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Chapter 13: Socioeconomics, Land Use, Tourism and Recreation

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INDEX

13 SOCIO-ECONOMICS, LAND USE, TOURISM AND RECREATION

13.1 Introduction

13.1.1.1 This Chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) presents the results of the socio-economic, land use, tourism and recreation impact assessment. It considers the potential impact of the Proposed Development during the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases.

13.1.1.2 The Chapter provides an overview of the existing baseline environment for the Proposed Development, followed by an assessment of the significance of socio-economic, land use, tourism and recreational effects.

13.2 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

13.2.1.1 The key legislation, planning policy and guidance relevant to the socio-economic, land use, tourism and recreation assessment is summarised below. Please refer to **Chapter 5: Planning Policy** for further information and detail regarding the planning policy and legislative context of the Proposed Development.

13.2.2 Legislation

13.2.2.1 The Land Reform (Scotland) Act, 2003, introduced the right of responsible non-motorised access for recreational and other purposes to land and inland water throughout Scotland, with a few exceptions (including land in which crops have been sown or are growing). The Act also places a duty on local authorities to manage access in their areas, including planning for a system of core paths that cater for everyone.

13.2.2.2 The Countryside (Scotland) Act, 1967, established a duty for local authorities and National Park authorities to protect and manage public rights of way in Scotland.

13.2.3 National Policy

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

13.2.3.1 The Scottish National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4[1]) is the national spatial strategy for Scotland and was adopted on the 13th February 2023. The Plan sets out policy principles related to energy with the intent to "*encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore"* with the overarching desired outcome to expand renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies. Policies relevant to this chapter include:

- Policy 11 – Energy:

[1] Scottish Government (2023) National Planning Framework 4

- Part a) Development proposals of solar arrays will be supported.
- Part c) Proposals will be supported where they demonstrate that they maximise the net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities.
- Part e) How design will mitigate the following relevant points:
  - Impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact, noise and shadow flicker; and
  - public access, including impact on long distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes.

- Policy 5 – Soils:
  - Part b) Development proposals on prime agricultural land, or land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use, as identified by the LDP, will only be supported where it is for:
    - Iv. The generation of energy from renewable sources or the extraction of minerals and there is secure provision for restoration.

13.2.3.2 Policy 5 states that the layout and design of the proposal should minimise the amount of protected land that is required.

- Policy 25 – Community wealth building:
  - Part a) Development proposals which contribute to local or regional community wealth building strategies and are consistent with local economic priorities will be supported. Examples include:
    - Increasing spending within communities;
    - Ensuring the use of local supply chains and services; and
    - Local job creation.

Just Transition – A Fairer, Greener Scotland

13.2.3.3 The Just Transition Commission set out in their 2021 plan[2] titled 'A national mission for a fairer, greener Scotland' that the "*imperative of a just transition is that Governments design policies in a way that ensures the benefits of climate change action are shared widely*". As part of their work, they highlighted their call to action into four messages:

1. Pursue an orderly, managed transition to net-zero that creates benefits and opportunities for people across Scotland. Delivery of this must be a national mission;
2. Equip people with the skills and education they need to benefit from the transition;
3. Empower and invigorate our communities and strengthen local economies; and
4. Share benefits widely and ensure burdens are distributed on the basis of ability to pay.

[2] Just Transition Commission (2021) A national mission for a fairer, greener Scotland

13.2.3.4 In response to the Just Transmission Commission the Scottish Government established the National Just Transition Planning Framework[3] as a proactive measure aimed at ensuring the transition to a low-carbon economy is equitable and inclusive. As part of the framework there is a recognition of the urgency of achieving the climate goals which include a 75% reduction in greenhouse gases (GHG) by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2045 – with the framework overseeing the necessary transformation.

13.2.3.5 The Framework aims to ensure that there is a shared vision for the just transition for the wellbeing of the nation as a whole and displays a clear message of collaboration between business, unions, workforce and the local community.

National Performance Framework

13.2.3.6 The National Performance Framework incorporates the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and guides the work of the Scottish Government. At the heart of this is the purpose of "*creating a more successful country with opportunities for all Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and economic growth*".

13.2.4 Local Policy

East Lothian Local Development Plan

13.2.4.1 The adopted Local Development Plan[4] sets out East Lothian Council's development strategy for the area, including its vision, aims and objectives. The Plan notes that East Lothian's economy was built on agriculture, fishing, coal mining and manufacturing, and that the area has found it more difficult to attract large scale economic development and employment opportunities than neighbouring areas. Agriculture continues to be an important sector, however it is recognised that the local economy is diversifying and that small and medium enterprise is a strength.

East Lothian Council Plan

13.2.4.2 East Lothian Council Plan[5] outlines how the Council intends to meet the vision of "*an even more prosperous, safe and sustainable East Lothian, with a dynamic and thriving economy, that enables our people and communities to flourish*". One of the plans three overarching objectives is to respond to the climate emergency, as well as recover to create an economically sustainable future. This was outlined in the 2021 residents survey with the top three priorities being:

- Support business, employment and economic growth (52%);
- Reduce inequality and poverty (39%); and
- Tackle climate change (35%)

[3] Scottish Government (2021) Just Transition – A Fairer, Greener Scotland
[4] East Lothian Council (2018) Local Development Plan
[5] East Lothian Council (2022) East Lothian Council Plan 2022 - 2027

East Lothian Climate Change Strategy (2019-2025)

13.2.4.3 As part of their response to the climate emergency, the current adopted East Lothian Climate Change Strategy (2019 – 2025[6]) outlines the need to create a low carbon and sustainable economy, improve the employability of East Lothian's workforce and develop future ways of working. The strategy also outlines the tourism sector as a key growth sector for the economy through promotion of Edinburgh's Coast and Countryside, and golf – estimated to attract 100,000 visitors to East Lothian annually.

East Lothian Draft Climate Change Strategy (2025-2030)

13.2.4.4 The Draft Climate Change Strategy (2025 – 2030[7]) provides an update to the previous strategy, with one of the focus areas proposed being the economy. One of the major factors being the desire to upskill, reskill and futureproof East Lothian's workforce so that residents can find, secure, climate-positive jobs and procure local firms to support the climate change actions.

East Lammermuir Local Place Plan

13.2.4.5 The East Lammermuir Local Place Plan[8] was developed with the intention of giving *"local people the opportunity to engage meaningfully and have a positive influence in the future planning of development in their areas."* The Plan details the response from the local community which highlights a wide support for renewable energy and the decarbonisation of the grid. The main concerns and priorities of the community have been grouped into three categories:

- Getting Around – well-designed paths and cycle routes;
- Our Places – sustainability and environmental aspects of buildings; and
- The Land – protecting the unique character of the landscape and understanding and managing the change that major infrastructure brings to the area.

13.2.5 Guidance

13.2.5.1 There is limited published guidance for the assessment of socio-economic, land use, tourism and recreation effects. Relevant guidance that has informed the assessment includes:

- Scottish Natural Heritage, Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook, Appendix 6: Outdoor access impact assessment[9];

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[6] East Lothian Council – Climate Change Strategy 2020 – 2025. Online. Available at < Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025 | East Lothian Council >
[7] East Lothian Council (DRAFT) Climate Change Strategy 2025-2030. Online. Available at < DRAFT Climate Change Strategy 2025-2030 | East Lothian Council >
[8] East Lammermuir Community Council (2024) East Lammermuir Local Place Plan 2024 – 2034
[9] Scottish Natural Heritage (2018), Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook, Appendix 6: Outdoor access impact assessment. Available online at: Wayback Machine

- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), LA109 – Geology and soils[10]; and
- Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), A New Perspective on Land and Soil in Environmental Impact Assessment[11].

13.3 Scoping and Consultation

13.3.1.1 To inform the scope of the assessment for the Proposed Development, consultation was undertaken with statutory and non-statutory bodies through early consultation and a formal EIA scoping process. Full details of the consultation process and responses are included in **Chapter 4: EIA Methodology**.

13.3.1.2 Given the anticipated positive impact of the Proposed Development on socio economic receptors, it was proposed in the Scoping Report that socio-economics could be scoped out of the EIAR. Specific scoping responses, relevant to Socio-economics, Land Use, Tourism and Recreation, are provided in **Table 13.1**.

TABLE 13.1 SCOPING CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE	SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSE	RESPONSE TO CONSULTEE
East Lothian Council (ELC)	Recreational access: The Scoping Report does not mention visual impacts on people walking on the core path network, or access rights under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. These aspects should be included in the EIAR. Provisions for public access and recreation, and any restrictions proposed, should be covered in a Recreation and Access Management Plan.	Impacts on access rights under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and amenity effects for users of core paths and other tourism and recreation resources are included in the tourism and recreation assessment. The Traffic Mitigation section of **Volume 1 Chapter 11 Traffic and Transport** presents proposed measures to alleviate the impact on core path users and maintain use, such as barriers to maintain separation from construction.
	Economic effects: Potential negative impacts on the local economy and cumulative impacts of local developments should be assessed. The assessment should include the impact on	Potential effects for established sectors of the local economy, including agriculture, are assessed as part of the assessment of wider socio-economic effects.

[10] DMRB, LA 109 – Geology and Soils. Available online at: LA 109 - Geology and soils While this guidance was developed in the highways sector, it provides industry-standard guidance for the assessment of impacts on agricultural land and so has informed the methodology for this chapter.
[11] IEMA (2022), A New Perspective on Land and Soil in Environmental Impact Assessment. Available online at: 2022-iema_land_and_soils_guidance.pdf

CONSULTEE	SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSE	RESPONSE TO CONSULTEE
	availability of productive agricultural land.	
East Lammermuir Community Council (ELCC)	ELCC noted a lack of information around the socio-economic benefits of the Proposed Development and stated that socio-economics should therefore be scoped into the EIAR.	Socio-economics has been scoped into the EIAR.
ScotWays	ScotWays noted that other path LE235 crosses or is close to the application site, and that the assessment should take into account recreational amenity and landscape impacts. ScotWays also noted access rights under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the requirement to produce an Access Management Plan.	Other path LE235 follows the same route as East Lothian Core Path 12 and is included in the assessment. Access rights under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 have been considered as part of the assessment. The Traffic Mitigation section of **Volume 1 Chapter 11 Traffic and Transport** presents proposed measures to alleviate the impact on core path users and maintain use, such as barriers to maintain separation from construction.
The British Horse Society (BHS)	The BHS noted that it is likely that the public exercise their access rights on informal routes along field boundaries and through woodland within the site and surrounding area, and that consideration should be given to how access will be managed during construction and operation.	Access rights under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 have been considered as part of the assessment.

13.4 Scope and Methodology

13.4.1 Scope

13.4.1.1 The scope of this socio-economic, land use, tourism and recreation assessment has been informed by feedback from consultation bodies in their Scoping Opinion (as summarised in **Table 13.1**), feedback from the local community received through August/September 2024

and March 2025 public consultations, European Commission guidance on scoping[12], and professional judgement. Impacts and effects included within the scope of this socio-economic, land use, tourism and recreation assessment are summarised in **Table 13.2** below.

TABLE 13.2 SCOPE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC, LAND USE, TOURISM AND RECREATION ASSESSMENT

SCOPE	POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND EFFECTS
Socio-economic impacts	• Direct, indirect, and induced employment created by the project • Direct, indirect, and induced productivity gains measured as Gross Value Added (GVA)
Wider socio-economic effects	• Effects on industries arising from socio-economic impacts, specifically food production and tourism sectors
Socio-cultural effects	• Local population changes arising from socio-economic impacts • Effects on access to local community services (health and education) • Change in local identity and sense of place because of the project impacts, population change, and changes to local industry
Land use effects	• Temporary change in land use, including the availability of agricultural land
Tourism and recreation effects	• Effects on tourism and recreation receptors (quality and access) including core paths, open spaces, and accommodation

13.4.1.2 Effects on soils are outside the scope of this chapter and are assessed in **Chapter 10: Geology and Soils.**

13.4.1.3 Effects are considered during the construction phase (18 months) and operation and maintenance phase (40 years). While the starting date for construction activities will be dependent on consent being granted and on grid connection availability, for the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that construction will begin in 2030, with operation and maintenance beginning in 2031 and the first full year of operation being 2032. Decommissioning at the end of the project life is also included in the scope.

[12] European Commission (2017) Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Scoping (Section 9 p57). Available online at: Circabc

13.4.2 Methodology

13.4.2.1 The overall methodology is to assess the significance of potential impacts and effects against the baseline position. The baseline describes the current socio-economic, land use, tourism and recreational conditions within the relevant study areas using latest available data. Baseline data sources are summarised in **Table 13.3** below:

TABLE 13.3 BASELINE INDICATORS AND SOURCES

INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE	YEAR
Population, age profile	Scotland Census	2022
Ethnicity	Scotland Census	2022
Economic Activity, Qualifications, Occupations	Scotland Census	2022
Households	Scotland Census	2022
Property Price	Land Registry	2024
Economic Activity	Scotland Census	2022
Long-term health problems or disability	Scotland Census	2022
Health Services	Public Health Scotland, Scottish Government	2024, 2025
Gross Value Added (GVA)	ONS, GVA per head	2022
Tourism employment, tourism spending, tourism volume, tourism	Visit Scotland	2022
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)	Scottish Government	2020

13.4.2.2 Impacts and effects are defined and quantified as much as possible to determine their magnitude. Where they cannot be quantified, a qualitative assessment is made using professional judgement. The criteria used to assess sensitivity, magnitude and significance are provided in **Chapter 4: EIA Methodology**.

13.4.3 Limitations

13.4.3.1 Limitations of the methodological approach are:

- Baseline data is available at different spatial levels and does not always align neatly with the relevant study areas for each impact and effect;

- Latest data is used as much as possible. However, this relies on the frequency at which data is published by the Government and other sources. For example, the Census is published every 10 years;

- The detail for decommissioning will be agreed at the time, and so there is limited information available at this stage. Impacts of decommissioning are assumed to be similar to construction; and

- The assessment draws on the findings of other relevant chapters of the EIAR. Professional judgement has been used to interpret the findings of these chapters for the purposes of the Socio-economics, Land Use, Tourism and Recreation assessment.

13.4.4 Study Area

13.4.4.1 The significance of impacts and effects on socio-economic, land use and tourism and recreation receptors will vary across different spatial scales. Therefore, impacts and effects will be assessed at multiple spatial scales as relevant to the impact, for example; national, local and neighbourhood levels against their respective baselines. The study area for the Socio-economics, Land Use, and Tourism and Recreation impact assessment is therefore determined by:

- The location of the project and associated activity;

- The nature of impacts being assessed and the spatial scale that impacts could occur;

- The location of receptors who may be directly and indirectly affected;

- Considering local administrative boundaries and functional areas; and

- Considering that impacts and effects could vary at different spatial scales.

13.4.4.2 The selection of study areas for each impact and effect are explained below:

- **Socio-economic impacts:** Socio-economic impacts are likely to be realised at a national and local level. Some socio-economic impacts may occur at a neighbourhood level, for example, where jobs are filled by residents, or opportunities are secured by businesses located in the neighbourhood. However, this is unlikely to be significant. Therefore, the local (East Lothian) and national (Scotland) study areas are most relevant for socio-economic impacts.

- **Land use effects:** Land use effects relate to the impact of the change in land use and are specific to the project site. Therefore, the study area for land use includes the project site and implications for the surrounding neighbourhood and local area.

- **Tourism and recreation effects:** Tourism and recreation effects could be significant at a neighbourhood level where the community, and related tourism and recreation receptors, are directly impacted by the project. Tourism accommodation in the wider local area may also be affected.

- **Wider socio-economic effects:** The wider socio-economic effects arising from socio-economic impacts and changes in land use are unlikely to be significant at a national level but may affect very localised industries at the neighbourhood or local level. Therefore, the neighbourhood (data zone) and local study areas are relevant for assessing wider socio-economic effects.

- **Socio-cultural effects:** Socio-cultural effects are not likely to be significant at a national or local level but may be perceived or observed at a small area level, where there are changes impacting small communities nearby. Therefore, the neighbourhood and local study areas are relevant for assessing wider socio-economic effects.

13.4.4.3 The neighbourhood study area is used as an area of best fit to define the communities who will be most likely affected at the small area level. Data zones are the key geography used for producing small area statistics in Scotland. The East Linton and Rural data zone (S01008282) has been identified as the neighbourhood study area which best fits. The tourism and recreation effects are also assessed at the neighbourhood level, where the study area includes the relevant data zone and any identified receptors within a 5 km buffer of the Proposed Development. The local study area refers to the East Lothian local authority area. The national study area refers to Scotland. **Table 13.4** below summarises the relevant study areas for key impacts and effects. The study area boundaries are shown on **Figure 13.1.**

TABLE 13.4 IMPACTS AND EFFECTS AND RESPECTIVE STUDY AREAS

IMPACTS AND EFFECTS	NEIGHBOURHOOD: EAST LINTON & RURAL 06	LOCAL: EAST LOTHIAN	NATIONAL: SCOTLAND
Socio-economic impacts		✓	✓
Land use effects	✓	✓	
Tourism and recreation (5km of RLB) effects	✓	✓	
Wider socio-economic effects	✓	✓	
Socio-cultural effects	✓	✓	

13.5 Baseline Conditions

13.5.1.1 The baseline conditions are explained below. The full baseline data sets are included in **Technical Appendix: 13.1.** The relevant socio-economic data has been summarised and presented against the groups of impacts and effects included in the scope of this assessment. These are socio-economic impacts, land use effects, tourism and recreation effects, wider socio-economic effects, and socio-cultural effects.

13.5.2 Socio-economic

13.5.2.1 **Table 13.3** indicates that socio-economic impacts will be assessed at both the local and national level. Therefore, the baseline environment for socio-economic impacts is described in this section for both East Lothian and Scotland.

Employment and Earnings

13.5.2.2 Scotland has a lower unemployment rate at 3.3% when compared with the rest of the UK (3.8%). Data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) for 2024 shows that gross median weekly earnings for full-time employees, resident in Scotland were £740, slightly above the UK average of £728.30[13] . In East Lothian, residence-based earnings were in line with the Scottish and UK averages, at £737. However, workplace-based earnings were considerably lower, at £644.10. This could suggest that the economy of East Lothian is characterised by employment in typically lower paid sectors, with some residents commuting out of the area to access more highly paid work elsewhere.

Economic Activity

13.5.2.3 The rate of economic inactivity is higher in Scotland at 23.0%, compared to 21.5% in the UK[14]. Economic inactivity includes people who are not in work and not seeking work, and includes for example, students, retired people, carers and long-term sick people. This would suggest a need for inclusive employment practices for people who are economically inactive but who want a job. See **Table 1** in **Technical Appendix 13.1**. Economic activity and employment in the East Lothian area is more positive than the national picture. Economic activity rates in East Lothian are higher than the Scotland average however the unemployment rate is higher than the Scotland average. Economic inactivity is below average, and the rate of economic inactivity due to retirement is higher in both areas. See **Table 1** in **Technical Appendix 13.1.**

Productivity

13.5.2.4 Scotland's economy is valued at £183,471 m GVA per annum in 2023. The East Lothian area contributes £2,351 m GVA per annum, which is a relatively small contribution to Scotland's economy. Scotland tends to have lower rates of productivity than the rest of the UK. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per head is £37,192 in Scotland, which is lower than the UK average of £39,845. In East Lothian, GDP per head falls to £24,554[15]. This would suggest the Scottish economy has a higher concentration of jobs in lower value industries.

Economic Structure

13.5.2.5 **Table 4** in **Technical Appendix 13.1** shows that East Lothian residents are employed in sectors which are broadly reflective of the wider Scottish economy. That said, there is slightly higher representation of residents employed in Financial and Insurance; Professional, scientific & technical; and Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services. In summary, East Lothian residents are a little more likely to be employed in creative, knowledge and service sectors. It is likely that East Lothian has fewer employment opportunities locally and residents are typically employed in higher value jobs outside of the area, for example, in Edinburgh.

[13] ONS (2024), Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.
[14] ONS (2024) Annual Population Survey
[15] ONS (2025), Annual estimates of balanced UK regional gross domestic product.

13.5.2.6 The latest data on the UK Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Economy[16] shows that Scotland has above average employment in the solar sector, compared to the rest of UK with a location quotient of above one, which is higher than the same indicator for England[17]. A location quotient above one, means the solar industry has a higher concentration of employment in Scotland than the rest of the UK (i.e. it accounts for a higher proportion of employment in Scotland than in the rest of the UK). Whilst this data is not available at the local level, East Lothian tends to have above average employment in the sub sectors prevalent in solar (such as construction and, to a lesser extent professional, scientific and technical activities). See **Table 4** in **Technical Appendix 13.1.**

13.5.2.7 In conclusion, the Scottish economy appears to have lower productivity than the UK which could mean a higher concentration of lower value jobs. However, unemployment is low and earnings are generally above UK average, although workplace-based wages in East Lothian are lower than average. Scotland also appears to have above average representation of employment in renewables sectors including solar, which tend to have higher value added. Although these jobs/ workers are less likely to be based in the local study area.

13.5.3 Land Use

13.5.3.1 Land within the site boundary is currently in agricultural use for a mixture of crops and grazing. Land capability for agriculture (LCA) mapping, shown in **Figure 13.3**, shows that the majority of land within the site is classed as LCA 3.2, with smaller pockets of land classed as LCA 3.1 and 6.1. Classes 1 to 3.1 are considered 'prime agricultural land'.

13.5.3.2 The total agricultural area of East Lothian is 128,473 hectares (ha)[18], of which 36,152 ha is classed as prime agricultural land[19]. A total of 46,304 ha is used for growing crops, principally wheat, barley and oilseeds[20].

13.5.4 Tourism and Recreation

13.5.4.1 Tourism is an important sector of the Scottish economy. Visit Scotland does not publish data on the tourism market at the neighbourhood level, but data is published for Edinburgh and the Lothians and is included in **Technical Appendix 13.1**. Data shows there are almost three million domestic visitors and a further 2.4 million international visits to Edinburgh and

[16] Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Economy (LCREE) (2022), Employment data by solar sector and industry, UK.
[17] This data is the most recent available and is from 2022, and therefore may not reflect recent growth in the solar sector in England
[18] Scottish Agricultural Census, June 2024. Available online at: Agricultural+Census+-+June+2024+-+Tables.xlsx
[19] ERM calculations using data from Soil Survey of Scotland Staff (1970-1987), Soil maps of Scotland (partial coverage). Digital version 10 release, James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen. Available online at: Soil maps - James Hutton Institute
[20] Scottish Agricultural Census, June 2024. Available online at: Agricultural+Census+-+June+2024+-+Tables.xlsx

the Lothians per annum in 2022. Visitors spend for both national and international visits equates to more than £2bn per annum[21].

13.5.4.2 Whilst much of this tourism activity will likely be concentrated in Edinburgh, there are tourism and recreation receptors within 5km of the Proposed Development which drive tourism, support livelihoods, and recreation activity within the local and neighbourhood study area. These include:

- Innerwick Castle;
- Dunglass Estate Events;
- Cove Harbour;
- Pease Sands;
- Thurston Manor Leisure Park;
- Cockburnspath Holiday Park;
- Pease Bay Leisure Park;
- Tower Farm Holidays;
- Neuk Farm Holiday Cottages;
- Cove Farm Wigwam Holidays;
- Bransly Hill;
- Bilsdean Waterfall;
- Woodhall Dean Scottish Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve;
- Pease Dean Scottish Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve;
- Skateraw Dean Nature Reserve; and
- Skateraw Lime Kiln.

13.5.4.3 East Lothian Core Path 12 runs through the southern part of the site of the Proposed Development.

13.5.4.4 Much of the land within the site boundary is currently used for growing crops. As set out in **Section 13.2**, the access rights permitted under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 do not apply to land on which crops have been sown or are growing (paragraph 6 (1) (i) of the Act). However, it is understood that some areas within the site boundary are currently used by the public for recreation. During public consultation events held in March 2025, members of the public were given the opportunity to mark up a map of the site to show the routes that

[21] Visit Scotland, Edinburgh and the Lothians. Available online at: Edinburgh and the Lothians - Research I VisitScotland.org

are currently used for walking, dog-walking and horse-riding. This information has informed the assessment in this chapter.

13.5.4.5 Outside the site boundary, National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 76, which connects Berwick-upon-Tweed to Kirkcaldy in Fife, runs along the coast, on minor roads and on the A1. The coast-to-coast Southern Uplands Way runs along Pease Bay and ends at Cockburnspath. Crachoctrestrete Heritage Path is around 2km to the south[22]. **Chapter 11: Traffic and Transport** notes that part of the U220 Dunglass Road through Bilsdean is designated as 'suggested links on quiet roads', and therefore may be used by pedestrians and other non-motorised users.

13.5.4.6 All core paths within 5km of the Proposed Development are mapped on **Figure 13.4.**

13.5.5 Wider Socio-economic

13.5.5.1 **Table 13.4** indicates that wider socio-economic effects could occur at the neighbourhood and local levels which are defined as East Linton and Rural 06 data zone (S01008282) and East Lothian. Therefore, the baseline environment for wider socio-economic effects is described for both the neighbouring communities and East Lothian below.

Key Local Industries

13.5.5.2 The employment profile of East Lothian residents is similar to the rest of Scotland. However, livelihoods of the residents in the neighbourhood study area differs slightly from the local and national area profiles explained in **Section 13.5.2** above. The data suggests that residents in the neighbourhood study area are more likely to rely on traditional local industries such as agriculture, fishing, manufacturing and tourism for their livelihoods. See Table 4 in **Technical Appendix 13.1**. Further information on tourism is provided in **Section 13.5.4** . More information is provided on agriculture below in **Section 13.5.3**.

13.5.5.3 In terms of occupations, there is above average representation of residents employed in skilled trades occupations and slightly above average in Managers, directors and senior officials' occupations (**Table 5** in **Technical Appendix 13.1**). **Table 4** in **Technical Appendix 13.1** shows that residents in the neighbourhood are less likely to be employed in sectors which are most relevant to solar projects, i.e. construction, electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; and professional, scientific and technical activities.

13.5.5.4 Stakeholder feedback from public consultation held in March 2025 indicates that, in the immediate area surrounding the Site of the Proposed Development, there is a high proportion of residents who work from home, including a number of residents who run their own businesses. Stakeholders reported that the quiet, rural setting of their properties is important for their businesses.

[22] ScotWays, Heritage Paths. Available online at: Heritage Path | ScotWays

13.5.6 Socio-cultural

13.5.6.1 As noted in **Table 13.4** above, socio-cultural changes have the potential to affect neighbouring communities and potentially East Lothian. Therefore, the baseline environment for socio-cultural effects is described for both the neighbourhood and East Lothian below.

Population and Demographics

13.5.6.2 The East Linton and Rural 06 data zone have a population of 664 people (based on the Census 2022). There are several residential properties and farmsteads within 1km of the Proposed Development. The wider local population is dispersed across several settlements in this rural setting. The village of Oldhamstocks is the nearest settlement which is adjacent to the red line boundary and approximately 0.5 km from the proposed solar array. Other nearby settlements within the data zone include Innerwick, Skateraw, and Thorntonloch to the north, and Bilsdean, and Dunglass to the east.

13.5.6.3 **Table 7** in **Technical Appendix 13.1** shows that the community has an older age profile. More than half of the local community are aged over 50 (56%) which is higher than East Lothian (46%) and Scotland (41%)[23]. The community has under representation of all age groups below 50. In terms of ethnicity, most of the community is White with less than 1% of the community representing other ethnic groups. The proportion of residents who are considered disabled under the Equality Act is slightly lower than average, despite the area having an ageing population.

Deprivation

13.5.6.4 The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a relative measure of deprivation in Scotland. SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. SIMD is used to understand the outcomes and circumstances of people living in the most deprived areas in Scotland. It ranks each data zone from most deprived to least deprived. Neighbourhoods ranking in the top 20% most deprived areas tend to be a priority for government policy and intervention. **Figure 13.2** shows that the neighbourhood study area does not rank within the most deprived parts of Scotland.

Social Infrastructure

13.5.6.5 Socio-cultural changes caused by the construction of the proposed development could have the potential to affect the availability of social infrastructure and services. Social infrastructure includes local housing supply as well as education and health receptors, summarised below:

13.5.6.6 **Housing:** There are almost 49,000 households in East Lothian, with above average owner occupancy. The average house price is £291,000, considerably higher than the Scottish average (£189,000). The neighbouring community includes less than 300 households and owner occupancy rates are higher than both East Lothian and Scotland. Land Register of

[23] NRS, Census 2022.

Scotland data is not available at the neighbourhood level, however a recent Rightmove search shows there are no properties on the market in the neighbourhood and properties for sale in the surrounding areas are well in excess of the East Lothian and Scotland average house price. There are also very few rental properties on the market nearby.

13.5.6.7 **Education:** There are 36 primary schools in East Lothian, of which one, Innerwick Primary School, is located in the neighbourhood study area. As of September 2023, Innerwick Primary School had a pupil roll of 46, 61.3% of its total capacity of 75[24]. There are seven secondary schools in East Lothian, the nearest of which to the neighbourhood study area is Dunbar Grammar School which, in September 2023, had a pupil roll of 1,120, 93.4% of its total capacity of 1,199.

13.5.6.8 **Health:** In October 2022, there were 15 GP practices within East Lothian, with an average practice list of 7,822 patients. This is larger than the national average practice list of 6,470[25]. There are no GP practices within the neighbourhood study area, with the nearest being Lauderdale Medical Practice and Whitesands Medical Practice in Dunbar[26]. There is a community hospital in Dunbar, however the nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency department is the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

13.6 Assessment of Effects

13.6.1 Construction

Socio-economic

13.6.1.1 Socio-economic impacts are measured in terms of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs and Gross Value Added (GVA) and are assessed at the level of the local study area (East Lothian) and Scotland. Estimates of jobs and GVA are derived from project capital expenditure (CAPEX). The construction period is anticipated to be from 30th April 2030 to 31st October 2031 which would be an 18-month construction period.

Employment

13.6.1.2 The CAPEX has been derived using information provided by Voltalia (the Applicant) and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero[27] which provides an estimated construction cost per kilowatt (KW) of solar capacity. Applying this proxy to the project and uplifting the costs into 2025 prices, the total CAPEX has been calculated as £78.6m. Based on research from existing studies[28][29] the CAPEX has been split across three categories; Materials (53%), labour (28%) and, Equipment and other costs (19%). The CAPEX spend categories have been

[24] Scottish Government (2024), School Estate Statistics.
[25] Public Health Scotland (2022), GP Workforce and Practice List Sizes.
[26] NHS Inform (2025), Scotland's Service Directory.
[27] Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (2023) Contracts for Difference. Methodology used to set Administrative Strike Prices for CfD Allocation Round 6
[28] NREL (2023) Clean Energy Employment Impacts. Online. Available at < Clean Energy Employment Impacts >
[29] Ethos Urban (2023) Goulburn River Solar Farm. Online. Available at < Appendix-19-Economic-Impact-Assessment.pdf >

assigned a Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code and relevant FTE and GVA effects and multipliers from the Scottish Government input-output tables[30], which are then used to estimate direct, indirect, and induced effects. There is limited UK evidence or guidance on the solar supply chain. Based on professional judgement, the assessment assumes 100% of CAPEX will be spent in Scotland, with 35% being in East Lothian and 65% will be spent in the rest of Scotland. The assumed split of CAPEX between local and national spend is based upon recent studies[31].

13.6.1.3 Based on the method described above, **Table 13.5** shows that the construction of the Proposed Development would create a total of 764 direct FTE person years of employment over the 18 month construction period, with a further 353 indirect and 429 induced person years in the supply chain. Of these, 267 direct person years, 124 indirect person years, and 183 induced person years would be within the local study area. Indirect employment refers to jobs created as a result of linked purchases within the supply chain, and induced employment refers to those created by local spend by construction workers.

TABLE 13.5 HEADLINE CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT IMPACT (PERSON YEARS)

TYPE	LOCAL	NATIONAL	TOTAL
Direct FTEs	267	497	764
Indirect FTEs	124	230	353
Induced FTEs	183	246	429
Total	**574**	**972**	**1,546**

Source: ERM 2025 (may not sum due to rounding)

13.6.1.4 The sensitivity of the labour market in the local study area is assessed as low, as the current labour supply force in the construction and manufacturing sectors are capable of absorbing the impact. The magnitude of the impact is assessed as moderate. As there would be temporary alterations to existing industries (construction and manufacturing), the new FTEs would crudely account for 2.7% of the manufacturing and construction sectors (estimated in the baseline at 9,736 employees in 2023). This results in a minor beneficial effect that is not significant.

13.6.1.5 Construction would create a further 497 direct, 230 indirect and 246 induced FTE person years of employment elsewhere in Scotland. The sensitivity of the labour market is assessed as low, as. The magnitude of the impact is assessed as negligible as there would be a barely perceptible alteration to existing industry sectors (manufacturing and construction) from direct and indirect jobs. This results in a negligible effect that would not be significant.

[30] Scottish Government (2024) Supply, Use and Input-Output Tables: 1998 – 2021. Online. Available at < Supply, Use and Input-Output Tables: 1998-2021 - gov.scot >
[31] Ethos Urban (2023) Goulburn River Solar Farm.

GVA

13.6.1.6 **Table 13.6** shows that the construction of the Proposed Development would generate a total of £35.2m in direct GVA over the 18 month construction period, with a further £13.5m in indirect GVA and £22.2m in induced GVA in the supply chain. Of this, £12.3m of direct GVA, £4.7m of indirect GVA, and £7.8m of induced GVA would be within the local study area.

TABLE 13.6 HEADLINE CONSTRUCTION GVA IMPACTS

TYPE	LOCAL	NATIONAL	TOTAL
Direct GVA (£m)	£12.3	£22.9	£35.3
Indirect GVA (£m)	£4.7	£8.8	£13.5
Induced GVA (£m)	£7.8	£14.4	£22.2
Total (£m)	**£24.8**	**£46.1**	**£70.9**

Source: ERM 2025 (may not sum due to rounding)

13.6.1.7 For impacts associated with GVA within the local study area, the sensitivity of the baseline is assessed as low as the local economy is receptive to change and has the ability to absorb the change. The magnitude of the impact is assessed as negligible as there would be a slight alteration to the GVA, with a total of £24.8m added to a GVA estimated at £2,055m (2022) – accounting for just 1.2% of the total GVA. This results in a negligible effect that would not be significant.

13.6.1.8 Construction would generate a further £22.9m direct, £8.8m indirect and £14.4m induced GVA elsewhere in Scotland. In the national study area, the sensitivity of the baseline is assessed as low, as the economy of Scotland is receptive to change and can absorb the change. The magnitude of the effect is assessed as negligible as there would be a barely perceptible alteration to the existing GVA through the addition of £46.1m during the construction of the Development. This results in a negligible effect that would not be significant.

Land Use

13.6.1.9 Construction of the Proposed Development would require the temporary use of 174.6 ha of agricultural land for a period of 40 years. **Table 13.7** provides a breakdown of the area of land that would be required temporarily by LCA classification. Approximately 12% of the land required, an area of 20.9 ha, is LCA class 3.1, and therefore considered 'prime agricultural land'. The requirement accounts for 0.2% of all agricultural land in East Lothian and approximately 0.05% of all prime agricultural land in East Lothian.

TABLE 13.7 LAND REQUIREMENTS BY LCA CLASS

LAND CAPABILITY FOR AGRICULTURE CLASS	DESCRIPTION	APPROXIMATE AREA REQUIRED TEMPORARILY (HA)
3.1	Land capable of producing consistently high yields of a narrow range of crops and/ or moderate yields of a wider range. Short grass leys are common.	20.9
3.2	Land capable of average production though high yields of barley, oats and grass can be obtained. Grass leys are common.	151.8
6.1	Land capable of use as rough grazings with a high proportion of palatable plants.	1.9
Total prime agricultural land requirement:		20.9

Source: ERM calculations based on Soil maps of Scotland (partial coverage).

13.6.1.10 **Chapter 2: Site Design and Evolution** describes the site selection process, which sought to minimise the impact on prime agricultural land. The process included a high-level appraisal of the differing agricultural land capability of potential sites. While the land required is all classed as prime agricultural land, the site of the Proposed Development was agreed upon as this area typically yielded fewer and lower grade crops than other areas within the wider estate.

13.6.1.11 While this land would be required for the 40-year lifespan of the Proposed Development, following decommissioning, the photovoltaic (PV) modules, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure would be removed, and the land would be reinstated. As the land would be returned to agricultural use, there would be no permanent impact on the availability of land for agriculture. There is some evidence that use of agricultural land for solar farms can give soils the opportunity to recover from intensive use, with the potential for longer term benefits[32]. Impacts on soils are outside the scope of this chapter and are assessed in **Chapter 10: Geology and Soils.**

13.6.1.12 As the land that would be lost temporarily is mostly LCA class 3.2, with only a small area of class 3.1, the sensitivity of the resource is assessed as medium. The area of land that would be required temporarily comprises a very small proportion of the total agricultural area of East Lothian (0.2%), and approximately 0.05% of the prime agricultural land in East Lothian. The loss of this land would be reversible on decommissioning and reinstatement of the land, and it is expected that there would be no permanent loss. The magnitude of the impact is

[32] Solar Energy UK (2024), Factsheet: Solar Farms and Agricultural Land. Available online at: FactSheet: Solar Farms and Agricultural Land 2024 | Final

therefore assessed to be low. This results in a minor adverse effect on the availability of agricultural land in East Lothian that would not be significant.

Tourism and Recreation

13.6.1.13 East Lothian Core Path 12, which runs between Dunglass and Oldhamstocks, passes through the site of the Proposed Development. It is proposed that there would be solar PV modules on one parcel of land (Field 9) to the immediate north of Core Path 12. It is not anticipated that any closures or diversions of Core Path 12 would be required during construction. **Chapter 11: Traffic and Transport** reports that a banksman would be on Site to communicate with users of the core path and on-site vehicles to ensure the continuous safe usage of the core path network throughout construction. Other measures that could be used to maintain safe access for non-motorised users include provision of signage, fencing or barriers adjacent to the core path, temporary re-routing of the core path (if required), and an active management plan for crossing points and shared use access routes.

13.6.1.14 As set out in **Section 13.2**, the access rights permitted under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 do not apply to land on which crops have been sown or are growing (paragraph 6 (1) (i) of the Act). It is understood from information gathered through public consultation that land within the site area is used by the local community for recreation. As much of the land is currently used for growing crops, it is assumed that this existing recreational use of the land is limited to East Lothian Core Path 12, field boundaries and areas of woodland within the site. Where it applies, the right of responsible access would be maintained as far as is practicable, however during construction it is proposed that public access to some parts of the site would be restricted for safety and security purposes.

13.6.1.15 The assessment has considered the potential for effects on amenity for users of core paths from a combination of noise, visual and traffic effects. **Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual** reports that there would be significant adverse visual effects for a receptor group comprising local roads, core paths and homes within 0.4 km of the Site, which includes East Lothian Core Path 12. **Chapter 11: Traffic and Transport** notes that there could be a decrease in amenity for non-motorised users of East Lothian Core Path 12 and the U220 Dunglass Road through Bilsdean, but concludes that, after mitigation, this would not be significant.

13.6.1.16 **Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration** reports that there would not be any significant adverse effects associated with the construction of the Proposed Development. The noise assessment focuses on Noise Sensitive Receptors (NSRs), all of which are residential properties, and does not assess effects on core paths. However, any noise associated with construction activity would be temporary and short-term, and recreational users of core paths and other outdoor attractions are transitory, reducing their sensitivity to any potential noise impacts on the core path network.

13.6.1.17 In terms of access, **Chapter 11: Traffic and Transport** concludes that the increase in traffic on local roads associated with construction would be negligible in terms of traffic flows and existing capacity. Therefore, it is not anticipated that there would be any impact on access to tourism and recreation receptors during construction.

13.6.1.18 Given the relative importance of tourism to the local economy and existing use of land within the site for recreation, the sensitivity of tourism and recreation receptors within the 5km study area is assessed as medium. As it is proposed to keep Core Path 12 open throughout

construction, and it is not expected that there would be any significant noise effects, the magnitude of the impact is assessed as low. This results in a minor adverse effect that would not be significant.

Wider Socio-economic Effects

Agriculture and food production

13.6.1.19 The baseline demonstrates the importance of the agricultural sector to the local economy, with 11.3% of employees in the neighbourhood study area employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing, compared with 2% in East Lothian and 1.6% across Scotland as a whole. **Table 13.7** shows that the construction of the Proposed Development would require the temporary loss of 174.6 ha of agricultural land, approximately 12% of which is classed as prime agricultural land, for a period of 40 years. It is anticipated that the land would be returned to agricultural use post-decommissioning, and so there would be no permanent loss. The land required comprises approximately 0.05% of the 36,154 ha of prime agricultural land available in East Lothian.

13.6.1.20 There is the potential for wider impacts on the agricultural sector in East Lothian and the neighbourhood study area, on food production, and on the security of food supplies. However, it is understood that the crops currently grown on this land are used primarily in animal feed, rather than in food production, which reduces the direct impact on the security of food supply. While some small parts of the site (for example the area where the BESS will be located) will be removed from any agricultural use for the lifespan of the project, there may be opportunities for some agricultural uses, such as grazing of sheep, to continue around the solar array. Industry bodies such as Solar Energy UK recognise that solar farms can have multiple, simultaneous uses, supporting grazing and improving biodiversity alongside generating renewable energy[33]. Farm diversification, including the use of agricultural land for solar projects, can also help to support farm profitability and viability.

13.6.1.21 Given the importance of agriculture to the local economy, the sensitivity of the sector in the neighbourhood study area and East Lothian is assessed as medium. The loss of agricultural land would be small – at 0.2% of the total agricultural area of East Lothian, and approximately 0.05% of prime agricultural land in East Lothian – and temporary, for a period of 40 years. It is therefore expected that the impact on employment and productivity in the neighbourhood and East Lothian agricultural sector would be minimal. As the land is currently used to produce crops primarily for animal feed, the impact on food production and security is also expected to be small. Overall, the magnitude of the impact on the wider agricultural sector in the neighbourhood study area and East Lothian is assessed as low. This results in a minor adverse effect that would not be significant.

Tourism

13.6.1.22 Employment in tourism-related sectors is also above average in the neighbourhood study area, at 8.4% in the accommodation and food sector compared with 6.5% in East Lothian and 6.9% for Scotland as a whole, and 3.8% in the arts, entertainment, recreation and other services sector compared with 3.5% in East Lothian and 2.7% in Scotland as a whole. Direct

[33] Solar Energy UK, Solar farms no threat to food security, 15th May 2024. Available online at: Solar farms 'no threat to food security' Solar Energy UK

and indirect impacts on tourism receptors are discussed below. The assessment has not identified any significant effects for tourism and recreation receptors within 5km of the Proposed Development.

13.6.1.23 Much of the tourism activity in East Lothian is concentrated outside of the study area, in and around the coastal towns of North Berwick and Dunbar, and would not be impacted directly by the construction of the Proposed Development. While its attractive rural countryside is recognised as an important element of East Lothian's visitor offer, an evidence paper produced in support of the emerging East Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP) 2 notes that tourism in the area is driven by day trips to beaches and coastal locations rather than overnight visits, with 25% of visitors travelling from Edinburgh[34].

13.6.1.24 Evidence from the East Lothian Visitor Survey (2021) shows that the most popular type of accommodation for overnight visitors to East Lothian was caravan parks and camping (33%), followed by rented accommodation (24%) and hotels (19%)[35]. A study of the East Lothian visitor accommodation sector, also conducted in 2021, found that a key issue facing the tourism sector is the lack of large hotels or resorts in the area[36]. The need for new hotel development to encourage overnight stays was raised as one of the key issues in relation to tourism, raised in consultation on the emerging LDP[37].

13.6.1.25 Employment in the tourism sector is often seasonal, and the employment created by the construction of the Proposed Development could introduce additional competition for workers. However, the socio-economic assessment set out above shows that there is capacity within the East Lothian construction and manufacturing sector to absorb the additional demand, and so it is not expected that there would be any largescale displacement of workers from tourism-related sectors.

13.6.1.26 There could be some additional demand for tourism accommodation associated with an incoming construction workforce. It is estimated that the construction of the Proposed Development would create a total of 764 direct FTE jobs over the 18 month construction programme, of which 267 would be taken up by workers living in East Lothian and 497 by workers living elsewhere in Scotland. At the peak of construction, it is expected that there would be an average of up to 150 workers required on site each day. Assuming a similar split, this would equate to an average of approximately 96 workers from outside of East Lothian working on site each day.

13.6.1.27 It is anticipated that many of these workers would travel from the neighbouring local authority areas of the Scottish Borders, Midlothian, and the City of Edinburgh, which is within one hour's travel time of the site, and would therefore not require accommodation in the neighbourhood study area. However, there may be a smaller portion of the workforce that would travel from further afield and would require temporary accommodation nearby. The

[34] East Lothian Council (2023), Local Development Plan 2: Evidence Report. Available online at: Draft Evidence Report
[35] East Lothian Council (2023), Local Development Plan 2: Background Paper – Tourism. Available online at: ELC 015 Tourism Background Paper | East Lothian Council
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.

baseline information set out in **Section 13.5.4** shows that there are a number of holiday parks and self-catering complexes located within 5km of the Proposed Development.

13.6.1.28 Should the peak of construction coincide with the peak summer tourist season, any increase in demand for tourist accommodation could result in displacement of tourists, with negative knock-on effects for hospitality and tourism-related businesses in East Lothian. Outside of the peak season, there could be positive effects for businesses from the additional demand. However, the proportion of construction workers expected to require accommodation locally is small.

13.6.1.29 Given the above average proportion of employees working in tourism-related sectors of the economy, the sensitivity of the tourism sector in the neighbourhood study area and East Lothian is assessed as medium. As there would be no significant effects for tourism and recreation receptors, and as the additional demand for tourism accommodation is expected to be relatively small, the magnitude of the impact on the East Lothian tourism sector as a whole is assessed as low. This results in a minor adverse effect that would not be significant.

Socio-cultural

Population change and access to services

13.6.1.30 As discussed above, it is estimated that the construction of the Proposed Development would create a total of 764 direct FTE jobs over the 18 month construction programme, of which 267 would be taken up by workers living in East Lothian and 497 by workers living elsewhere in Scotland. This equates to an average of up to 150 workers required on site each day at the peak of construction.

13.6.1.31 It is anticipated that many of these workers would travel from the neighbouring local authority areas of the Scottish Borders, Midlothian, and the City of Edinburgh, which is within one hour's travel time of the site and would therefore not require accommodation in the neighbourhood study area. There is very little housing available locally and it is considered that any workers travelling from further afield who would require temporary housing would be more likely to use tourism accommodation (assessed above).

13.6.1.32 As the construction programme is relatively short at 18 months, it is not anticipated that construction workers moving to the area temporarily would bring their families with them. This reduces the likely impact on local demographics and on access to services including housing, health and education. The sensitivity of the population in the neighbourhood study area and East Lothian is assessed as low. The magnitude of the impact is assessed as negligible. This results in a negligible effect that would not be significant.

Sense of place

13.6.1.33 While any impact on local demographics or service provision is likely to be small, the construction of the Proposed Development could affect local identity and the sense of place within the neighbourhood study area due to changes in land use, impacts on traditional local industries, and environmental effects such as temporary increases in noise and changes in the visual environment.

13.6.1.34 As noted above, agriculture is an important employer locally and forms a key aspect of the local identity within the neighbourhood study area. It is not expected that there would be a significant effect on the agricultural sector, although there would be a temporary, reversible loss of agricultural land associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development that would be significant (discussed under Land Use, below).

13.6.1.35 **Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual Report** outlines that there would be significant adverse visual effects for a receptor group comprising local roads and core paths within 0.4km of the Site, including East Lothian Core Path 12[38]. Beyond the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development, visual effects would be small or negligible, and therefore not significant. Effects on landscape character are also assessed as not significant. **Chapter 11 Traffic and Transport** notes that there could be a decrease in amenity for non-motorised users of East Lothian Core Path 12 and the U220 Dunglass Road through Bilsdean, but concludes that, after mitigation, this would not be significant. **Chapter 12 Noise** reports that there would not be any significant adverse effects associated with the construction of the Proposed Development.

13.6.1.36 The temporary change in land use from agricultural land, in combination with adverse visual effects for users of core paths and local roads within 0.4km of the Site, could result in localised effects on the sense of place for residents of and visitors to the area during the construction of the Proposed Development. However, significant adverse visual effects would be restricted to a small number of receptors in close proximity to the site, and so any effect would be highly localised. It is not expected there would be an impact on sense of place elsewhere in the neighbourhood study area (East Linton and Rural data zone).

13.6.1.37 Given the concerns expressed by stakeholders regarding the sense of place in the area, the sensitivity of the local population of East Linton and Rural is assessed as medium. As the impact would be highly localised, the magnitude of the impact on sense of place and community identity in the neighbourhood study area as a whole is assessed as low. This results in a minor adverse effect that would not be significant.

13.6.2 Operation and Maintenance

Socio-economic

Employment

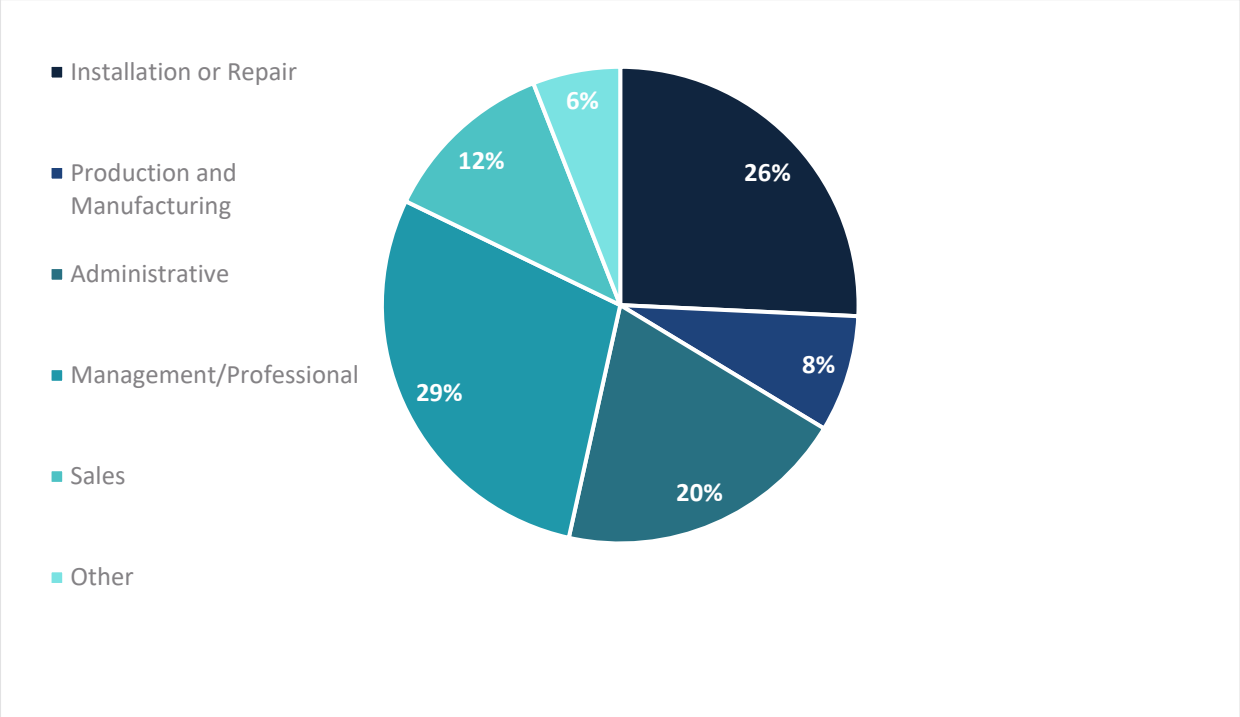
13.6.2.1 It is proposed that the Development would be operational for a period of 40 years with the first full year of operation being 2032. The operational expenditure (OPEX) has been estimated using information provided by the Applicant and qualified using professional judgement (from WSP) and adjusted for inflation. On this basis, the average annual OPEX is estimated to be £775,880 per annum.

13.6.2.2 The breakdown of potential employment opportunities has been derived from existing literature and sources which shows a diverse skill range of employment from entry level

[38] There is a small number of residential properties within this area, however views from private homes are not within the scope of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and are instead considered in **Appendix 6.5 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment.**

jobs such as a solar installer to an advanced level job such as a solar project manager[39]. **Chart 13.1**. shows the National Solar Jobs Census (2023[40]) occupational profile for operations and maintenance of solar farms. Operations and maintenance roles would require specialists to monitor the system performance in order to assess faults, determine and schedule maintenance, solar cleaning and data analysis[41].

CHART 13.1 SOLAR OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE JOBS BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY



Source: IREC, 2024

13.6.2.3 **Table 13.8** shows the estimated employment figures for the Proposed Development in the first full year of operation (2032). It is estimated that the operation and maintenance phase would create a total of seven direct FTEs, with a further three indirect FTEs and five induced FTEs in the supply chain. Of these, it is expected that the majority (13 of the 15) would be retained within the local study area.

TABLE 13.8 HEADLINE OPERATIONAL EMPLOYMENT IMPACTS

TYPE	LOCAL	NATIONAL	TOTAL
Direct FTEs	6	1	7

[39] Interstate Renewable Energy Council (2025) Solar Career Map. Online. Available at < Home | Solar Career Map >
[40] Interstate Renewable Energy Council (2024) National Solar Jobs Census 2023. Online. Available at < Census Solar Job Trends - Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) >
[41] Solar Energy Scotland (2022) Solar Skills Scotland – The job creation potential of Scottish solar. Online. Available at < Solar-Skills-Scotland-Briefing_May2022.pdf >

TYPE	LOCAL	NATIONAL	TOTAL
Indirect FTEs	2	0	3
Induced FTEs	4	1	5
Total	**13**	**2**	**15**

Source: ERM 2025 (may not sum due to rounding)

13.6.2.4 In the local study area, the baseline sensitivity is assessed as low as there is an existing supply of labour in the area, in the sectors that would be required. The magnitude of the impact is assessed as negligible, as there would be barely perceptible alterations to existing industries and not big enough to create structural economic change, with a total of 6 jobs in the local area being created in sectors that account for 2,150 jobs as per the baseline data (in 2023) – accounting for less than 1% of the current baseline. While long-term operational employment directly and in the supply chain would bring benefits to the local economy, the overall effect is assessed as negligible and therefore not significant.

13.6.2.5 Operation and maintenance would create a further one direct and one induced FTE job elsewhere in Scotland. Nationally it has been estimated that there is a demand of 1,563 estimated operations and maintenance jobs in Scotland in the solar industry in 2025 [42]. As such the sensitivity of the national study area is assessed as low as the two operational and maintenance jobs would account for just 0.1% of the total national demand. Additionally, the national economy is anticipated to have the ability to absorb change initiated by job creation without altering characteristics. The magnitude of the impact is assessed as negligible as there would be a barely perceptible change to the existing sectors. Additionally, while recent reports show that people employed in the solar industry in Scotland have the necessary skills, there is a "significant shortage of skilled labour[43]". While this may be the case, it is anticipated that with some adaption the existing training provision can provide the skills to those who do not have existing direct solar industry experience. Therefore, this results in a negligible effect that would not be significant.

GVA

13.6.2.6 **Table 13.9** shows that the operation and maintenance of the Proposed Development would generate a total of £0.35m in direct GVA annually, with a further £0.08m in indirect GVA and £0.17m in induced GVA in the supply chain. Of this, the majority (£0.30m of direct GVA, £0.07m of indirect GVA, and £0.14m of induced GVA) would be retained within the local study area.

[42] Climate Exchange (2024) Mapping current and future workforce and skills requirements in Scotland's solar industry. Online. Available at < Mapping current and future workforce and skills requirements in Scotland's solar industry >
[43] Climate Exchange (2024) Mapping current and future workforce and skills requirements in Scotland's solar industry. Online. Available at < Mapping current and future workforce and skills requirements in Scotland's solar industry >

TABLE 13.9 HEADLINE OPERATIONAL GVA IMPACTS

TYPE	LOCAL	NATIONAL	TOTAL
Direct GVA (£mn)	£0.30	£0.05	£0.35
Indirect GVA (£mn)	£0.07	£0.01	£0.08
Induced GVA (£mn)	£0.14	£0.02	£0.17
Total (£mn)	**£0.52**	**£0.08**	**£0.60**

Source: ERM 2025 (may not sum due to rounding)

13.6.2.7 In relation to GVA, the sensitivity of the baseline in the local study area is assessed as low as the local economy is receptive and can absorb change. The magnitude of the impact is assessed as negligible as there would be a barely perceptible alteration to the GVA, with a total of direct GVA of £0.35m to a GVA per annum added to a GVA estimated at £2,055m as per the baseline data (2022). While this would be a benefit to the local economy, the effect is assessed as negligible and therefore not significant.

13.6.2.8 Operation and maintenance would generate a further £0.05m direct, £0.01m indirect and £0.02 induced GVA elsewhere in Scotland. The sensitivity of the national study area is assessed as low as the national economy is receptive to and can absorb change. The magnitude of the impact is assessed as negligible as there would be a barely perceptible alteration to the existing GVA through the addition of £0.6m per annum during the operation and maintenance of the Proposed Development. This results in a negligible effect that would not be significant.

Land Use

13.6.2.9 The temporary loss of land required for the Proposed Development would occur during the construction phase and is therefore assessed as a construction effect. There would be no additional impacts on land use during operation.

Tourism and Recreation

13.6.2.10 It is not anticipated that there would be any closures or diversions to core paths during operation. The right of responsible access (see **Section 13.2**) would be maintained as far as is practicable, and public access to land within the Site would be maintained where this it is safe to do so. There may be certain areas of the site where access would be restricted for safety and security purposes.

13.6.2.11 There may be a visual impact for users of East Lothian Core Path 12, and any non-motorised users using particular roads within 0.4km of the Site. These are assessed in **Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual**. **Chapter 12 Noise and Vibrations** reports that there would not be any significant noise effects during operation, therefore there would not be any effect on amenity for users of tourism and recreation receptors from a combination of noise and visual effects.

13.6.2.12 There are alternative routes for walking available within the local area, however as land within the Site is currently used by the local community for recreation the sensitivity of the receptor is assessed as medium. As access to land within the site would be maintained as far as practicable during the operational phase, the magnitude of the impact is assessed as low. This results in a minor adverse effect that would not be significant.

Wider Socio-economic

13.6.2.13 Wider socio-economic effects on the agriculture sector associated with the temporary loss of land required for the Proposed Development would occur during the construction phase and are therefore assessed as construction effects. There would be no additional impacts on the agriculture or tourism sectors during operation.

Socio-cultural

Population change and access to services

13.6.2.14 It is estimated that, once in operation, the Proposed Development would create a total of 7 direct FTE jobs, of which 6 would be taken up by workers living in East Lothian and 1 by workers living elsewhere in Scotland. It is anticipated that these workers would be likely to travel from the neighbouring local authority areas of the Scottish Borders, Midlothian, and the City of Edinburgh, which is within one hour's travel time of the site, and would therefore not seek to relocate to the neighbourhood study area. As the number of jobs created is small, and there is already a workforce locally with the relevant skills, it is not expected that there would be any impact on the local population, or on community services such as health and education.

Sense of place

13.6.2.15 While it is not expected that there would be any impact on local demographics or on service provision, once in operation the Proposed Development could affect local identity and the sense of place within the neighbourhood study area due to changes in land use, impacts on traditional local industries, and changes in the visual environment.

13.6.2.16 As noted above, agriculture is an important employer locally and forms a key aspect of the local identity within the neighbourhood study area. The temporary loss of agricultural land would occur during the construction phase, however the potential knock-on effect of this for the local sense of place would be qualitatively different during operation due to the visual impact associated with the solar PV modules.

13.6.2.17 As discussed in the construction assessment, **Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual Report** reports that there would be significant adverse visual effects for a receptor group comprising local roads and core paths within 0.4km of the Site, including East Lothian Core Path 12[44]. Views of the solar PV modules from some of these receptors would be increasingly screened as proposed landscape mitigation grows. Beyond the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development, visual effects would be small or negligible, and

[44] There is a small number of residential properties within this area, however views from private homes are not within the scope of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and are instead considered in **Appendix 6.5 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment.**

therefore not significant. Effects on landscape character are also assessed as not significant. **Chapter 12 Noise** and **Chapter 11 Traffic and Transport** report that there would not be any significant adverse effects associated with the operation of the Proposed Development.

13.6.2.18 Given concerns expressed by some stakeholders regarding the sense of place in the area, the sensitivity of the local population of East Linton and Rural is assessed as medium. As the impact would be highly localised, the magnitude of the impact on sense of place and community identity in the neighbourhood study area as a whole is assessed as low. This results in a minor adverse effect that would not be significant.

13.6.3 Decommissioning

13.6.3.1 For most aspects of the assessment, any effects arising from the decommissioning of the Proposed Development are expected to be comparable to, or less than, those arising during construction.

13.6.3.2 Following decommissioning, it is anticipated that it should be possible for the majority of land required for the construction of the Proposed Development to be returned to agricultural use.

13.6.4 Cumulative Effects

13.6.4.1 There is the potential for the Proposed Development, in combination with other projects, to result in cumulative effects. The assessment has considered the potential for cumulative effects as a result of the Proposed Development in combination with the projects listed in **Table 4.5** in **Volume 1 Chapter 4: EIA Methodology**, all of which are within a 5km buffer of the Proposed Development. In addition, the assessment has considered the cumulative effects of the Proposed Development in combination with the proposed Crystal Rig solar development. Crystal Rig is outside the 5km buffer but has been included in the assessment due to the potential cumulative effect on agricultural land associated with solar projects.

Socio-economics, Wider Socio-economic Effects and Socio-Cultural Effects

13.6.4.2 Estimated employment projections were not publicly available at the time of writing for any of the cumulative developments, with the exception of the proposed Bowshiel Solar and BESS project which is expected to have a similar labour requirement to the Proposed Development. There could be benefits for the local economy associated with construction employment and GVA from the construction of the Proposed Development in combination with the cumulative projects. However, should multiple projects come forward concurrently, there is the potential for adverse effects such as displacement of economic activity that could arise due to additional demand on the local labour market, or knock-on socio-cultural effects as a result of demographic change and additional demand for services from incoming construction workers.

13.6.4.3 The cumulative projects considered in this assessment are all at different stages in the planning and development process, and so it is unlikely that the peak construction period associated with the Proposed Development would coincide with the peak construction period for other cumulative schemes, which reduces the potential for significant cumulative effects. The exception to this is the Bowshiel Solar and BESS project, which currently has a

similar timescale and construction programme to the Proposed Development. As both projects are being developed by the Applicant, it is likely that construction activity can be planned and managed to mitigate the potential cumulative effect on the local labour market.

Land Use

13.6.4.4 There could also be cumulative effects on land use due to the land required temporarily or permanently for other schemes in planning. However, most of the cumulative schemes that have been considered as part of this assessment are BESS or grid connection projects which generally do not permanently require large areas of prime agricultural land. While there may be some short-term, temporary loss of agricultural land during construction, and very small permanent losses associated with BESS and other associated infrastructure, these are not likely to be significant.

13.6.4.5 Two other solar PV developments have been considered – Solar and BESS and Crystal Rig Solar, both of which are located in the Scottish Borders local authority area. The site of the proposed Crystal Rig Solar development is within the existing Crystal Rig Wind Farm, and so the construction and operation of the development would not require any land currently in agricultural use. The EIAR for the proposed Bowshiel Solar and BESS shows that the development is located on land that is primarily LCA 4.1, with a smaller area (approximately 1.2 ha) of LCA 3.1. There would therefore be a cumulative, temporary requirement for 22.1 ha of prime agricultural land across the Proposed Development and the proposed Bowshiel Solar and BESS. This represents a very small proportion of the prime agricultural land in East Lothian, the Scottish Borders, and Scotland as a whole, and would therefore not be significant.

Tourism and Recreation

13.6.4.6 Details of direct and indirect impacts on core paths, land used for recreation, and other tourism and recreation receptors were confirmed not publicly available at the time of writing for any of the cumulative developments, with the exception of the proposed Bowshiel Solar and BESS project. The EIAR for the Bowshiel Solar and BESS project concludes that there would be a minor adverse effect on tourism and recreation during construction, and a negligible effect during operation, due to amenity effects for users of core paths and potential restrictions on access to land currently used for recreation. It is not expected that there would be any temporary or permanent closures of core paths. As there are numerous alternative routes and areas available for walking within East Lothian and the Scottish Borders, it is not expected that there would be a significant cumulative effect.

13.6.5 Mitigation

13.6.5.1 Mitigation was embedded into the design of the Proposed Development through the site selection process, which sought to minimise the impact on prime agricultural land. The process included a high-level appraisal of the differing agricultural land capability of potential sites. **Chapter 3: Development Description** provides further details of the mitigation embedded into the design of the Proposed Development

13.6.5.2 Further relevant mitigation measures are set out in the outline Construction Environment Management Plan (oCEMP) (**Technical Appendix 3.1: oCEMP**). The oCEMP comprises good practice methods and guidelines, including UK and Scottish guidance on good practice

for construction of infrastructure projects. These are established and effective measures to which the applicant will be committed to throughout the planning consent and duration of the Proposed Development.

13.6.5.3 A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be prepared and submitted to East Lothian Council for approval Prior to the commencement of construction works on Site. **Chapter 11 Traffic and Transport** provides details of the likely measures to be included in the CTMP, including in relation to the management of core paths.

13.6.5.4 No further mitigation is proposed to address the effects assessed in this chapter.

13.6.6 Residual Effects

13.6.6.1 It is not expected that there would be any residual significant land use, socio-economics, tourism or recreation effects.

13.7 Summary and Conclusions

13.7.1.1 The construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development will create employment and GVA, both directly and within the supply chain, which would benefit the local economy within East Lothian. While operational employment would be small, the jobs created would be for the duration of the operational phase, i.e. 40 years, and would therefore be a long-term benefit to the local economy.

13.7.1.2 There would be temporary loss of agricultural land within the site boundary for a period of 40 years, however this would be reversible on decommissioning and it is not expected that there would be any significant adverse effect on food production or the wider agricultural sector. There may be opportunities for some grazing to continue around the solar array during the lifespan of the project.

13.7.1.3 There would be effects on amenity for users of core paths in the immediate area surrounding the site during construction. Amenity effects would not be significant and it is not anticipated that there would be any significant effects for the tourism sector more widely, including as a result of additional demand from construction workers for tourist accommodation.

13.7.1.4 There is the potential for socio-cultural effects associated with temporary changes in demographics and additional demand for services during construction, and changes in local identity and sense of place associated with changes in land use, impacts on traditional local industries, and environmental effects during construction and operation. However, the assessment has concluded that these effects would not be significant.

13.7.1.5 The findings of the assessment are summarised in **Table 13.10**.

TABLE 13.10 SUMMARY OF EFFECTS

SCOPE	POTENTIALEFFECTS	STUDY AREA	SIGNIFICANCE	
			CONSTRUCTION	O&M
Socio-economic	Direct, indirect, and induced employment created by the project	Local	Minor beneficial	Negligible
		National	Negligible	Negligible
	Direct, indirect, and induced productivity gains measured as GVA	Local	Negligible	Negligible
		National	Negligible	Negligible
Land use	Temporary loss of agricultural land	Site area	Minor adverse	N/A
Tourism and recreation	Effects on tourism and recreation receptors (quality and access) including core paths, open spaces, and accommodation	Site area plus 5km	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
Wider socio-economic	Effects on industries arising from socio-economic impacts, specifically agriculture and food production	Neighbourhood	Minor adverse	N/A
		Local	Minor adverse	N/A
	Effects on industries arising from socio-economic impacts, specifically tourism	Neighbourhood	Minor adverse	N/A
		Local	Minor adverse	N/A
Socio-cultural	Local population change and impacts on access to local services	Neighbourhood	Negligible	N/A
		Local	Negligible	N/A
	Change in local identity and sense of place	Neighbourhood	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
		Local	Minor adverse	Minor adverse