



Transboundary screening undertaken by the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) on behalf of the Secretary of State (SoS) for the purposes of Regulation 32 of The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 2017 EIA Regulations)	
Project name:	Sunnica Energy Farm
Address/Location:	Comprising two sites; Sunnica West site located approximately 4.5 km to the east of Burwell in East Cambridgeshire District Council, and the Sunnica East Site is approximately 2.5km to the south-west of Mildenhall in West Suffolk Council.
Planning Inspectorate Ref:	EN010106
Date(s) screening undertaken:	First screening – 27 September 2019 following the Applicant’s request for a scoping opinion Second screening – 06 January 2022 following acceptance of the application on 16 December 2021

FIRST TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING	
Document(s) used for transboundary Screening:	Sunnica Energy Farm ('the Scoping Report') September 2019
Screening Criteria:	The Inspectorate’s Comments: The review and comments below are based upon information provided by the Applicant in their Scoping Report.
Characteristics of the Development	The Proposed Development comprises the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of the solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generation panels and on-site energy storage facilities across two sites (Sunnica East and Sunnica West). Total generation capacity is described as being up to 500 megawatts (MW). The Sunnica East and Sunnica West development sites consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar PV modules and mounting structures; • Inverters and transformers; • Switchgears; • On-site cabling; • One or more Battery Energy Storage systems (BESS); • One electrical compound comprising a substation and control building; • Fencing and security measures; and • Access tracks.

	<p>Sunnica East and Sunnica West will connect to the existing Burwell National Grid Substation via Grid Connection A and B as shown on Scoping Report Figure 1-2.</p> <p>Construction of the Proposed Development is anticipated to commence in 2022 with completion in 2024 and operation in 2025. The Proposed Development has a 40-year design life with decommissioning anticipated for 2065.</p> <p>The Scoping Report has not stated the exact quantities and type of waste that will be produced but states that the level of generated waste during the construction and operation phases is anticipated to be low. The waste generated during construction is predicted to predominantly comprise of soils and the operational waste is predicted to predominantly comprise of office/ administrative waste. The Scoping Report omits reference to waste generated during the decommissioning phase.</p> <p>The Scoping Report has identified the potential for the Proposed Development to produce pollution or nuisances from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emissions to water; • Dust and emission to air; • Noise; • Glint and glare; and • Traffic.
<p>Location of Development (including existing use) and Geographical area</p>	<p>The Proposed Development is located within the administrative boundaries of Suffolk County Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. The Sunnica East site is comprised of 5 parcels of agricultural land separated by minor roads in the administrative boundary of Suffolk County Council. The settlement of Mildenhall is located approximately 2.5 km northeast of the site, the A11 is south of the site, the settlement of Freckenham is to the west.</p> <p>The Sunnica West site is located in the administrative boundary of Cambridgeshire County Council and is comprised of agricultural fields and plantations. Approximately 2 km southeast of the site is the settlement of Newmarket, the southern boundary is adjacent to the A14 and the settlement of Snailwell is due west of the site.</p> <p>Cable Route A traverses between Sunnica Site East and West through predominantly agricultural land and the River Kennet. Cable Route B extends from Sunnica East Site connecting to the existing National Grid substation at Burwell.</p> <p>France is the closest EEA state to the Proposed Development.</p>
<p>Environmental Importance</p>	<p>The Scoping Report Table 8-1 identifies the following UK European Sites located within 10 km of the Proposed Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fenland Special Area of Conservation (SAC);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chippenham Fen Ramsar; • Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA); • Breckland SAC; • Wicken Fen Ramsar; • Rex Graham Reserve SAC; and • Devil’s Dyke SAC. <p><u>The Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar:</u> located adjacent to the northern boundary of Sunnica Site West. The sites are designated due to their diversity of vegetation and rare and scarce flora.</p> <p><u>The Breckland SPA:</u> located approximately 1.4 km northeast of Sunnica East Site and is designated for supporting 1% or more of the UK breeding populations of Stone Curlews, Nightjar and Woodlark as stated in the Scoping Report. These species have been identified as being present within the 2km ecological survey study area.</p> <p><u>The Wicken Fen SAC:</u> is located approximately 2.1 km northwest of Cable Route B and 3.1 km of the Burwell National Grid Substation Extension. It is designated for its important vegetation and rare and scarce flora as stated in the Scoping Report.</p> <p><u>Rex Graham SAC:</u> is located approximately 3 km from the Sunnica East Site and is designated for its vegetation and large population of military orchids as stated in the Scoping Report.</p> <p><u>Breckland SAC:</u> is located approximately 3.4 km east of the Sunnica East site and is designated for its inland dunes, eutrophic lakes and great crested newts as stated in the Scoping Report.</p> <p><u>Devil’s Dyke SAC:</u> is located approximately 5 km southwest of the Cable Route B and is designated for its extensive chalk grassland habitat as stated in the Scoping Report.</p>
<p>Potential impacts and Carrier</p>	<p>The Scoping Report states that during construction and operation, habitat loss, disturbance and displacement of species may occur with impacts being carried by air, land and water.</p> <p>The Scoping Report identifies several UK European sites in proximity to the Proposed Development. The following bird species are qualifying features of the Breckland SPA and have been identified as being within the 2km study area: Stone Curlews, Nightjar and Woodlark.</p> <p>A Transboundary Effects Screening Matrix is provided in Appendix A of the Scoping Report, which concludes that the Proposed Development is not likely to have significant effects beyond the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom (UK).</p>

	Requirement for a secondary transboundary screening will be determined as design progresses.
Extent	No impacts have been identified at this time which would be likely to significantly affect another EEA State.
Magnitude	No impacts have been identified at this time which would be likely to significantly affect another EEA State.
Probability	No impacts have been identified at this time which would be likely to significantly affect another EEA State.
Duration	No impacts have been identified at this time which would be likely to significantly affect another EEA State.
Frequency	No impacts have been identified at this time which would be likely to significantly affect another EEA State.
Reversibility	No impacts have been identified at this time which would be likely to significantly affect another EEA State.
Cumulative impacts	No impacts have been identified at this time which would be likely to significantly affect another EEA State.
<p><u>Transboundary screening undertaken by the Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS</u></p> <p>Under Regulation 32 of The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 2017 EIA Regulations) and on the basis of the current information available from the Applicant, the Inspectorate is of the view that the Proposed Development is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment in an EEA State.</p> <p>In reaching this view the Inspectorate has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in its Advice Note Twelve: Transboundary Impacts), and taken into account the information currently supplied by the Applicant.</p> <p>Action:</p> <p>No further action required at this stage.</p> <p>Date: 27 September 2019</p> <p>Note: The SoS' duty under Regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process.</p>	

SECOND TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING	
Document(s) used for transboundary Screening:	<p>Applicant's Environmental Statement Volume 6.2: Appendix 8M, HRA Report to inform an Appropriate Assessment, November 2021</p> <p>Volume 6, 6.1 Environmental Statement Chapter 3: Scheme Design</p> <p>Volume 6, 6.1 Environmental Statement Chapter 4: Alternatives and Design Evolution</p>

	Volume 6, 6.1 Environmental Statement Chapter 5: EIA Methodology
Date screening undertaken:	Re-screened on 06 January 2022 following acceptance of the application on 16 December 2021.
<p>Transboundary re-screening undertaken by the Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS</p> <p>Following submission of the DCO application which included the Environmental Statement and the Applicant’s HRA report, the Inspectorate has reconsidered the transboundary screening decision made on 27 September 2019.</p> <p>The Inspectorate has identified that the following matters differ from that considered at the time of the previous transboundary screening decision:</p> <p><u>Change in the description of the Proposed Development</u></p> <p>After receipt of the EIA Scoping Opinion, the Applicant made a series of changes to the layout of the Proposed Development following its statutory consultation and through ongoing discussions with landowners and consultation bodies. The Applicant’s HRA Report uses scheme design information from Volume 6, 6.1 Environmental Statement Chapter 3: Scheme Design. A description of the changes made through design evolution is provided in Volume 6, 6.1 Environmental Statement Chapter 4: Alternatives and Design Evolution and can be summarised as:</p> <p><u>Sunnica East Sites A and B</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional mitigation areas incorporated for Stone Curlew; • Layout modifications to provide a buffer to Worlington village; • Removal from the Order Limits of land proposed for extensions to Worlington Quarry; • Removal from the Order Limits of an area of land designated as a Scheduled Monument; and • Modification of the layout to move solar PV and energy storage out of areas of highest flood risk. <p><u>Sunnica West Sites A and B</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar PV moved to preserve certain heritage assets in situ, to avoid Scheduled Monuments and to address setting effects on Chippenham Park Historic Park and Garden; • Additional ecological mitigation areas incorporated within the layout; • Layout modifications to increase the buffer to Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site; and • Modification of the layout to move solar PV and energy storage out of areas of highest flood risk. <p><u>Grid connections A and B</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to the railway crossing points; and • Route alignment changes to address concerns from landowners. <p><u>Burwell substation extension</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to the boundary to enable retention of an existing treeline; and • Changes to address landowner concerns and overhead powerlines. <p>The Environmental Statement anticipates that construction will commence in 2023 with a single phase of construction being assumed in the assessment as a worst-case scenario. This differs from the construction start date of 2022 considered by the previous</p>	

transboundary screening in September 2019. No other changes are identified to the Proposed Development timeline.

Volume 6, 6.1 Environmental Statement Chapter 5: EIA Methodology provides the Applicant's position on transboundary effects. This chapter notes that while there have been refinements to the scheme description following the EIA scoping stage, the characteristics and potential impacts of the Sunnica Energy Farm have not changed from those previously assessed at that stage. The Applicant's conclusion on transboundary effects therefore remains that the Proposed Development is unlikely to give rise to significant effects beyond the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom (UK). Transboundary effects have not been considered further in the ES, therefore.

Under Regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations and on the basis of the current information available from the Applicant, there is no change to the previous conclusion, and the Inspectorate remains of the view that the Proposed Development **is not likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in an EEA State.

In reaching this view the Inspectorate has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in its Advice Note Twelve: Transboundary Impacts); and taken into account the information currently supplied by the Applicant.

Action:

No further action is required at this stage.

Date: 06 January 2022

Note: The SoS' duty under Regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process.

Note:

The Inspectorate's screening of transboundary issues is based on the relevant considerations specified in the Annex to its Advice Note Twelve, available on our website at <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>