



Knowsley Council

Our Ref: 24/00142/SO

Date: 08.05.2024

Re: 24/00142/SO - Screening Opinion for proposed battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated infrastructure

Thank you for your recent request for a screening opinion in relation to the proposed development referred to above. Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council has considered the information contained in the screening request against the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2018, and although the development falls under Schedule 2 of the Regulations we do not believe that it would give rise to significant environmental effects. As such, I confirm that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required to support any future planning application.

Please find attached the Local Planning Authority's further information and reasoning when arriving at this decision. Should you wish to discuss the matter further or require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.



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Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017

Application no: 24/00142/SO

Site Address: Land north of Cut Lane, Kirkby, L33 3AJ

Description of development: Screening opinion for proposed battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated infrastructure.

- Does the development fall within schedule 1?

No

- Does the development fall within schedule 2?

Yes

EIA Screening Opinion

This is a screening opinion for the purpose of determining whether Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for this development under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The applicant has submitted an EIA Screening Request on 18th March 2024 which has been reviewed to form the basis of this response. The proposal falls under Schedule 2 3(a) of the EIA regulations 2017.

The submission relates to the proposed development relating to the erection of a Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure to provide a total export capacity of 57MW. However, the proposal is linked to storage rather than electricity generation and therefore the impacts are significantly lower than other forms of electricity generation.

The area of the proposed development site is 2.96ha and therefore exceeds the threshold of .5ha. The proposal has been assessed against the selection criteria stated in schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations.

- Characteristics of the development
- Location of the development
- Characteristics and potential impact



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Characteristics of the development

The proposed development site is classed as Major development at 2.96ha. It would be sited some 136m north of Cut Lane where vehicular access is to be taken which leads to a access track. The proposed development site would be contained by a perimeter fence which would enclose 52no. sungrow contains, 13no. sungrow skids together with ancillary plant machinery (spares container, welfare facilities, water tank, control room, auxiliary switch room, transformers etc).

The BESS site would include an underground cable connection.

The proposed development have some visual impact with some limited screening provided by the set back of the proposed development and ground levels. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be submitted alongside the application due to its location in Green Belt.

The site comprises of grassland associated with former agricultural use. However, the area in which the BESS site is located is current subject to significant ground works. The applicant intends to maintain the existing site levels.

The site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area nor would the proposed use result in any gaseous emissions in terms of normal operations. Any waste can be managed and minimised as part of normal construction practices and through appropriate mechanism such as a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP). There is not anticipated to be significant environmental effects with regards to the production of waste from the use proposed. Likewise, mitigation measures can be included in a suitably worded CEMP with regards to risks to human health and air pollution. Accordingly, it is not anticipated that the proposed development site will result in any significant environmental effects with regard to climate change of risks associated with major accidents.

The screening criteria advises that there is no potential for pollution of land or water beyond leakage from vehicles and plant during construction and therefore risk is very low. Further a water crossing design and method statement will be produced to inform any future planning application to ensure appropriate control measures are in place and that no pollution will occur to surface water bodies concerning the underground cable route. As such, there is not anticipated to be a significant environmental effect with regards to risks to human health.

Location of the Development

The site consists of 2.96ha of former agricultural land. The site includes an existing agricultural barn, which has been previously granted permission for conversion into an indoor equestrian facility. That permission included consent for the creation of a fishing lake. However, it appears that significant ground works have been undertaken where the BESS site is proposed which falls outside the scope of that application and is therefore unlawful development. Notwithstanding this, the site is not in equestrian use nor is it in agricultural use at the present moment in time.





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A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment will be required to support any future application. This is discussed further below.

There are no significant issues defined by the Regulations that would require an Environmental Statement concerning biodiversity in the area that are applicable for the proposed development.

The site has one heritage asset recorded on the Merseyside Historic Environment Record within the proposed development: MME5931 A Mesolithic flint scatter found during fieldwalking. However, the proposed development site has been subject to extensive ground disturbance which will almost certainly removed any such remains. As such, the proposed development site will have negligible archaeological potential.

Characteristics and Potential Impact

The proposed development exceeds the applicable threshold based on the size of the proposed development under Schedule 2 3(a) development. Battery Energy Storage is not considered a novel technology and will have limited impacts in terms of noise and air quality associated with the construction phase but none would occur from the operational phase of the proposed development.

Taking this into account, the screening thresholds and selection criteria is Schedule 3 and given the characteristics and location of the development and its potential impacts there are no criteria which would lead to a positive screening for Environment Impact Assessment. As such, the proposals are unlikely to give rise to significant environmental affects and therefore an EIA is not required in this instance.

Other Environmental Matters

Ecological Information

The site location plan indicates that some habitat will be affected to accommodate the route of proposed cables. There is also potential for breeding birds to be present within the site and non-breeding birds to be present in adjacent fields. The applicant states that any future application will be supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment and there is potential for habitat creation and enhancement within the application site and is therefore supported.

If permission is granted any works will need to avoid the bird breeding season which runs from 1st March to 31st August inclusive.



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The development site is adjacent to arable land which may provide foraging habitat for qualifying features of the following national and international sites. These sites are protected under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Local Plan Policy CS8 therefore applies:

- Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA;
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar site;
- Martin Mere SPA; and
- Martin Mere Ramsar site.

In the first instance, an analysis of data, obtained from the County Bird Recorder is required to confirm, or otherwise, the presence of non-breeding birds in adjacent fields and assess potential impacts on them. If non-breeding birds are present in surrounding fields the proposals would require assessment against the Habitat Regulations. The analysis of non-breeding bird data would be required prior to determination of any future planning application.

The proposed development will be required to deliver a mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. In order to assist the consideration of BNG as part of the determination of the planning application and more broadly whether the biodiversity gain condition is capable of being discharged then the following information should be submitted to support any future planning application:

- o UKHAB habitat survey of the current pre-development habitat;
- o Completed Statutory Defra Metric showing both pre-development habitats and proposed post construction habitats. This should be submitted with macros disabled, and all sheets unhidden;
- o If using the Small Sites Metric competency requirements must be provided for the person who has completed the metric, please refer to the Small Sites Metric User Guide .
- o Accompanying habitat condition assessments must be submitted for the existing pre-development habitats and proposed condition of newly created or enhanced habitats (If using the small sites metric condition assessment sheets are not required);
- o GIS layers of pre-development baseline and post-development baseline;
- o Evidence that the mitigation hierarchy and biodiversity gain hierarchy have been followed;
- o Landscape masterplan showing on site habitat provision;
- o Details of any proposed offsite provision (e.g. use of habitat bank, provision of own offsite, use of national credits);
- o A draft habitat management and monitoring plan for any proposed habitats that are considered significant on-site gains (this should follow the Habitat management and monitoring plan template).



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Further information can be found on the Liverpool City Region MEAS BNG information note:

Knowsley Council <https://easnet.org.uk/biodiversity-net-gain/>



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