

To

Sophia Cockell SLR Consulting Limited

Today's Date 12 August 2025

Application No: SCR/25/01041

Tel direct 0151 691 8450

Please ask
for Mr C Heather

Dear Sir/Madam

Proposal	Screening request for Proposed solar PV development
Location	Rose Cottage Station Road, Thurstaston, Wirral, CH61 0HL

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (ENGLAND & WALES)
REGULATIONS 2011****REQUEST FOR A SCREENING OPINION**

I am writing to you further to your letter received on 4th July 2025 requesting a Screening Opinion in relation to the above development. 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 submitted information (document entitled "Request for EIA Screening Opinion" dated 4 July 2025, Ref: 425.VT2915.00001 Rev. 02) has been used as the basis for the Environmental Impact Assessment screening opinion, although the site was also visited on 12 November 2024 in respect of pre-application submission PRE/24/00066/ENQ, and this visit gave knowledge of the site.

The proposal is not Schedule 1 development. However, it falls under Schedule 2, specially part (a) of Column 3 (Energy Industry):

- a. Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1)

The applicable threshold and criteria for this type of development are:

- The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare

The proposed development has a total area of 27 hectares which exceeds the Schedule 2 criteria.

Further guidance is provided within the planning practice guidance (PPG). Indicative criteria, threshold and advice for identification of Schedule 2 development (Energy Industry development) requiring EIA:

- Thermal output of more than 50 MW.
- Small stations using novel forms of generation should be considered carefully.

At 27 hectares the proposed development does exceed the 5 hectares area of scheme criteria. The development would have environmental impacts which are considered below.

Having reviewed the proposal and considered the project against the provisions of the EIA Regulations (including screening criteria presented below) and the relevant National Planning Practice Guidance, it is considered that the proposals are likely to give rise to significant environmental effects from an EIA perspective, and that **EIA is therefore required**.

I am writing to you further to your letter received on requesting a Screening Opinion in relation to the above development.

Yours faithfully

Mr C Heather
Planning Officer

	SCREENING OPINION	
Characteristics of development		Any key issues to consider
The size and design of the whole development	<p>The proposed development covers an area of approximately 27ha.</p> <p>The development would comprise Solar PV array (of a height of up to 3.5m), inverters, transformers, on-site substation, temporary construction compound, internal access tracks, security fencing up to 2.5 m high, CCTV cameras as well as providing landscape and biodiversity enhancement.</p> <p>This is a temporary use for 35 years following which it will be returned to agriculture.</p>	The site is located within the Green Belt, an Area of Special Landscape Value (Dee Estuary LAN-SA8.1), and Nature Improvement Area (West Wirral Heathlands and Arrowe Park NIA-3). The impact on these is important to consider.
Cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development	There are no significant developments in the vicinity which would need to be considered alongside the current proposal, either solar developments or other types of development.	
The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;	The site is located close to European Designated sites and is likely to be functionally linked land.	
The production of waste;	Any waste can be managed and minimised as part of normal construction practices and can be managed through an appropriate mechanism such as a Waste audit or as part of a Construction Environment Management Plan.	

	There are not anticipated to be significant environmental effects with regard to the production of waste from the uses proposed.	
Pollution and nuisances;	<p>There will be no associated emissions in the operational phase.</p> <p>Construction related impacts can be managed through normal construction and mitigation measures such as through the implementation of a suitable Construction Environment Management Plan.</p> <p>A Glint and Glare Assessment would accompany any planning application.</p> <p>Previous discussions around land contamination concluded that the likelihood of issues arising are low and manageable.</p> <p>There are not anticipated to be significant environmental effects with regard to pollution and nuisances from the uses proposed.</p>	The site is not situated in an Air Quality Management Area.
The risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge;	There are not anticipated to be significant environmental effects with regard to these potential risks.	The site does not lie in an area at risk of flooding, and surface water flooding is low. It is noted that when the site was visited in 2024 that there was some flooding but it was localised and likely to be connected to particular rain events. It did not appear unusual compared to other farmland.
The risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).	<p>Air pollution - Any risks during construction can be managed through normal construction and mitigation measures such as through the implementation of a suitable Construction Environment Management Plan. During the operational phase vehicle movements will be minimal and the impact on air quality would therefore also be minimal.</p> <p>Land contamination – It is not anticipated that land contamination will be a significant issue.</p> <p>There is not anticipated to be a significant environmental effect with regard to risks to human health.</p>	
Location of Development		Any key issues to consider

The existing and approved land use;	The site currently comprises agricultural land defined by hedgerows. An access road cuts through the site connecting Station Road to the east.	
The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;	<p>The site falls within the Thurstaston Fields Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Core Count Area close to the following internationally and nationally designated sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dee Estuary SPA (200m SW); • Dee Estuary Ramsar (200m SW); and • Dee Estuary SSSI (200m SW). <p>The development may result in the long-term loss of land which is functionally-linked to internationally designated sites, including the Dee Estuary SPA and Ramsar sites.</p> <p>There are anticipated to be significant environmental effects with regard to these potential impacts.</p>	
The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas—		
(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;	No issues requiring an Environmental Statement.	
(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;	Not applicable for this proposed development.	
(iii) mountain and forest areas;	Not applicable for this proposed development.	
(iv) nature reserves and parks;	Not applicable for this proposed development.	
(v) European sites and other areas classified or protected under national legislation;	<p>Land within the application site is highly likely to be functionally-linked to internationally designated sites, including the nearby Dee Estuary SPA and Ramsar sites. The proposals have the potential to result in the long-term loss of a sizeable area of functionally-linked land.</p> <p>This issue will require an Environmental Statement.</p>	
(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality	No issues requiring an Environmental Statement.	

standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;		
(vii) densely populated areas;	<p>The proposed development is not located in a densely populated area. The Site is between Caldy and Thurstaston, which are relatively low density settlements. Heswall, Pensby and Irby and beyond and are larger and more dense than Caldy and Thurstaston. However, there is a degree of separation to these settlements.</p> <p>No issues requiring an Environmental Statement.</p>	
(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance	<p>The site has the potential for prehistoric and medieval archaeological remains. Should any such remains be present they would be considered to be regionally important, rather than locally important which the submission suggests. However, they are unlikely to be sufficient to require an Environmental Statement.</p> <p>The site is currently fairly open with large fields and some short, medium and long views. Although some trees and hedges exist the size of the proposed development (extent and height) as well as the specific features proposed would raise some issues that need to be considered. The proposal would impact a substantial area in terms of landscape and visibility.</p> <p>Thurstaston Conservation Area is to the north-east and there are several listed buildings within it. The character and appearance of the heritage assets need to be considered and the impact on the significance of the listed buildings is a material consideration.</p> <p>Overall the location is considered to be sensitive with potential for significant visual and cumulative effects. This is a function of the physical characteristics of the proposal development as well as any mitigation which may be proposed.</p> <p>There are anticipated to be significant environmental effects with regard to these potential impacts.</p>	<p>The site is within an Area of Special Landscape Value and near to a Conservation Area and listed buildings. The topography of the site is relevant with a slope from north-east to south-west towards the Dee Estuary.</p>

Types and characteristics of the potential impact		Any key issues to consider
<p>The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</p> <p>the nature of the impact;</p> <p>the transboundary nature of the impact;</p> <p>the intensity and complexity of the impact;</p> <p>the probability of the impact;</p> <p>the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;</p> <p>the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development;</p> <p>the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.</p>	<p>The proposed development exceeds the applicable threshold based the size of the proposed Schedule 2, 3(a) development however the proposed generating capacity is below the planning policy guidance indicative threshold (50MW).</p> <p>Solar panels are an established technology, and so would not be considered a novel form of generation. They also have limited impacts in terms of noise and air quality (associated with the construction phase) and none for their operation.</p> <p>The site is situated in close proximity to the Dee Estuary SPA and Ramsar and other important ecological features. The development may result in the long-term loss of land which is functionally-linked to internationally designated sites, including the Dee Estuary SPA and Ramsar sites. This loss is considered significant.</p> <p>The topography of the site results in a range of viewpoints across a relatively open area, with the Thurstaston Conservation Area and several listed buildings to the north-east being potentially affected by the proposals. The siting and appearance of the proposed development, as well as mitigation, would have impacts that need to be carefully considered.</p> <p>Taking into account the screening thresholds and the selection criteria in Schedule 3, given the characteristics and location of the development, and the potential impacts, the development does lead to a positive screening for EIA. The proposals are likely to give rise to significant environmental effects and that</p> <p>EIA is therefore required in this case.</p>	
<p>Is the location Sensitive under Schedule 3</p>	<p>Yes, the site is close to internationally designated sites, including the Dee Estuary SPA and Ramsar sites and is considered highly likely to be functionally linked land. The site is also open and the impact on the landscape over a substantial area, and nearby heritage assets, would be significant.</p>	

