

Environmental appraisal report



The development partners appointed RSK to undertake appraisals to assess the potential environmental effects that the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development might have on the environment. A summary of the findings of each study is presented below.

Landscape and Visual

Landscape and visual effects are largely limited to the area immediately adjacent to the main site area. Given the wider expansive landscape and the location of the Proposed Development below the skyline in all but the immediate context of the main site area, it is therefore considered that the landscape has the capacity to accommodate the Proposed Development.

Ecology and Ornithology

The loss of habitats within the infrastructure footprint and up to an additional 10m buffer of this (to account for drying effects, etc) would be unavoidable. However, this loss would be compensated for, and these habitats are common and widespread in the wider area at the locality. There was no evidence of protected species onsite or in the wider study area. Furthermore, the site was considered as having only limited value for protected species, with no ponds, hedgerows or trees onsite. Overall, with the proposed embedded mitigation and habitat restoration and enhancement, no adverse effects on any ecological feature are anticipated from the Proposed Development.

Hydrology, hydrogeology, geology and soils

Private water supplies and potentially groundwater-dependent terrestrial ecosystems that are within, near or have a hydraulic linkage to the application site have been assessed individually and appropriate mitigation measures set out where linkages have been identified. An Outline Peat Management Plan has also been produced for the Proposed Development, which illustrates how peat resources have been safeguarded by avoiding areas of deep peat. Additionally, the Outline Peat Management Plan demonstrates that any excavated peat would be reused on-site or nearby for peatland restoration. A Drainage Impact Assessment has been produced to ensure that the rate of runoff from the Proposed Development post-development is no greater than that prior to development and to prevent any reduction in water quality in aquifers or watercourses downstream of the application site.

Noise

Construction and short-term operational stages of road traffic noise have been assessed. The results indicate that the magnitude of change due to the Proposed Development would be negligible along all road links considered in both stages. For potential noise impacts arising from operation of the Hydrogen Production Facility, the assessment predicts noise levels that would remain comfortably below required standards.