

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017**

**Application Reference:** PA/SCR/2025/1454

**Address:** land south-east of Firtree Farm, East Marsh Road, Goxhill

**Proposal:** EIA screening request for :

- A) Hardstanding and compound of approximately 21,060m<sup>2</sup> (2.1ha) for welfare, equipment laydown, drill entry point, retention pond, topsoil and subsoil storage bunds, and parking.
- B) Two temporary access tracks linking the compound to the local road network.
- C) Area of underground development within the compound that incorporates the insertion of approximately 50m of 42" diameter metal casing to guide the drill through unstable soils.
- D) Installation of a section of 3 to 4.5" (outer diameter) steel pipe sleeve through the whole length of the HDD under the river Humber.

**Has the LPA adopted a Screening Opinion for this proposal?**

YES  NO

<b>1</b>	Is the proposal a Schedule 1 Project?	NO X	<b>Go to question 2</b>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>2</b>	Is the application listed in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regs 2017?	NO <input type="checkbox"/>		YES X	<i>No specific reference to horizontal drilling in Sch2, most relevant section is:  2(d) Deep Drilling, in particular – (i) geothermal drilling; (ii) drilling for the storage of nuclear waste material; (iii) drilling for water supplies; with the exception of drillings for investigating the stability of the soil.</i>
<b>3</b>	Is the proposal in a sensitive area as defined in the EIA Regs 2017?	NO <input type="checkbox"/>		YES X	The Proposed Development falls within the sensitive area of the Humber Estuary Ramsar, Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protected Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

<b>4</b>	Does it exceed the threshold and criteria in Schedule 2?	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES X	<i>Area of works less than 1 hectare (0.2 hectares)</i>
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**Selection Criteria for Screening Schedule 2 Development as set out in Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations.**

## 1. Characteristics of the Development

The characteristics of the development must be considered having regard, in particular to the following:

Size:

Does the proposal exceed the indicative sizes given in Planning Practice Guidance-Environmental Impact Assessments?  YES X NO

*With regards to 2(d) the PPG suggests that drilling operations involving development of a surface site of more than 5ha is more likely to require EIA. The site area of the surface site is less than 5ha in area (2.1ha).*

Cumulative Impacts:

Will the proposal be undertaken in conjunction with other development?  YES X NO

*The proposal is for early investigation trial horizontal directional drilling to test ground conditions in advance of a proposed DCO submission on a carbon capture pipeline and understand the feasibility of using the horizontal drilling method over traditional tunnelling.*

Use of Natural Resources:

Will any natural resources be lost? (If no proceed to Production of Waste)  YES X NO

*A supply of clean water is required to operate the drill. Options to abstract from the local watercourses and groundwater sources, and to draw water from local mains, along with other options, have been ruled out due to environmental and reliability factors. Therefore, it is proposed that the water supply will be road tankered to the site for the Trial HOD and no natural resources will be lost during construction or operation.*

Will their loss be significant?  YES X NO

Production of Waste:

Will the proposal generate waste (if no proceed to Pollution and Nuisances) X YES  NO

*Waste will be generated during construction of the proposed development. Construction waste would be typical of an industrial development and would be mitigated through established best practice. Minimal waste is anticipated during the operational phase of development.*

Pollution and Nuisances:

Will the proposal cause any pollution/nuisance (if no proceed to accidents) X YES  NO

Will it be short term (during construction)? X YES  NO

*The construction phase of the development is likely to generate noise, dust, vibration and light nuisance as a result of HGV movements to and from the site and the operation of construction machinery on site. However, it is considered that disruption during construction would be temporary*

*and issues could be mitigated through the use of planning conditions and standard mitigation measures.*

Will it be longer term?  YES  NO

*Noise generated at the operational phase is not anticipated to be significant and a planning application would be supported by a Noise Impact Assessment to demonstrate this.*

Accidents:

A higher than average risk of accidents during construction?  YES  NO

*The proposal is a relatively small development and construction and is likely to involve traditional construction techniques. There are no site-specific issues that would present an abnormal risk of accidents during construction.*

A higher than average risk of accidents during operation?  YES  NO

*The proposed development is for early investigations for potential methods for the proposed DCO for the Humber Carbon Capture Pipeline and is temporary in nature. There are no site-specific issues that would present an abnormal risk of accidents during operation.*

Risks to Human Health:

Will the proposal increase risk to human health?  YES  NO

*The construction phase will be relatively limited as a temporary proposal and any health and any associated health and safety risks will be common to all construction operations and can be suitably managed by industry standard methods.*

## 2. Location of Development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered, having regard, in particular, to the following:

What is the existing land use?

*The Humber South Compound, access tracks and underground works are proposed on the south side of the Humber River and comprise part of an agricultural field, part of a flood defence embankment, and an area of mudflats and marsh.*

*A Main Drain runs along the southern field boundary. Beyond this, Skitter Beck, a Main River and tributary to the Humber River, passes under the access track in the south-east corner of the agricultural field. The access track adjacent to the flood defence embankment continues to Skitter Road passing over an Environment Agency owned bridge and weir. Skitter Beck and the Main Drain run broadly parallel to the southern field boundary.*

*The entire Site is located in Flood Zone 3 (indicative of a high risk of flooding from the sea), as defined by the EA mapping.*

Is the Site in a 'Sensitive Area' as defined in the Regulation?  YES  NO

*The Proposed Development falls within the sensitive area of the Humber Estuary Ramsar, Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protected Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is noted that whilst the compound is to the south of the sensitive area, the HDD does go through the sensitive area the HDD is actually underground with the regulation just specifying in rather than over or under.*

Is the site sensitive in another way?

(contaminated, densely populated, archaeology, landscape etc)

If yes give details?

YES  NO

### **3. Characteristics of the Potential Impact:**

The likely significant effects of the development on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 above. The potential impacts identified include:

- Potential impact on the character of the landscape and visual amenity;
- Potential impacts on the biodiversity value of the site;
- Potential impacts in respect of contaminated land;
- Potential noise pollution from operations on site;
- Potential impact on air quality as a result of emissions and the increase in vehicular traffic;
- Potential impacts on the highway network;
- Potential effect on surface water drainage and flood risk for the site and surrounding area;
- Potential effects on the settings of designated heritage assets; and
- Potential impacts in respect of climate change.

#### **Assessment of the significance of likely effects**

##### Landscape and Visual

This is a flat, low-lying reclaimed estuarine landscape characterised by large, rectilinear arable fields. Vegetation cover is sparse, with few hedgerows and limited tree presence. The site, nor its surroundings are designated for landscape value.

The temporary nature of the compound may reduce long-term impacts, but will have a moderate impact on during the construction phase for users of the Public Rights of Way in the immediate proximity to proposed site during the construction phase whilst the site is has a barrier to screen the proposal. The compound area is relatively small, with the majority of the HDD works underground means that long range views are unlikely to be impacts with the impact localised. The temporary nature of the site and its ability to be fully reinstated to agricultural land.

It is anticipated that construction activity will be visible from a number of nearby local roads and sensitive residential receptors during construction, due to their proximity to the site. However, through the implementation of control measures within a CEMP the effects on landscape and visual amenity are unlikely to be significant due to the temporary nature of the construction phase..

## Ecology and Biodiversity

In terms of ecology, there is the potential displacement of passage and wintering waterbirds from functionally linked land for the Humber Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, as well as potential disturbance and pollution risks for the Humber Estuary SPA, SAC and Ramsar site

A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been prepared to assess the effects of the proposed HDD on the Humber Estuary SPA, SAC and Ramsar site. It will include the screening and report to inform an Appropriate Assessment alongside breeding, passage and wintering bird surveys

The application site supports agricultural land in close proximity to the River Humber. The proposed HDD route will run underneath the adjacent estuarine habitats, including the intertidal mud flats and salt marsh, and not interact with them since it runs more than 20m below ground.

Although known in the area, no badger setts were identified within the site boundaries with limited foraging potential of the existing intertidal and arable habitats. There is moderate potential of badgers foraging through the site considering their presence in the local landscape. Depending on the works commencement, a further check will be undertaken with a buffer zone also surveyed. With the lack of potential bat roosts within the site, the likelihood that the site's zone of influence would contain a bat roost was assessed as low. Similarly, the habitats on-site present low suitability for foraging or commuting bats.

While there is confirmed potential for otters to utilise the watercourses close to the site for foraging, the potential for resting or holting within the zone of influence was assessed as low.

The compound site has unsuitable habitats for water vole, and the reedbed associated with the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) has negligible suitability. Presence was confirmed within 350m of the compound site although no presence was confirmed within the site in the East Halton Beck that runs through it. Whilst not present within the site or immediately adjacent to the site, measures to prevent water-borne pollution should be implemented within the CEMP

The presence of protected and notable birds within the HDD site is likely and further surveying has informed the HRA that has been prepared, with the assessment to determine whether the site can be classified as functionally linked land (FLL). Numerous Schedule 1 bird species were returned during the desk studies; however, many were determined to have negligible or low likelihood of presence on the site. Redwing and fieldfare were assessed as moderate likelihood of presence, and barn owl has been confirmed as using a nest box within 250m of the site and therefore is likely to forage within the site. With the temporary nature of the proposal and the majority of works taking place underground the impact on protected and notable bird is considered to be low and can be mitigated accordingly.

For the compound site there is negligible potential for reptiles due to the arable nature of the site, however the HDD site has moderate potential considering the proximity to watercourses and associated habitats.

The approaches for the species and groups discussed above is appropriate for the site and the nature of the proposed works.

BNG requirements do apply to the Compound Site since the habitats will take more than two years to reinstate, the on-site habitats (i.e. the temporary construction compound and site access tracks) will be assumed lost to development. They are assumed to be restored to baseline 3 years post-development, which is reflected in the delayed start of 3 years for habitat creation in the metric.

The baseline area units were calculated as 7.31, comprising cropland, grassland and urban habitats. There were no watercourse or hedgerow habitats. 1.21 ha of habitat will not be impacted during the development and therefore is classed as retained.

The remaining 5.29 ha will be lost and then recreated with a three-year delayed start. Therefore, the change in biodiversity units is -0.70 units providing a biodiversity net loss of -9.60%. The unit deficit is 1.43 units of low distinctiveness habitat units.

The applicant has indicated these units will be purchased from an off-site habitat bank, although other options are being explored to secure BNG in accordance with the BNG hierarchy. This includes the possible purchase of off-site units if that provides the optimum solution in this case, noting that the site is proposed to be reinstated to its former use once the HDD Trial has been completed.

Overall, the proposal is not likely to result in significant environmental impacts with appropriate mitigation that would warrant an EIA.

### Contamination

Historic mapping and current land use show that the proposed site is predominately agricultural. It is the developer's responsibility to assess and address any potential contamination risks and it is acknowledged that a Phase 1 report will be submitted with any future planning application.

Accordingly, the local planning authority considers that the risks arising from land contamination are not significant and can be appropriately assessed, understood and managed through the normal planning process and standard regulatory controls, rather than through an Environmental Impact Assessment.

### Noise

The proposed development includes the creation of a temporary compound associated with the horizontal drilling, construction will be required for these elements of the proposal. Construction traffic movements will be undertaken in accordance with the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). With the implementation of the control measures within the CEMP and the CTMP, in relation to routing plans and vehicle control, it is considered that the effects of construction vehicle movement noise, both on-site and on the local road network are unlikely to be significant.

Due to the nature of the drilling works, there will be a requirement for 24-hour working within both drilling compounds. To provide acoustic screening of the HOD plant and equipment, a noise barrier is proposed. There is the potential for localised, ground-borne vibration impacts at the drill entry points. Given the separation distance from residential and commercial properties, the impact to sensitive receptors is anticipated to be negligible. There is not likely to be a significant environmental effect on Noise and Vibration during the testing and monitoring phase based on the appropriate actions detailed above.

It is considered that the potential for noise impacts is not significant and can be appropriately assessed, understood and managed through the normal planning process and standard regulatory controls, rather than through an Environmental Impact Assessment.

### Air Quality

There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within 6km of the proposed development site. Standard and well-established best practice working methods would be employed during the construction phase to ensure that there is no likely significant adverse effect related to construction dust.

Traffic flows associated with the development are below the criteria set out in The Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) Land Use Planning & Development Control Guidance. The Guidance states that HGV flows of greater than 100 annual average daily traffic (AADT) two-way movements and greater than 500 AADT flows for LGVs and cars (combined) are likely to give rise to air quality issues. The guidance states that "if none of the criteria are met then there should be no requirement to carry out an air quality assessment for the impact of the proposed development on the local area, and the impacts can be considered to have insignificant effects." The only impacts from the development on air quality is likely to be generated through dust associated with the construction phase, and it is anticipated this will be controlled through the incorporation of best practice measures in the Construction Environmental Management Plan

### Transport

Traffic routes and Site accesses have been chosen to minimise the traffic impacts on the properties adjacent to and in the vicinity of the Site. Additional passing places, and upgrades to existing passing places, will be in place before construction works start which will reduce impacts from traffic associated with the Proposed Development.

Control measures will be applied through the implementation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan, to reduce or avoid any potential effects that may occur due to traffic associated with the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development would require Abnormal Indivisible Loads (Alls) for a small number of deliveries. Alls will exit the site on to East Marsh Road and follow the return route through Goxhill on the south side. Alls will follow this route subject to agreement with the Local Highways Authority.

It is considered that subject to the submission of Transport Statement and Outline Construction Phase Traffic Management Plan for approval by the Local Planning Authority the impact from transport would not be significant can be appropriately assessed, understood and managed through the normal planning process and standard regulatory controls, rather than through an Environmental Impact Assessment.

### Flood Risk and Drainage

The entire Site is located in Flood Zone 3 (indicative of a high risk of flooding from the sea), as defined by the EA mapping. However, fluvial flood risk to the Site is considered to be low based on the East Halton Brook Flood Model (source: EA). The risk of flooding at the Site in the 3.3% (1 in 30) defended flood extent is attributed to flooding from the Sea alone.

Given the temporary nature of the Proposed Development, it is considered highly unlikely that a breach of defenses, or extreme event resulting in overtopping would occur during the 10 to 12 month period where there would be activities taking place at the site. Residual risk will be managed through the implementation of a flood warning and evacuation plan.

The Proposed Development would not increase flood risk to third parties over its lifetime, including accounting for climate change. The subsequent reuse and decommissioning/ reinstatement of the site will be assessed in the Flood Risk Assessment and assessments. These documents, alongside standard pollution prevention and SuDS design requirements, are considered sufficient to address potential environmental impacts without the need for an EIA.

### Cultural Heritage

The Humber South Compound is located within an area of known archaeological activity. Historic activity is known from the prehistoric period and Roman periods. Previous archaeological fieldwork around East Halton Skitter have identified areas of previous settlement activity dating particularly from

the 2nd to 4th Century. A large concentration of activity was excavated as part of the Feeder 9 Project, directly north of the site boundary.

Significant impacts upon the settings of these assets is unlikely given the footprint and scale of the proposed development, the distances involved and intervening structures and landscaping and as such EIA is not considered to be required in this regard. Notwithstanding this, a Heritage Assessment will be required in support of any application and will provide a robust assessment of the potential impacts on settings and views from surrounding heritage assets.

Climate Change

The proposed development is not considered to be a significant emitter of greenhouse gasses during either the construction or the operation phases. The Proposed Development is temporary in that the sites will be fully reinstated within a period of less than five years. Relevant environmental topics have considered climate change as part of their assessments

**Conclusion:**

Is an Environmental Statement required?

YES    NO X

Further comments:

The potential impacts of the proposal on the site and surrounding area relate to the natural environment, the visual impact on the landscape, noise disturbance and increased traffic generation.

The extent of the potential impacts identified will be only local in nature and in relation to the population likely to be affected. Specifically, the visual/landscape impacts will be restricted to the local area surrounding the site and the traffic impact will relate to the local highway network, with limited impact on the wider highway network.

The proposed development is well below the screening threshold set out in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and does not exceed any indicative thresholds set out in the PPG and is not considered to be intrinsically complex and nor are the potential impacts identified. Where potential impacts have been identified it is considered that these impacts can be effectively mitigated through relatively standard measures.

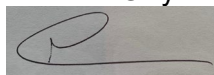
Cumulative impacts of the development in conjunction with existing or proposed development in the area have not been identified.

Furthermore, it is considered that through the submission of a comprehensive suite of supporting documents the scale and temporary nature of potential impacts is known and that, whilst the development is temporary, the potential impacts can be mitigated to a level where they will not be significant.

Officer: Matthew Gillyon

Authorised by: .....

Signature:



Signature: .....

Date: 19 December 2025

Date: .....

If YES required, date applicant notified: .....