

## **Scoping Opinion Report: Land North Of Birchanger And South Of Stansted**

### **Appendix A: Scoping Opinion (Report)**

**Location:** Land North Of Birchanger And South Of Stansted

**Planning Ref:** UTT/25/2203/SO

**Proposal:** Request for Scoping Opinion for - Up to 520 new homes (Use Class C3) and up to 20,000 sqm of commercial floor space with public open space, new access, active travel routes between the Birchanger Site and Stansted Mountfitchet and Sustainable Urban Drainage System

### **Introduction**

1. This Scoping Opinion report is provided by Uttlesford District Council, the Local Planning Authority ("LPA"), with reference to the email dated 14 August 2025 submitting a request for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Opinion for the envisaged proposal ("proposed development") described above.
2. The applicants request for Scoping Opinion was accompanied by a 'EIA Scoping Report: Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report City & Country Stansted Ltd 14 August 2025 and has been submitted pursuant to Part 4 (15) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (2017) (as amended).
3. Under Part 4 (15) (2) of the EIA Regulations (2017) (as amended) requires that any request for a Scoping Opinion must include:
  - I. a plan sufficient to identify the land;
  - II. a brief description of the nature and purpose of the development, including its location and technical capacity;
  - III. an explanation of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment; and
  - IV. such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make;
4. Given the content of the submitted Scoping document LPA Officers are satisfied that the request for scoping opinion is compliant with the Regulation in this respect.
5. It has been determined by the Applicant and agreed with UDC through the pre-application process as well as informal correspondence via phone/email, that the Proposed Development should be subject to EIA. The EIA is a systematic process that aims to prevent, reduce or offset the significant adverse environmental effects of development proposals and enhance beneficial effects. It ensures that planning decisions consider likely significant environmental effects and involve statutory bodies and other stakeholders, including the public.
6. Both the Birchanger Site and the Stansted Mountfitchet Site individually fall within Part 10(b) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations as an 'urban development project'; these projects include part (ii) comprising schemes of more than 150 dwellings and part (iii) which includes sites of more than 5 hectares of land outside of the built urban area.

7. For Schedule 2 developments, the EIA Regulations require that an EIA be undertaken where the development is “likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location. In determining whether the development is likely to give rise to significant environmental effects, reference should be made to Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations. This identifies three categories of criteria, this includes characteristics of the development, location of the development and characteristics of the potential impacts.
8. In the light of these, EIA will be required for Schedule 2 development in three main types of case:
  - a. Major developments which are of more than local importance;
  - b. Developments located in particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable locations;  
and/or
  - c. Developments with unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects

### **The Site**

9. The proposed development sites are located to the north of Birchanger and the south-east of Stansted Mountfitchet, within the administrative boundary of Uttlesford District Council. The sites lie within a transitional landscape between the Stort Valley and the North Essex Claylands, characterised by gently rolling topography, historic field patterns, and a patchwork of hedgerows, woodlands, and rural lanes.
10. The area is well-connected via the M11 and A120 corridors, with proximity to Stansted Airport and Stansted Mountfitchet railway station, offering strategic accessibility. However, all sites are situated within the Green Belt, close to the Hatfield Forest SSSI Impact Risk Zone, with several Public Rights of Way and TPO-designated trees intersecting or bordering the land parcels.
11. The surrounding settlements exhibit a mix of historic and modern development, with Birchanger retaining a more rural village character and Stansted Mountfitchet functioning as a larger service centre. The sites are currently in agricultural use and are not previously developed land.

### **Birchanger Site**

12. The scoping boundary for the Birchanger Site encompasses an area of circa 20.65 hectares and is located to the north-west of the village of Birchanger. It largely comprises two parcels of agricultural land with surrounding hedgerows and woodland. The scoping boundary also encompasses linear corridors (which are proposed for active travel routes) to the north and west on land comprising agricultural land as well as areas of Tot Lane and Birchanger Lane (and their junctions with connecting roads).
13. To the west is the B1383 Stansted Road; Birchanger Lane forms a junction with the B1383 and provides access to the Birchanger Site. Birchanger Lane runs from the west towards the south-east and into the settlement of Birchanger. The Scoping

boundary encompasses a field to the south of Birchanger Lane and a field to the north-west of Birchanger, east of Tot Lane. The land south of Birchanger Lane is bounded to the south by agricultural land and the A120 which runs southeast from Stansted Road (circa 300 metres to the south).

14. To the north of Birchanger Lane are areas of woodland (outside of the scoping boundary) and agricultural fields (within the scoping boundary) which run along the northern boundary of Birchanger. The field boundaries are defined by hedges and trees, occasionally broken up by built development. Birchanger C of E Primary School and Birchanger Butterflies Preschool are located immediately southeast of Site. A Public Right of Way ('PROW') runs through the agricultural fields and within the scoping boundaries to the west and along its southern boundary.
15. Tot Lane runs north/north-east from Birchanger Lane towards the north until the junction with Forest Hall Road (which runs to the south of Stansted Mountfitchet). Tot Lane has hedgerows along its length. The Site is entirely within Flood Zone 1 (Low Probability on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning).

#### **Stansted Mountfitchet Site**

16. The Stansted Mountfitchet Site comprises two parcels of agricultural land of circa 17.57 hectares. It lies to the south and south-east of the settlement of Stansted Mountfitchet. The main site lies immediately to the south and west of Forest Hall Secondary School and Mountfitchet Leisure Centre and is accessed from Forest Hall Road. It comprises a smaller field to the south of Forest Hall Road with a larger field beyond to the south. The fields are divided by hedgerows which also extend along the majority of the boundaries of the Site. To the west, the parcel is bound by Parsonage Lane which extends south towards the M11 Business Link Stansted Business Units. To the east is the M11 motorway.
17. The smaller parcel of circa 1.6 hectares is located immediately to the south of Stansted Mountfitchet. It comprises part of an agricultural field and is bound to the north by hedgerows fronting onto Forest Hall Road. Areas of further agricultural land extend to the east and south with areas of woodland to the south-west. This parcel is currently proposed to provide sustainable drainage features for the Stansted Mountfitchet Site, not for residential development. The Site is entirely within Flood Zone 1 (Low Probability on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning).

#### **Surrounding Area**

18. The settlements of Stansted Mountfitchet and Birchanger lie in an area to the north of Bishops Stortford (which is circa 2km to the south). The A120 – which forms the northern ring road to Bishops Stortford – lies to south of the Birchanger Site (as described above).
19. The area surrounding the settlements is largely agricultural in character to the north, west and south. To the east, and beyond the M11 motorway, is Stansted Airport. Junction 8.
20. Land North of Birchanger and Land South of Stansted Mountfitchet: Information accompanying a request for UDC to form an EIA Scoping Opinion which provides access to both the A120 and to the Airport is circa 1.5 to 2km to the south and south-east of the sites described in this Scoping Report.

21. The railway line between London and Stansted Airport runs through Bishops Stortford, to the west of the Birchanger Site and on to Stansted Mountfitchet which has a railway station circa 800 metres beyond Forest Hall Road. The rail line then progresses to the Airport where it terminates. The rail line also branches towards Cambridge and beyond.
22. The River Stort runs adjacent to the railway line to the west of the Birchanger Site. None of the land within the Scoping boundaries are within statutorily designated sites. The nearest is the Hatfield Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI') which is located to the south of Stansted Airport, east of the M11 motorway and circa 2.8km to the south-east of the land within the Scoping boundaries.
23. None of land within the Scoping boundaries includes listed buildings or other features of historic interest. However, there are several listed buildings in the surrounding area including within the settlements of Birchanger and Stansted Mountfitchet. Circa 200 metres to the north of the Stansted Mountfitchet Site – and beyond Church Road – is the Grade II\* listed Church of St Mary the Virgin; and circa 200 metres to the south-west are a cluster of three Grade II listed buildings associated with Parsonage Farmhouse.
24. Immediately to the south of Forest Hall Road and circa 175 metres from the nearest Scoping boundary of the Birchanger Site is the Grade II listed Forest Hall. To the north of the junction between Birchanger Lane and the B1383 is a cluster of three Grade II listed buildings associated with Sion House Farmhouse.

### **The Proposed Development**

25. The Proposed Development will comprise residential-led development, including the following key features:
  - Up to 520 new homes (Use Class C3) with up to 220 new homes at the Birchanger Site and up to 300 new homes at the Stansted Mountfitchet Site. The final density and the number of new homes on each site is to be informed by contextual and site analysis;
  - Public open space;
  - Active travel routes between the Birchanger Site and Stansted Mountfitchet;
  - New vehicular and pedestrian access into the Proposed Development;
  - Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) features;
  - The Stansted Mountfitchet Site will include up to 20,000 sqm of commercial floorspace.
26. The Proposed Development will be brought forward in outline, and a series of parameters will be established for the purposes of assessment comprising a maximum envelope within which the detailed design will be brought forward pursuant to subsequent reserved matters applications

## **General Approach to the EIA**

27. To assist the Local Planning Authority's deliberations on its scoping opinion, the applicant has supplied a Scoping Report outlining the issues to be considered in the Environmental Statement.
28. The LPA has considered the explanations in the Scoping Report about how the envisaged EIA will approach assessment of likely significant effects. This section shall consider each of the topic areas in the submitted Scoping Report in turn.
29. Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria: For clarity in what will be a technical document available to the public, consistent terminology should be used throughout the EIA, and a readily accessible list of abbreviations must be provided and in a convenient accessible part of the environmental statement.
30. Baseline Conditions: The information used for any "baseline scenario" must include the actual current data. The source of any data or other information used for each baseline must be provided. So far as reasonably practicable, no baseline data should be more than two years old.
31. Impact Assessment: The appropriate environmental controls, envisaged to be in place so as to avoid, prevent, or reduce the likelihood of significant adverse environmental effects from constructional impacts, should be set out and appropriately categorised as features or measures in accordance with Regulation 18(3)(a) and (c) and paragraph 7 of Schedule 4. In relation to operational effects, the same approach should be adopted.
32. A "Do Nothing" scenario must also be included in the assessments, i.e. the effects that are to be anticipated without the development taking place.

## **Cumulative Impacts**

33. The cumulative impacts of the proposal, together with committed developments in the locality that are at an advanced stage (such as those with extant planning permissions) or that are likely to come forward in the next 3 years, should be assessed and included in the ES, regarding traffic and transport considerations.
34. The proposed list of cumulative schemes must be agreed with the LPA, and other relevant locality authorities as appropriate. It should be acknowledged that, in some topic areas, the list of Cumulative Schemes will vary, and explanations should be given for any such differences. The ES will assess cumulative effects across all scoped-in environmental topics, including:
  - Transport and access.
  - Air quality.
  - Noise and vibration.
  - Biodiversity and ecology.
  - Landscape and visual impact.
  - Water resources and drainage.
  - Climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.
  - Socio-economics.
  - Public Health

## Cumulative Impacts: Committed Schemes

Site Address	Location relative to the Development Site(s) (at closest point)	LPA Planning Reference	Description of Scheme	Current Status
Land At Parsonage Farm Forest Hall Road Stansted Essex	Borders eastern and southern boundaries of the Stansted Mountfitchet Site	UTT/25/1742/FUL	Construction and operation of a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays and battery storage together with associated development, including inverter cabins, substation, customer switchgear, access, fencing, CCTV cameras and landscaping.	Under determination (received by the council on Fri 27 Jun 2025; validated on 2 July)
London Stansted Airport Bassingbourn Road Stansted CM24 1QW (several applications-most recent included)	East of the Stansted Mountfitchet Site, on the eastern side of the M11.	UTT/25/1542/FUL	Airfield works comprising two new taxiway links to the existing runway (Rapid Access Taxiway and Rapid Exit Taxiway) to enable continued airfield operations of 274,000 aircraft movements and an increase in passenger throughput from 43 million terminal passengers to up to 51 million terminal passengers, in a twelve month calendar period.	Under determination (validated on 05/06/25)
		s62A/2023/0022 / UTT/23/1970/PINS	Partial demolition of the existing Track Transit System and full demolition of 2 no. skylink walkways and the bus-gate building.  Construction of a 3-bay extension to the existing passenger building, baggage handling building, plant enclosure and 3 no.skylink walkways and associated hardstanding.	Approved (by PINs) on 31-10-23
		APP/C1570/W/20/3256619	Airfield works comprising of two new taxiway to the existing runway (a Rapid Access Taxiway and a Rapid Exit Taxiway), six additional remove aircraft stands (adjacent Yankee taxiway); and three additional aircraft strands (extension of the Echo Apron) to enable combined airfield operations of 264,000 aircraft movements (of which not more than 16,000 movements would be Cargo	Approved 21/06/21 (Commencement is imminent)

Site Address	Location relative to the Development Site(s) (at closest point)	LPA Planning Reference	Description of Scheme	Current Status
			Air Transport Movements) and a throughput of 43 million terminal passengers, in a 12-month calendar period.	
		UTT/16/356 6/FUL	A dedicated terminal facility for arriving passengers (34,384sqm); an associated forecourt; and altered access and service roads	Approved 07/04/2017 (Anticipated completion mid-2030s.)
Land East of High Lane Stansted	1.75km north	UTT/25/106 1/FUL	Proposed erection of 56 no. dwellings, (including affordable housing) formation of site accesses, open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure. Allocated in UDC Submission Local Plan.	Under determination (validated 22/04/25)
Land North of Walpole Meadows West of Cambridge Road, Stansted	2.2km north	UTT/25/053 4/OP	Outline application with all matters reserved except for access for up to 270 dwellings (including affordable housing), as well as land for a community use, parkland, public open space, children's play area and all other associated infrastructure. Allocated in UDC Submission Local Plan.	Under determination (validated 27/02/25)
Land Near Pelham Substation Maggots End Road Manuden And Berden	4.9km northwest	UTT/25/122 4/FUL	Construction, operation and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic ("PV") farm with associated infrastructure.	Under determination (validated 16/05/25)
Land To the North-West of Bishops Stortford Farnham Road Farnham	3km west of the site	UTT/25/16 93/DOC / S62A/2024 /0045	Erection of a Solar Photovoltaic Farm with supporting infrastructure and battery storage, inverters and transformers, fencing, landscaping works and connecting cable.	Approved 26/06/24
Land North of Stansted Airport	Adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Stansted Mountfitchet Site	UTT/22/0 434/OP	Outline application for demolition of existing structures and redevelopment of 61.86 hectares to provide 195,100 sqm of commercial/employment development predominantly within Class B8, with supporting uses including Classes E(g), B2, food retail, food/beverage, and nursery provision.	Approved

## **Consultation**

35. As required by Part (15) (4) of the EIA Regulations the LPA has consulted the following bodies;

- Active Travel England (ATE)
- Affinity Water
- ECC Archaeology
- ECC Education
- ECC Highways
- Environment Agency (EA)
- Essex Police
- Historic England
- MAGS Airport
- Place Services (Ecology)
- National Air Traffic Services (NATS)
- Natural England
- UDC Conservation
- UDC Environmental Health
- UDC Urban Design

36. In relation to the proposed structure, methodology and environmental topics which are proposed to be scoped-in or scoped out of the EIA, the suggested relevant topics and comments from the consultation responses are discussed below.

37. As guided by the submitted Scoping document, the proposed structure, methodology and environmental topics which are proposed to be scoped-in or scoped out of the EIA are listed below and discussed further;

- Socio-economics
- Transport and Access
- Air Quality
- Noise and Vibration
- Biodiversity
- Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas
- Cultural Heritage
- Landscape Visual Impact
- Non-Significant Topics

## **Socio-economics**

38. It is noted from the Scoping Report that socio-economics matters are to be scoped-in the Environmental Statement (ES) given the baseline conditions and that the study area will extend to the Birchanger and Stansted Area, the district of Uttlesford District Council and the region of Essex.

39. UDC agrees broadly with this approach and that socio-economics ought to be scoped-into the ES.



## **Transport and Access**

40. This section of the Scoping Report has been informed by assessing the potential significant effects of the Proposed Development in terms of Transport and Access. The assessment will be undertaken both separately for each of the Sites and together as the Proposed Development. LPA Officers agree that Transport is a fundamental issue which ought to be scoped into the ES as proposed.
41. The Highway Authority has provided comments and advised the following.
- We agree with the recommendation within the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report that Transport is scoped into the Environment Statement for the Proposed Development.as per the comments received from National Highways the assessment should be undertaken in accordance with DfT Circular 02/2013 "The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development. The Transport Assessment should be informed by a Walking Cycling and Horse-Riding Assessment Report (WCHAR).
  - For information, the Highway Authority will require a full Transport Assessment (and Travel Plan) to accompany any submitted planning application. The Transport Assessment should consider all the transport implications of the proposals, in terms of accessibility to other modes of sustainable travel, highway safety, capacity and efficiency.
  - It should also include full details of any highway mitigation that will be necessary with associated independent Stage 1 Road safety Audit.
  - The proposal should also take account of construction traffic and any impact of the development on the Public Rights of Way network
42. Based on the information submitted and consultation responses, the LPA considers transport and access should be scoped into the Environmental Statement.

## **Air Quality**

43. It is noted from the Scoping Report that air quality will be scoped into the ES given the effects of increase of dust and particulate matter from construction activities and the effects due to the increase of emissions from additional operational traffic.
44. There are existing sensitive receptors located within the vicinity of the Sites which may be affected by the construction and/or operational phases of the Proposed Development. Furthermore, the proposed pattern of land use across the Sites will be appropriately evaluated to inform their suitability. It is noted the Council's Environmental Health Officer considers the proposed method of assessment is acceptable. Based on the information submitted and consultation responses, the LPA considers air quality should be scoped-in the ES.

### **Noise and Vibration**

45. The Proposed Development has the potential to increase noise at the nearest Noise Sensitive Receptors (NSRs) during the construction phase (noise associated with construction traffic, plant and machinery) and operational phase (principally associated with road traffic). The Proposed Development will also introduce new NSRs to the Sites; NSRs that will principally be exposed to transportation noise sources.
46. Construction effects would be temporary but operational effects would be permanent for the lifetime of the Proposed Development.
47. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has advised a construction management plan should also be included in future submissions, which not only considers noise but dust management, operating hours, delivery hours, waste management proposals, details of complaints, parking and loading arrangements, details of any proposed piling operations, including justification for the proposed piling strategy, a vibration impact assessment and proposed control and mitigation measures.
48. Based on the information submitted and consultation responses, the LPA considers noise and vibrations should be scoped into the Environmental Statement.

### **Biodiversity and Ecology**

49. The aim of the surveys outlined in this Scoping Report is to identify the most significant ecological receptors present within the Sites, allowing the key potential effects from the Proposed Development to be assessed. Standard survey and assessment methods are being used to allow the habitats and species present on site to be characterised and evaluated. These surveys have been carried out on both sites. Given the proximity of the Sites, this provides a spatial analysis rather than an analysis on an individual site basis.
50. It is noted from the Scoping Report that biodiversity is to be scoped-in the ES. Natural England has provided detailed advice on the scope of the Environmental Statement (ES), highlighting the need for robust assessment of impacts on designated sites, protected species, priority habitats, ancient woodland, and soils.
51. The development lies within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for Hatfield Forest and other nearby SSSIs, and the ES should assess both direct and indirect effects, including cumulative impacts and functionally linked land. The presence of ancient woodland and potential great crested newt habitat requires careful consideration, with District Level Licensing available in Essex. Biodiversity Net Gain must be demonstrated using the statutory metric, and opportunities for enhancement should be explored. Natural England also recommends full landscape and visual impact assessment, consideration of air and water quality, and climate change resilience. Their guidance will inform the scope of technical assessments and mitigation strategies within the ES.
52. The area likely to be affected by the development should be thoroughly surveyed by competent ecologists at appropriate times of year for relevant species and the survey results, impact assessments and appropriate accompanying mitigation strategies included as part of the ES. Surveys should always be carried out in optimal survey time periods and to current guidance by suitably qualified and, where necessary, licensed, consultants.

53. Given the details included in the scoping report and consultation response from Natural England should be taken fully into account. The LPA considers biodiversity, and ecology should be scoped into the EA.

### **Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases**

54. Regulation 4(2) (c) of the 2017 EIA Regulations requires significant effects on climate to be considered, as appropriate, within the EIA process. In addition, Schedule 4 to the 2017 EIA regulations requires the likely significant effects resulting from the “impact of the project on climate and vulnerability of the project to climate change” to be addressed within the ES where relevant.
55. It is noted from the Scoping Report that details of Climate Change are to be scoped into the EA. In line with guidance provided by IEMA [10], the chapter will assess the effects of the Proposed Development upon climate, in terms of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the vulnerability and resilience of the Proposed Development to Climate Change
56. The EIA will include an assessment of climate change and resilience both during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. In line with guidance, two factors will be considered within the scope of the chapter: greenhouse gases (climate change mitigation) and climate change adaptation and resilience.
57. In the preparation of the ES, please also see Natural England’s letter, dated 4 September 2025, for further guidance on Climate Change. Uttlesford District Council agrees that climate change and greenhouse gas emissions should be scoped into the Environmental Statement. The assessment should address both the potential contribution of the development to greenhouse gas emissions and its vulnerability to climate change, in line with the requirements of the EIA Regulations and relevant guidance.

### **Cultural Heritage and Archaeology**

58. It is noted from the Scoping Report that cultural heritage, and certain archaeological effects, is to be scoped out of the ES. The pre-app heritage report demonstrated that effects would be insignificant in EIA terms as there are no on-site assets and very few in the surrounding areas, the wider setting, and none of the highest grading.
59. Given the scale and nature of the Proposed Development, it is still believed that there is little potential for effects on the wider setting. Historic England have advised that whilst it is ultimately for the local planning authority to determine the scope of the EIA, we would nevertheless expect to see a thorough and robust assessment of the potential impact that the development is likely to have upon the historic environment included as part of the planning application as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - whether that is as part of the EIA or as standalone exercise.
60. It is recommended that any heritage assessment should be carried out in accordance with established policy and guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework and Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets.
61. The latter provides a thorough discussion of setting and methods for considering the impact of development. This should assess the significance of heritage assets, the

settings and the contribution their settings make to the significance, and to assess the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the designated heritage assets.

62. The requirements for evaluation should also be agreed in consultation with archaeological staff at Essex County Council's Historic Environment Team. It is also noted Place Services Archaeological Teams advise not any archaeological impacts would be such a significance that the requirement for an Environmental Statement to support the anticipated planning application is triggered.
63. Based on the information submitted, the information required to be considered under Regulation 15(6) of the EIA Regulations 2017 and consultee responses, Uttlesford District Council considers Cultural Heritage and Archaeology is not required to be scoped into the ES however due consideration should be made regarding the information and recommendations from Historic England.

#### **Clarification on Archaeological Requirements (Non-EIA)**

64. While Cultural Heritage and Archaeology has been scoped out of the Environmental Statement (ES) on the basis that the likely effects are not considered significant in EIA terms, this does not remove the requirement for archaeological assessment under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
65. In accordance with paragraph 207 of the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority expects a Desk-Based Assessment (DBA), informed by geophysical survey, to be submitted in support of any future planning application. This is necessary to assess the significance of any non-designated archaeological assets and to inform the planning decision.
66. At the time of issuing this Scoping Opinion, no DBA has been received. As such, the Local Planning Authority is not yet in a position to confirm whether further archaeological field evaluation (e.g. trial trenching) will be required. This will be determined following review of the submitted DBA and in consultation with Essex County Council's Historic Environment Team (Place Services).

#### **Landscape Visual Impact**

67. It is noted from the Scoping Report that LVIA matters are to be scoped in of the ES given the baseline conditions; UDC agrees with the broad scope of the landscape chapter of the scoping report, which should be scoped in. It will be important for this section to assess the impact of lighting at the site and the surrounding area and address any issue of light spillage as proposed.
68. However, supporting Zone of Theoretical Visibility mapping should be provided to ensure long-distance views outside the assessment study area are being considered. All visual representation with any submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).
69. Based on the information submitted and the information required to be considered under Regulation 15(6) of the EIA Regulations 2017, Uttlesford District Council agrees with the conclusion that LVIA matters are to be scoped in and requires any features or measures relied upon to be separately described and considered in a technical assessment to be submitted with the planning application

## **Flood Risk and Drainage**

70. Uttlesford District Council advises that, while the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has not specifically requested that flood risk and surface water drainage be scoped into the Environmental Statement (ES), these matters should be addressed in detail as part of the planning submission. The LLFA requires all major developments to assess the impact of flooding, particularly from surface water, and expects a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy to be submitted with any subsequent planning application. This should demonstrate compliance with the SuDS Design Guide for Essex, including:
- Discharge at the greenfield 1 in 1 rate for all storm events up to and including the 1 in 100-year event plus climate change allowance (as prescribed by the Environment Agency);
  - Application of the drainage hierarchy.
  - Identification of exceedance routes.
  - Provision of sufficient attenuation.
  - Inclusion of water quality treatment measures.
  - Addressing these requirements will support a robust and policy-compliant planning submission and ensure alignment with LLFA expectation
71. While the applicant has advised that detailed consideration of foul drainage volumes and Wastewater Treatment Plant (WwTP) capacity will not be scoped into the Environmental Statement (ES), Uttlesford District Council considers this to be a necessary inclusion. The Environment Agency has raised significant concerns regarding the potential for deterioration in surface water quality in the River Stort and Great Hallingbury Brook, both of which are currently failing to meet Water Framework Directive phosphate standards.
72. In response, the applicant has submitted further information (dated 19 September 2025) from their drainage consultant, confirming that the proposed development will discharge to Bishop's Stortford STW, which is subject to planned upgrades to reduce phosphorus levels to below 0.25mg/l. These improvements are scheduled to be completed prior to first occupation of the development and align with Thames Water's investment programme. The applicant has also confirmed that a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy will be submitted with the planning application to address water quality and drainage matters in detail.
73. The Local Planning Authority acknowledges receipt of the additional information submitted by the applicant on 18 September 2025, comprising a letter from G H Bullard & Associates and an accompanying email from Lichfields. This material has been reviewed in the context of the Environment Agency's consultation response dated 5 September 2025. The LPA notes the clarification regarding the receptor catchments, the planned upgrades to Bishop's Stortford Sewage Treatment Works, and the commitment to submit a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy with the planning application. While these details provide helpful context, the LPA considers that the potential impacts on water quality and wastewater treatment capacity remain of sufficient concern to warrant inclusion within the scope of the Environmental Statement. This position reflects the precautionary principle and aligns with the Environment Agency's advice.
74. The Environmental Statement should assess the potential impact of foul drainage on surface water quality, focusing on phosphorus levels and the capacity of the Bishop's

Stortford Wastewater Treatment Works. This should include expected wastewater volumes, development phasing, and cumulative effects within the WwTW catchment, to ensure compliance with the Water Framework Directive and local policy.

### **Waste**

75. All waste from the proposed development will be managed in accordance with all applicable legislation and best practices during both the construction and operation phases, and no significant effects are anticipated. Large quantities of waste are not anticipated through the development. This topic should be scoped out of the forthcoming ES and can be considered as part of the planning application

### **Land Use and Agricultural Resources**

76. Uttlesford District Council confirms that the information provided in relation to Land Use and Agricultural Resources reflects the Council's formal Scoping Opinion under Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.
77. The Council acknowledges that the land affected by the proposed development is predominantly classified as grade 3 agricultural land, which is considered Best and Most Versatile (BMV). While the loss of such land is recognised as significant, the topic has been scoped out of the Environmental Statement. However, any features, mitigation measures, or embedded design elements relied upon to address this impact must be separately described and assessed within the technical documentation submitted as part of the planning application.
78. Uttlesford District Council has reviewed the information provided in the Scoping Report and confirms that the topic of Land Use and Agricultural Resources is agreed to be scoped out of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

### **Ground Conditions and Contamination**

79. The Site comprises undeveloped arable farmland, therefore due to its historical use, significant sources of contamination which would lead to significant effects in EIA terms are considered unlikely.
80. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has advised that as per the details within the Scoping report that a Phase 1 Geo-environmental Survey should be undertaken to identify any potential contamination sources present within the Sites and will identify any mitigation measures where necessary.
81. Based on the information submitted, Uttlesford District Council agrees the details of ground conditions should be scoped out of the ES.

## **Lighting**

82. By virtue of its use, the Proposed Development will not require any intensive lighting to be installed. During operation, lighting will relate to the residential roads proposed and will be designed with ecologically mitigating measures built in. During construction some temporary lighting may be required. However, this will not be to a scale that will generate likely significant adverse effects. Where lighting is relevant (primarily to the LVIA and ecology assessments), this will be considered within the context of those assessments and separate consideration will be disproportionate and repetitive.
83. Given the nature of the proposed development and the location of the site, it is not considered that the construction and operation of the proposed development is not likely to cause significant lighting effects.
84. The comments from the Environmental Health Officer dated 10 February 2025, it was concluded that in view of the rural location of the site, it is essential to ensure that any external lighting is properly designed and installed to avoid any adverse impacts on residential neighbours from obtrusive/spillover light or glare. However, this detail can be considered as part of a planning application.
85. Regarding the potential effects on biodiversity, the distance between the identified external designated sites and the Proposed Development is considered sufficient that direct lighting influences are not predicted on the basis that a suitable considered lighting strategy is proposed and could be considered as part of a planning application.
86. Both MAG and NATS have highlighted potential aviation safeguarding concerns relating to external lighting associated with the proposed development. MAG advises that lighting design must avoid creating visual hazards for pilots or air traffic controllers, particularly through glint and glare effects from luminaires or reflective surfaces such as solar PV arrays.
87. Lighting should be capped at the horizontal to prevent upward light spill. NATS similarly notes that isolated commercial structures exceeding 15 metres in height may pose a low risk of interference with the S10 radar system at Stansted Airport. Both parties recommend early engagement with their respective safeguarding teams to ensure lighting proposals are assessed for potential impacts on aviation operations and radar performance.
88. Based on the information submitted, Uttlesford District Council agrees the details of lighting can be Scoped Out of the ES.

## **Vulnerability to Major Accidents and Disasters**

89. The site is not in a location that is at risk of disasters, such as significant flooding or earthquakes. Furthermore, the proposed development is of a nature that is unlikely to produce a significantly increased risk of natural disasters during its construction or operation that would go beyond the existing local context. Although the proximity of the site to Stansted Airport needs appropriate consideration during the construction and operational phases given that there is potential for major accidents within the vicinity.
90. Notwithstanding this, during the construction phase contractor(s) would need to implement measures in accordance with health and safety legislation and best

practices to minimise the risk of accidents that would have effects on people or the environment. All such measures would form part of the CEMP, which would be secured through a planning condition to any planning permission. As such, this subject can be scoped out of the ES.

### **Public Health**

91. In accordance with Section 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), which promotes the creation of healthy and safe communities, the Environmental Statement will include a dedicated assessment of public health impacts. This will consider both direct and indirect effects on physical and mental health, wellbeing, and health inequalities. The assessment will be informed by baseline health data for the local population and will evaluate factors such as air quality, noise, access to green space, active travel infrastructure, housing quality, and proximity to healthcare services. Particular attention will be given to vulnerable groups, including children, older adults, and those with pre-existing health conditions. Cumulative health impacts will also be considered in relation to other committed developments in the area.
92. The assessment will consider both direct and indirect effects on physical and mental health, wellbeing, and health inequalities. It will be informed by baseline health data for the local population and will evaluate factors such as air quality, noise, access to green space, active travel infrastructure, housing quality, and proximity to healthcare services. Particular attention will be given to vulnerable groups, including children, older adults, and those with pre-existing health conditions. Cumulative health impacts will also be considered in relation to other committed developments in the area.
93. The assessment will follow best practice guidance, including Public Health England's principles for Health Impact Assessment (HIA), and will inform mitigation and enhancement measures to support healthy and inclusive communities. This approach also supports Paragraph 98(b) of the NPPF, which encourages planning decisions to consider and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all sections of the community.

### **Other Consultee Responses**

#### **Secured by Design**

94. Essex Police's Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) welcomes the opportunity to engage early in the planning process and recommends that the development be subject to a planning condition requiring Secured by Design (SBD) accreditation. This will ensure crime prevention principles are embedded throughout the design and delivery of the scheme.
95. The DOCO highlights the importance of designing public rights of way and open spaces to be safe and inclusive, particularly in support of the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy. Lighting should be carefully considered to balance security needs with ecological sensitivity, especially during the construction phase. Essex Police also support the adoption of a Design Code to ensure consistency across all phases and encourages the use of Police Preferred Security Products to support both crime prevention and sustainability objectives. Ongoing engagement with the DOCO is advised to ensure that safety, security, and wellbeing are fully integrated into the development.



### **Aerodrome Safeguarding**

96. Please refer to NATs Safeguarding response dated 19 August 2025. NATS have no objection to the proposal at present on safeguarding grounds, as such this would not need to be scoped in, but duly considered as part of any future planning application.
97. Please refer to MAG London Standard Airport's aerodrome safeguarding consultation response dated 8 Sept 2025. Please note that that any future planning application should consider all aspect of the development which may be constrained due to the proximity to Stanstead Airport.

### **Education and Community Infrastructure – Essex County Council**

98. Essex County Council's Infrastructure Planning Officer advises that the potential impacts of the proposed development on education and childcare provision must be fully assessed. This includes Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Special Educational Needs, and Post-16 education. The developer should reference the latest version of the Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions and ensure that statutory walking distances to education facilities are considered via safe and direct routes. Where schools fall outside statutory distances, contributions towards school transport will be required. Mitigation for impacts on education and other community infrastructure, such as libraries, should be secured through Section 106 Planning Obligations in accordance with planning policy and infrastructure guidance.

### **Sport England**

99. Sport England has provided non-statutory planning advice in relation to the proposed development. While the scheme does not fall within Sport England's statutory remit, the Council is advised to consider the potential impact on existing sports facilities and the need for new provision arising from increased population. Any loss of existing facilities should be assessed against Paragraph 104 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and relevant local plan policies, including any adopted Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy.
100. Where new facilities are proposed, they should be designed in accordance with Sport England or relevant National Governing Body guidance. The use of Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator is recommended to estimate demand and inform infrastructure requirements. The Council is also encouraged to apply Sport England's Active Design principles to promote healthy lifestyles and consider Community Use Agreements to maximise access to facilities.

### **Parish Council**

101. Stansted Parish Council has raised objections to the proposed development on the basis that the site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and comprises good quality agricultural land. The Council notes that the site is not supported for development in either the emerging Uttlesford Local Plan or the Stansted Neighbourhood Plan. While these matters are acknowledged, they relate to planning policy and land use designation and will be considered as part of the determination of

any future planning application. They do not fall within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment under the EIA Regulations.

### **Structure of the Environmental Statement**

102. The forthcoming Environmental Statement needs to be guided by the structure as set out as per Schedule 4 of EIA (2017) Regulations. LPA Officers concludes that the proposed structure of the Environmental Statement as set out and explained in the submitted Scoping Report is generally satisfactory for the topics that are to be scoped into the environmental statement, except for additional information required where stated, as are the methodologies identified for assessment.
103. For clarification, the ES should also include a Non-Technical Summary so that it can be easily accessed by the public.
104. To summarise for this Scoping Opinion, the following topics as proposed should be **scoped into** the environmental statement:

- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Transport and Access
- Air Quality
- Noise and Vibration
- Biodiversity and Ecology
- Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas
- Socio-economics.
- Public Health

1. Reference should be made in the ES to any documents published by UDC that would have an influence on how the environmental statement should be informed and prepared for the proposed development.