 3 projects
  - Projects on the Planning Inspectorates Programme of Projects where a scoping report has not been submitted;
  - Development identified in relevant Development Plans; and
  - Sites identified in other policy documents as development reasonably likely to come forward.

6.2.30 A CIA has been carried out for the ES, and the full list of plans or projects to be included in the CIA has been developed as part of on-going consultation with technical consultees, notably Boston Borough Council.

6.2.31 The long list of potential cumulative schemes was screened according to the Zone of Influence (ZOI) for each environmental aspect considered within the ES, with reasons identified for inclusion or exclusion from cumulative assessment.

6.2.32 Where other developments will be completed before construction of the Facility the effects from them should be considered as part of the baseline and will be considered as part of both the construction and operational assessment.

6.2.33 Advice Note 17 provides guidance on the shortlisting process to ensure that it is proportionate: "The *criteria used to determine whether to include or exclude 'other existing development and/or approved development' from further assessment should be clearly presented. It should be prepared having regard to relevant policy*

or guidance documents and in consultation with the appropriate statutory consultation bodies (particularly the local planning authority). The criteria should address the following:

- ***Temporal scope**: The applicant may wish to consider the relative construction, operation and decommissioning programmes of the 'other existing development and/or approved development' identified in the ZOI together with the NSIP programme, to establish whether there is overlap and any potential for interaction.*
- ***Scale and nature of development**: The applicant may wish to consider whether the scale and nature of the 'other existing development and/or approved development' identified in the ZOI are likely to interact with the proposed NSIP. Statutory definitions of major development and EIA screening thresholds may be of assistance when considering issues of scale.*
- ***Other factors**: The applicant should consider whether there are any other factors, such as the nature and/ or capacity of the receiving environment that would make a significant cumulative effect with 'other existing development and/or approved development' more or less likely and may consider utilising a source-pathway-receptor approach to inform the assessment.*
- ***Documentation**: The CIA shortlisting process may be documented using Matrix 1 (Appendix 1)* [to Advice note 17]*. The reasons for excluding any development from further consideration should be clearly recorded. This will provide decision makers, consultation bodies and members of the public with a clear record of 'other existing development and/or approved development' considered and the applicant's decision making process with respect to the need for further assessment*.

6.2.34 Data was gathered on shortlisted schemes to allow a cumulative assessment to be made. The approach to each assessment followed the principles identified above for EIA. According to Advice Note 17, an assessment was made on shortlisted Tier 1 and Tier 2 developments. A review was made on any applicable Tier 3 schemes, according to the degree of information that is available at the time of completing the report. **Appendix 6.1** provides the list of cumulative projects considered in this ES.

6.2.35 Since the cut-off date of September 2020 for cumulative projects to be identified for assessment purposes (see list provided in **Appendix 6.1**) some further projects were identified by Boston Borough Council, and some projects have also been removed. A qualitative review of all such projects has been undertaken and

no adverse cumulative effects of any greater significance than those set out within each chapter of this ES is predicted. The review took account of the factors set out in **Paragraph 6.2.32** and the new projects introduced, as well as those removed, are presented in **Appendix 6.1**.

Summary of Compliance with the EIA Regulations

6.2.36 Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations specifies the information to be included in an ES for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. **Table 6-3** summarises these requirements and signposts where these details can be found within this ES.

Table 6-3 EIA Regulations: Information for Inclusion in Environmental Statements

Information for Inclusion in Environmental Statements	How has this information been provided within the ES
A description of the development, including in particular— • a description of the location of the development; • a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases; • a description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the development (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used; • an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases.	**Chapter 5 Project Description** provides a detailed description of the Facility including its location, a description of the construction works and describes each element of the Facility operation. The project description also includes a description of the lighting at the Facility. A layout of the facility is provided in **Figure 5.1**. Further details of impacts are provided in dedicated technical impact assessment chapters and their technical appendices such as potential impacts on: • Noise and vibration (**Chapter 10 Noise and Vibration**); • Air quality (**Chapter 14 Air Quality**); • Landscape (**Chapter 9 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**); • Land and hydrogeology (**Chapter 11 Contaminated Land, Land Use and Hydrogeology**); • Water (**Chapter 13 Surface Water, Flood Risk and Drainage**); • Ecology (**Chapter 12 Terrestrial Ecology**); and • Waste (**Chapter 23 Waste**).
A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the	The reasonable alternatives, including a discussion on the iterations of layouts and design are considered in the development of the proposed project and presented in **Chapter 4 Site Selection and Alternatives**. The main reasons for selecting the chosen site are also presented in **Chapter 4 Site Selection and Alternatives.**

Information for Inclusion in Environmental Statements	How has this information been provided within the ES
main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.	The comparative environmental effects of key design decisions and options considered are also presented as part of **Chapter 4 Site Selection and Alternatives**.
A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.	For each of the technical assessment chapters within the ES, a detailed baseline environment is described. In many cases this uses survey information gathered specifically to support the robust EIA for the proposed development. In all relevant technical assessment chapters, the likely evolution of the baseline without the implementation of the Facility is also presented.
A description of the factors specified in regulation 5(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape. The interaction between the factors listed.	This requirement is fulfilled in the following impact assessment chapters within the ES. Population and Human Health • **Chapter 22 – Health** Biodiversity • **Chapter 12 Terrestrial Ecology; and** • **Chapter 17 Marine and Coastal Ecology** Land • **Chapter 11 Contaminated Land, Land Use and Hydrogeology** • **Chapter 13 Surface Water, Flood Risk and Drainage** Water • **Chapter 13 Surface Water, Flood Risk and Drainage** • **Chapter 15 Marine Water and Sediment Quality** Soil • **Chapter 11 Contaminated Land, Land Use and Hydrogeology** Air • **Chapter 14 Air Quality** Climate • **Chapter 21 Climate Change** Material assets

Information for Inclusion in Environmental Statements	How has this information been provided within the ES
	• **Chapter 11 Contaminated Land, Land Use and Hydrogeology** • **Chapter 13 Surface Water, Flood Risk and Drainage** • **Chapter 19 Traffic and Transport** • **Chapter 20 Socio-Economics** • **Chapter 23 Waste** <u>Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects</u> • **Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage** <u>Landscape</u> • **Chapter 9 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**
A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from, inter alia — a. the construction and existence of the development, including, where relevant, demolition works; b. the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources; c. the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste; d. the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters); e. the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources; f. the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change; g. the technologies and the substances used. The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in	The significant effects arising from the Facility alone and cumulatively with other relevant developments have been comprehensively assessed within each technical assessment within this ES (**Chapters 8 – 24**). Potential impacts from major accidents or disasters are discussed in **Chapter 24 Major Accidents and Risk Management.** Potential implications of climate change are discussed within **Chapter 21 Climate Change.** Technologies and materials likely to be deployed in the Facility are discussed in **Chapter 5 Project Description** and throughout the technical assessment chapters. This chapter **(Chapter 6 Approach to EIA)** sets out the generalised EIA methodology including CIA and interrelationships used in this ES to ensure a consistency of approach. Each technical chapter presents the detailed and specific assessment data analysis, and impact assessment methodologies applied to assess each potential effect identified. Each technical chapter also considers the potential cumulative impacts of the Facility taken together with other relevant projects and the potential interrelationships between impacts. Transboundary impacts are outlined in **Chapter 25 Transboundary Impacts.**

Information for Inclusion in Environmental Statements	How has this information been provided within the ES
regulation 5(2) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development. This description should take into account the environmental protection objectives established at Union or Member State level which are relevant to the project, including in particular those established under Council Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC.	
A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.	Forecasting methods used to identify and assess significant effects on the environment are discussed in more specific detail in each technical chapter. The general approach of the overall EIA methodology is provided in **Chapter 6 Approach to EIA** (this document).
A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.	Mitigation measures include embedded mitigation, which are design decisions taken to reduce environmental impact of the Facility as part of the design development and additional mitigation measures which are proposed as ways of further reducing the assessed likely significant environmental impacts. Each technical assessment chapter includes an explanation of the embedded mitigation measures and where appropriate additional mitigations proposed. Monitoring has been proposed, where relevant, in technical chapters.
A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments pursuant to EU legislation such as Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom or UK environmental assessments may be used for this purpose provided that the requirements of this Directive are met. Where appropriate, this description should include measures	Potential impacts from major accidents or disasters are discussed in **Chapter 24 Major Accidents and Risk Management**. A Navigational Risk Assessment has also been prepared and is included within **Chapter 18 Navigational Issues.** This is a dynamic document that is anticipated to evolve post-Application through discussion regarding Statement of Common Ground with the Port of Boston.

Information for Inclusion in Environmental Statements	How has this information been provided within the ES
envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.	
A non-technical summary of the information provided in respect of the above requirements.	A suitable non-technical summary is provided as part of the DCO application.
A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the environmental statement.	A suitable reference list is provided at the end of each chapter.
Competent Expert Regulation 14(4): In order to ensure the completeness and quality of the environmental statement— (a) the applicant must ensure that the environmental statement is prepared by competent experts; and (b) the environmental statement must be accompanied by a statement from the applicant outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts	The competency of the EIA team and experts is discussed in **Appendix 1.1 Statement of Competency.**

6.3 References

European Parliament (2011). Council Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (codification).

European Parliament (2014). Council Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

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