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Reference: 25/00960/EAS
Date: 06 February 2026



**Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council**

Severn Trent Water Ltd
C/o Maxwell Griffin
Fisher German LLP
The Estates Office
Norman Court
Ashby De-La-Zouch
LE65 2UZ

Dear Sir

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion

Reference: 25/00960/EAS

Proposal: Request for a screening opinion for the installation of a 9.4km below-ground water pipeline Hallgate to Elm Farm

Location: North of Roecliffe Road, Hallgates to Elm Farm

Introduction

Thank you for your Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') Screening Opinion request on 26 September 2025 under Sections 5 and 6 of Part 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) ('the Regulations').

Summary

In summary, the proposed works within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth would not be considered to represent Environmental Impact Assessment Development, and an Environmental Statement would not be required in these site-specific circumstances.

Description of Development

In accordance with Sections 5 and 6 of Part 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) ('the Regulations'), Severn Trent Water Limited ('the Applicant') has requested that Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council adopt an Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') Screening Opinion to confirm whether their proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment ('EIA Development.')

The proposed development is for the installation of 9.42 kilometres of below-ground water pipeline and a 0.2-kilometre cross-connection between existing pipelines from land north of Roecliffe Road, where it would connect to the Hallgates Distribution Service Reservoir outlet main, to the Brickyard to the south, where it would tie into Severn Trent Water Limited's existing network.

This is a cross-boundary application that also affects land within the jurisdiction of Blaby District Council and Charnwood Borough Council. Only 2.4 kilometres of the proposal would be within the jurisdiction of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. Within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth, the proposed pipeline would begin to the southeast of Ratby near the Ivanhoe Trail, then head north to the southeast of Groby beyond Sacheverell Way before crossing the Leicester Western Bypass into Blaby District Council's jurisdiction. The proposed pipeline would then return into Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's jurisdiction to the northeast of Groby from the Leicester Western Bypass, which would head northwest across Anstey Lane towards Public Footpath J70/7 into land within the jurisdiction of Charnwood Borough Council.

The main pipeline would have an internal diameter of 1 metre, and the 0.2-kilometre cross connection would have an internal diameter of 200 millimetres. The construction of the development would feature a temporary 40-metre-wide working area, with approximately 20 metres on either side of the pipeline, and several construction compounds to facilitate the proposed works. The construction of the development is proposed to be staggered and is expected to take approximately two and a half years to be completed.

The proposed works form part of Severn Trent Water Limited's Long Term Delivery Strategy to protect supplies of clean water during times of 'peak flow' and provide resilience to the catchment at times of hot weather or high demand. The proposed development would help to secure water for approximately 279,731 customers.

Environmental Impact Assessment Legislation

The aim of the Environmental Impact Assessment process is to protect the environment by ensuring that a local planning authority when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project, which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects, and takes this into account in the decision making process.

Environmental Impact Assessment should not be a barrier to growth and will only apply to a small proportion of projects considered within the town and country planning regime. The Regulations integrate Environmental Impact Assessment procedures into this framework and should only apply to those projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The Regulations set out a procedure for identifying those projects which should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, and for assessing, consulting and coming to a decision on those projects which are likely to have significant environmental effects.

There are five broad stages to the process of an Environmental Impact Assessment. The first of which is the screening process, which determines whether a proposal falls within the remit of the Regulations, whether it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, and therefore whether it requires an Environmental Statement.

Determination of Proposal as Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 Development

Within the screening procedure, the Local Planning Authority should determine whether the project is of a type listed in Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 of the Regulations. If the development is listed in Schedule 1, an Environmental Impact Assessment is required in every case. If the project is listed in Schedule 2, the Local Planning Authority should consider whether it is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

If a proposed project is listed in the first column in Schedule 2 of the Regulations and exceeds the relevant thresholds or criteria set out in the second column (sometimes referred to as 'exclusion thresholds and criteria') the proposal needs to be screened by the Local Planning Authority to determine whether significant effects on the environment are likely and hence whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required. Projects listed in Schedule 2 which are located in, or partly in, a sensitive area also need to be screened, even if they are below the thresholds or do not meet the criteria.

Sensitive areas are defined within the Regulations as:

- (a) land notified under section 28(1) (sites of special scientific interest) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; and
- (b) a National Park within the meaning of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; and
- (c) the Broads; and
- (d) a property appearing on the World Heritage List kept under article 11(2) of the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; and
- (e) a scheduled monument within the meaning of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979; and
- (f) an area of outstanding natural beauty designated as such by an order made by Natural England under section 82(1) (areas of outstanding natural beauty) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as confirmed by the Secretary of State; and
- (g) a European site.

Projects which are described in the first column of Schedule 2, but which do not exceed the relevant thresholds, or meet the criteria in the second column of the Schedule, or are not at least partly in a sensitive area, are not Schedule 2 development.

The proposed form of development is not described or listed within Schedule 1 of the Regulations.

In accordance with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)'s Magic Map, the proposal would not be located in, or be located partly in, a sensitive area as defined by the Regulations within the jurisdiction of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

However, the proposed development would represent an infrastructure project consisting of the installation of a long-distance aqueduct, which is identified at Column 1(10)(l) of Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

Although the proposed pipeline would fall just under the 1-hectare size threshold identified at Column 2 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations, the overall construction area of the entire development, such as the temporary 40-metre-wide working area, would exceed this threshold.

Given the above, the proposed development as a whole would represent a Schedule 2 development infrastructure project that exceeds the relevant threshold requirements in Column 2 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations. The proposal would therefore need to be screened by the Local Planning Authority to determine whether significant effects on the environment are likely and hence whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required.

Screening of Development

When screening Schedule 2 projects, the Local Planning Authority must take account of the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the Regulations. Not all of the criteria will be relevant in every case. Each case should be considered on its own merits in a balanced way.

Where it is determined that the proposed development is not Environmental Impact Assessment Development, the Local Planning Authority must state any features of the proposed development and measures envisaged to avoid, or prevent what might otherwise have been, significant adverse effects on the environment.

Paragraph 2.4 of the submitted EIA Screening Opinion Request confirms that the Applicant is a Statutory Undertaker for the provision of water and sewages. Therefore, the Applicant would benefit from Permitted Development Rights for the proposed development under Class A of Part 13 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) ('GPDO').

However, Paragraph 10(a) of Section 3 of the GPDO confirms that Schedule 1 development or Schedule 2 development within the meaning of the Regulations is not permitted by the GPDO unless the Local Planning Authority has adopted a screening opinion under Regulation 6 of those Regulations that the development is not EIA development within the meaning of those Regulations.

Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') also states that Schedule 2 development does not constitute Permitted Development unless the Local Planning Authority has adopted a screening opinion to the effect that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required. Where an Environmental Impact Assessment is required, Permitted Development Rights are withdrawn, and a planning application must be submitted and accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

Given the above, the Local Planning Authority's screening assessment is solely based on the submitted details by the Applicant.

Should the Applicant not implement the proposed development as described within this application, nor in accordance with the necessary environmental mitigation measures identified by the Local Planning Authority, the scheme would not benefit from Permitted Development Rights without a further screening opinion. The following screening assessment has been undertaken on this basis, and in accordance with the selection criteria detailed at Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

The screening opinion is based on the following submitted information:

Submitted 04 February 2026

- Gradiometer Survey Report

Submitted 28 January 2026

- EIA Screening Opinion Request (V2)

Submitted 27 January 2026

- Archaeological Management Strategy (294344 03)
- Overarching Written Scheme of Investigation (294344 04)

Submitted 19 December 2025

- Tree Impact Plan

Submitted 17 November 2025

- Archaeology Clarifications Letter
- CPC Best Practice Construction Statement
- Ecology Technical Note
- Propose Charnwood Pipeline Location
- Watercourse Crossing #2 Information
- Whole Proposed Development Area

Submitted 26 September 2025

- Arboricultural Survey Data Sheets
- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Statement of Heritage Report ref .: 294341.02
- Environmental Impact assessment Overview Pipe Only Dwg no STW-2025-08-JS-EIA
- Environmental Impact Assessment Page1 Dwg no STW-2025-08-JS-EIA Rev A
- Environmental Impact Assessment Page2 Dwg no STW-2025-08-JS-EIA Rev A
- Environmental Impact Assessment Page3 Dwg no STW-2025-08-JS-EIA Rev A
- Environmental Impact Assessment Page4 Dwg no STW-2025-08-JS-EIA Rev A
- Environmental Impact Assessment Page5 Dwg no STW-2025-08-JS-EIA Rev A
- Environmental Impact Assessment Page 6 Dwg no STW-2025-08-JS-EIA Rev A

- Hallgates to Elms Farm Pipeline Route (Section 2 – Additional Scope), Leicestershire/Preliminary Ecological Assessment
- Road Closure & Diversion Bradgate Road Cropston LE7 7GB Dwg no RHTM/RJA/5299/0
- Road Closure & Diversion Bradgate Road Cropston LE7 7GB Dwg no RHTM/RJA/5299/002
- Road Closure & Diversion Bradgate Road Cropston LE7 7GB Dwg no RHTM/RJA/5299/003
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment
- Protected Species Report Badger Report Ref 10480.013
- Protected Species Report Crayfish Report Ref: 10480.014
- Protected Species Report Great Crested Newt
- Protected Species Report Otter & Water Voles Report Ref::10480.009
- Reservoir Road closure Diversion Dwg no RHTM RJA 5299 010
- Summary of Existing Arboricultural Information available
- Summary of Existing Ecological Information available
- Tree Constraints Plan Drawings 1 to 51 Dwg nos D10480.01.001 - D10480.01.051
- Winter Bird Habitat Assessment Doc Ref: 10480.010

Characteristics of Development

Schedule 3(1) of the Regulations states that the characteristics of development must be considered with particular regard to—

(a) the size and design of the whole development

Within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth, the development would be 2.4 kilometres in length. The pipeline would be constructed predominantly via open-cut techniques that utilise an excavator to excavate a 1.8-metre-wide and 2.5-metre-deep trench, in which the pipe would be laid to allow for a 1 metre depth of cover. The excavation would be benched on one side and sloped on the other, with a width of approximately 4 metres at the top of the trench

A dual trenchless installation would also be used in three locations to install approximately 616 metres of pipework in two locations beneath the Leicester Western Bypass (A46) and beneath Groby Road. The dual trenchless installation at Groby Road and at the southern crossing of the Leicester Western Bypass would be within the Local Planning Authority's jurisdiction. The dual trenchless installation would be completed by horizontal directional drilling ('HDD'). HDD is achieved from ground-level pits by launching a pilot bore at the required depth and length. The pilot is then reamed until it's a suitable diameter for the main to be pulled through.

Once implemented, the ground, site, and working areas would be returned to the state which existed prior to the commencement of the works.

Overall, the final development would be considered to be limited in terms of built form, massing and height by virtue of the type of the proposal, although acknowledging that it does temporarily change the character of the land during the construction period, no likely significant impacts on the environment would be considered to arise as a result of the size and design of the whole development.

(b) cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development

No other existing or approved developments have been identified within location of the proposed pipeline in the last five years. However, the proposed location of the development would run along the eastern boundary of land south of Sacheverell Way, Groby, which is currently subject to an outline planning application (25/01213/OUT) for a residential development of up to 180 dwellings. Given the size of this other development, the residential scheme will be subject to its own screening opinion assessment. However, this application has not been determined yet and the detailed design, layout, and appearance of the scheme is not subject for determination at this stage. Overall, the current proposal would not be considered to result in any likely significant cumulative impacts on the environment or result in an over concentration of this use in light of other existing or approve development in the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the cumulative impact of the whole of the development, including those areas in Blaby District Council and Charnwood Borough Council is likely to be greater than overall impacts solely in the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth, it is considered that with the appropriate mitigation measures as detailed within this Screening Opinion, and as detailed within the Applicant's submitted details, the cumulative impact of the whole development would not be considered to have a significant impact on the environment, nor to the extent that would require the submission of an environmental statement to the Local Planning Authority.

(c) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity

Aside from the works underneath the Leicester Western Byway and Anstey Lane, the development would be undertaken on agricultural land within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth. The scheme would utilise natural resources and would require the excavation of soil to install the proposed pipeline. The level of natural resources required to facilitate this water pipeline, such as land use, would not be considered to have a significant effect on natural resources in the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth. In addition, a variety of measures during the construction phase would also reduce impacts upon land and soils.

As confirmed on Page 15 of the EIA Screening Opinion Request, following the completion of the proposed works, all land affected by the scheme would be fully reinstated to the condition which existing prior to the commencement of the works.

For example, prior to works commencing, land drainage surveys would be undertaken which would inform the nature and types of soils in addition to any required drainage works.

Subsequently, using information gained from the surveys, topsoil would be stripped and stored in a bund to one side of the working width and subsoil would be removed from the trench would be stored in a separate bund to the topsoil. Both soil bunds would be within the 40-metre construction easement using practices outlined in DEFRA Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites and The MAFF Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils, April 2000. Pre-construction and post-construction works would take place in accordance with the findings of the surveys.

The affected land and soil would be reinstated once the proposed pipeline has been implemented to ensure that there would be no lasting impact on the land along the proposed pipeline route. As such, the development would not be considered to have a significant effect on natural resources within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth.

No major water courses would be crossed by the proposed pipeline, but the development would cross various minor water courses, such as small streams and ditches via an open-cut method, associated with a reduced working corridor. It is noted that works near or on watercourses require Ordinary Watercourse Consent in accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended).

The Applicant has confirmed that work in proximity to watercourses would be undertaken in accordance with working method statements to ensure the proposed work would not be associated with any adverse impacts on such watercourses and associated wildlife.

Subject to these details being submitted to, and considered acceptable by, Leicestershire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority prior to any works affecting watercourses, the development would not be considered to significantly or detrimentally impact the relative abundance, availability, quality, or regenerative capacity of water or watercourses within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth.

(d) the production of waste

Construction waste is an inevitability with any development project. The main environmental concerns associated with this development arise during the construction phase, including landscape and topographical changes and the production of waste associated with the excavation, disturbance and movement of topsoil and subsoil.

The Applicant has confirmed that this volume of surplus subsoil would be distributed across the working area prior to the topsoil being replaced and any dug material from the site which could not be reinstated on site would be sent off-site to an appropriate recycling facility. Subject to these mitigation measures being undertaken, the development's production of waste would not be considered to result in any significant effects to the environment.

(e) pollution and nuisances

Once operational the pipeline as installed would not be considered to result in any pollution or nuisance impacts.

The principal consideration regarding pollution and nuisances associated with this development would therefore be temporary and during the construction phase, including construction traffic and the installation of the development on site.

The route of the proposed pipeline would be located away from the residential properties in Ratby and Groby on agricultural land within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough. Any existing land contamination discovered during the construction of the development can be appropriately addressed under the statutory requirements of Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

To reduce any potential pollution and nuisance impacts during construction, the Applicant has confirmed that the construction of the scheme would be staggered and undertaken in sections, implemented in accordance with a Construction Traffic Management Plan, and the proposed working hours would be limited to 7 AM to 7 PM. The Applicant has submitted a Practice Statement that confirms the development would be constructed in accordance with British Standard BS 5228 (Noise and Vibration Control).

By virtue of the location and scale of the development, and the proposed temporary and staggered nature of the construction of the scheme, it is considered that the pollution and nuisance impacts of the development within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth would be satisfactorily managed through a construction traffic management plan and construction environment management plan, which have been considered acceptable by the Council's Environmental Health Department. Ultimately any issues regarding pollution and nuisance can be addressed via the requirements of statutory nuisance of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended).

- (f) *the risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge*

The proposed works lie predominantly within Flood Zone 1 where there is a low probability of flooding, but some sections of the route are located within Flood Zone 3 such as to the south of Ratby, and as it crosses the Leicester Western Bypass towards Anstey Lane. These would form very small areas of the proposed development, and the construction works would be temporary in nature and phased to limiting the potential of any flooding of the construction zones. Furthermore, Flood Risk Activity Permits ('FRAPs') are required from the Environment Agency ('EA') for working in these area and the management of risks in connection with flooding is controlled by the statutory requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (as amended).

It is not considered that there are any other likely risks of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the proposed works.

Given the above, the proposed development is not considered vulnerable to major accidents and/ or disasters, including major flood events which may be exacerbated by climate change.

- (g) *the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).*

The development would not be considered to result in any water contamination or air pollution issues to the significant detriment of human health.

Although the development would likely present a risk to human health during its construction, these impacts would be localised and controlled by the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (as amended), the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health ('COSHH') Regulations (as amended), and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended). Therefore, the risks to human health would not be considered to be significant in the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough.

Location of Development

Schedule 3(2) of the Regulations confirms that the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered, with particular regard, to—

- (a) *the existing and approved land use*

Within the jurisdiction of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, the proposed development would take place solely on agricultural land and underneath public highways. Works affecting a public highway require approval from Leicestershire County Council as the Local Highway in accordance with the Highways Act 1980 (as amended). Although an agricultural land classification report has not been submitted, given the above measures and findings, this is not considered alone to be sufficient to require an Environmental Statement.

Once the proposed development is installed under the ground, the affected land would be returned to its original statement prior to the commencement of the works. In light of these factors, the development would not be considered to result in any significant harm to the existing and approved uses of land within the application site.

- (b) *the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground; and*

Aside from the works underneath the Leicester Western Byway and Anstey Lane, the development would be undertaken on agricultural land within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth. For the pipeline works, given the underground nature and scale of the development, it would not result in a significant or permanent loss in the amount or quality of land proposed for the route, or in proximity to it. As confirmed on Page 15 of the EIA Screening Opinion Request, following the completion of the proposed works, all land affected by the scheme would be fully reinstated to the condition which existing prior to the commencement of the works. On this basis, the development would not be considered to significantly or detrimentally impact the relative abundance, availability, quality, or regenerative capacity of soil or land.

Biodiversity and ecological impacts will be discussed further in this Report.

(c) *the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas—*

- (i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths; and*
- (ii) coastal zones and the marine environment; and*
- (iii) mountain and forest areas; and*
- (iv) nature reserves and parks; and*
- (v) European sites and other areas classified or protected under national legislation; and*
- (vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in assimilated law and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure; and*
- (vii) densely populated areas; and*
- (viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.*

The proposed development would not be considered to affect any identified areas highlighted at Schedule 3(2)(c) of the Regulations within land under the jurisdiction of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

However, due to the lack of previous archaeological investigation within the application site, the presence, location and significance of any buried remains of archaeological significance cannot currently be confirmed.

To mitigate any potential impacts of the development to sites of archaeological significance within the application site, Leicestershire County Council's Archaeology Department confirmed that the development must be undertaken accompanied by an archaeological desk-based assessment that is to an appropriate standard and encompasses the necessary categories of data and information, alongside sufficient on-site investigation to substantiate the conclusions of the desk-based assessment to establish the implications of the development and its impact upon the significance of the known and potential archaeological resources within the application site.

Sufficient on-site archaeological investigation would require a geophysical survey and may include further fieldwalking and trial trenching measures, where identified as necessary by Leicestershire County Council. The on-site archaeological investigation should not be confined to known sites and/or detected geographical anomalies to allow for a thorough investigation of all likely impacts of the construction of the proposed development.

Following this, the scheme would require the preparation of a robust mitigation strategy that draws from both the desk-based assessment and geophysical survey to design a programme of archaeological fieldwork comprising an initial stage of archaeological assessment and archaeological trial trenching, followed by a second stage of appropriate archaeological managements. These works should ensure that there is suitable off-setting mitigation, such as, but not limited to, earthwork survey and restoration, area investigation by excavation or strip, plan and sample methodologies, and archaeological monitoring with a watching brief, alongside appropriate contingency provision.

This programme of archaeological fieldwork must be shown to be deliverable within the context of the development in terms of timetable, to allow for the review of trial trenching results and to design and implement any necessary further investigation and recording, and development impacts, to deliver a suitable scheme of investigation and recording given the nature of the development impact.

The Applicant has stated that all archaeological works would be conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists standards and guidance, and the methodologies set out within the Written Schemes of Investigation and the Archaeological Management Strategy would be agreed with the County Council's Archaeologist.

Should significant archaeological remains be identified within the application site, works should cease within the affected area of the application site until further investigative and mitigation measures in consultation with Leicestershire County Council's Archaeological Department have been undertaken to the satisfaction of the County Council.

By virtue of the above factors, and on the basis that the above requested archaeological mitigation measures were submitted to and approved by Leicestershire County Council's Archaeology Department prior to the commencement of each staggered phase of the construction of the development, and subject to the works then being implemented in accordance with these approved details, the proposed mitigation measures would be considered to ensure that the development would not result in any significant effects to landscapes or sites of archaeological significance.

Types and Characteristics of the Potential Impact

Schedule 3(3) of the Regulations states that the likely significant effects of the development on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in Schedule 3(1) and (2) above, with regard to the impact of the development on the factors specified in Regulation 4(2), taking into account—

- (a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected); and
- (b) the nature of the impact; and
- (c) the transboundary nature of the impact; and
- (d) the intensity and complexity of the impact; and
- (e) the probability of the impact; and
- (f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact; and
- (g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development; and
- (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

Regulation 4(2) of the Regulations specifies that the environmental impact assessment must identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of the proposed development on the following factors—

- (a) population and human health; and
- (b) biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under any law that implemented Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC; and
- (c) land, soil, water, air and climate; and
- (d) material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape; and
- (e) the interaction between the factors referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d).

As a whole the spatial extent of the proposed development would cover 9.4 kilometres, but only 2.4 kilometres of which would be within the jurisdiction of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. Therefore, the magnitude and spatial extent of the development would have the potential to result in significant effects on the environment. Whilst the proposal would span across the jurisdiction of three different local authorities, the scheme would still be in England. Therefore, the proposal would not be considered to result in any transboundary impacts.

The development would be below ground within a 2.5-metre-deep trench and once the proposed works were completed, the trench would be backfilled using the original excavated soil and the land would be fully reinstated to its original condition. It is therefore considered that the operation of the pipeline would not be considered to result in any significant effects on the environment, including human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, air or climate, or material assets. As such, the nature of the impact of the proposed development on the environment would be limited to its construction.

The probability of impacts from the construction of the development would be expected to be inevitable. However, this impact on the environment could be reduced through appropriate mitigation measures.

The proposed works would be undertaken via a 2.5-year construction programme, which would be commenced and completed in sections and the affected area would be returned to the state prior to the commencement of the works.

Ultimately, the construction of the below-ground waterpipe would not be considered to be of an intense or complex nature that would result in a significant effect on the environment in of itself.

No other existing or approved developments have been identified within location of the proposed pipeline in the last five years. Therefore, the impact of the development when considering the cumulative impact of other existing or approved developments would not be considered to result in any significant effects on the environment.

Land, Soil, Water, Air, and Climate

Any land and soil affected by the proposed development would be reinstated once the proposed pipeline has been implemented to ensure that there would be no lasting impact on the land along the proposed pipeline route. The Applicant has confirmed that work in proximity to watercourses would be undertaken in accordance with working method statements to ensure the proposed work would not be associated with any adverse impacts on such watercourses and associated wildlife.

By virtue of these factors, the construction of this form and scale of development would not be considered to have a significant effect on land, soil, water, air or the climate in the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth.

Population and Human Health

The Applicant has confirmed that all works would be undertaken in accordance with recognised UK construction best practice, including, but not limited to, CIRIA guidance on environmental good practice and control of water pollution, British Standards such as BS 5528 (Noise and Vibration Control) and BS 42020 (Biodiversity Code of Practice), amongst others. The construction of the development would also be controlled by the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (as amended), the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health ('COSHH') Regulations (as amended), and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended).

The scheme would be separated from neighbouring residential properties in Groby and Ratby by Sacheverell Way and the Leicester Western Bypass, and the Ivanhoe Trail respectively, as well as agricultural fields.

In addition, the development would be installed with a 40-metre-wide working width to safely and appropriately accommodate excavations, haul roads, storage areas and excavated material stockpiles, and the hours of working would be limited from between 7 AM and 7 PM.

Page 18 of the EIA Screening Opinion Request confirms that the development would be constructed in accordance with a Construction Environment Management Plan. The Construction Environment Management Plan should be approved in writing by the Council's Environmental Health Department and include details on how the impact of dust, odour, noise, light and land contamination would be controlled, mitigated or prevented, and monitored to minimise the impact of the development on nearby existing properties and the environment.

By virtue of the scheme's distance from neighbouring residential properties, the extent of the safety working area, the limited working hours, and the staggered nature of the construction phase, and the construction of the development in accordance with best practices and a Construction Environment Management Plan approved by the Local Planning Authority, the development would not be considered to result in any significant effects to the population or human health in these site-specific circumstances.

Material Assets, Cultural Heritage, and the Landscape

As the affected areas of the site would be returned to their original state, the scheme would not be considered to result in any significant effect to the landscape of the area.

The proposed development would not be considered to result in any significant effects on any identified material assets or cultural heritage assets.

Any necessary diversions or proposed works to public highways or Public Rights of Way would require approval from Leicestershire County Council as the Local Highway Authority under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended) and Section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), and the Highways Act 1980 (as amended)

respectively. As these matters are controlled outside of the planning process, it is considered that the development's impacts on these assets would not be significant.

Although the presence, location and significance of any buried remains of archaeological significance within the site cannot currently be confirmed, the development would be undertaken in accordance with an Archaeological Management Strategy and a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by, and in consultation with, the County Council's Archaeology Department. On this basis, that the development would not result in any significant effects to landscapes or sites of archaeological significance within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth.

Biodiversity and Protected Species and Habitats

However, the scheme would be located within the Risk Impact Zone of Groby Pool and Woods, Sheet Hedges Wood, and Bradgate Park and Cropston Reservoir, which are all Sites of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI'). The Preliminary Ecological Assessment ('PEA') also highlighted that the scheme is likely to impact several protected species of flora and fauna including, but not limited to, badgers, bats, bluebells, birds, otters, and water voles.

Given the above, the PEA stated that the following surveys were required to inform the construction of the development: a National Vegetation Classification Survey of all lowland hay meadow grasslands, a River Condition Assessment including a MoRPH survey, badger surveys, day time and nocturnal bat roost surveys, otter surveys, water vole surveys, white-clawed crayfish surveys, breeding bird surveys, winter bird surveys, a Ground Level Tree Assessment, Environmental DNA surveys of waterbodies within 250 metres of the site, and a bluebell survey and method statement. The PEA also recommended the production of a Construction Environment Management Plan, a Sensitive Lighting Strategy, an Invasive Non-Native Species Method Statement, and Precautionary Method of Working Statements for bats, badgers, brown hares, hedgehogs, polecats, amphibians, reptiles, and notable plants.

The Applicant has provided an Ecology Technical Note to demonstrate that the proposed surveys and works are currently being prepared for the development.

In light of the above, Natural England confirmed that the potential effects of the construction of the development could be avoided through the proposed measures within the Construction Environment Management Plan. Leicestershire County Council's Ecology Department also confirmed that protected and priority species had been considered adequately and any direct or indirect impacts upon local wildlife sites and SSSIs during construction of the development can be mitigated via a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Notwithstanding the above, the Applicant as a statutory undertaker is legally obliged under Section 3(2)(a) and (b) of Part I of the Water Industry Act 1991 (as amended) to further the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, flora, fauna, and geological features, and to have regard to the protection of buildings, sites, and objects of archaeological, architectural, or historic interest.. Furthermore, protected ecological areas and species are protected by the statutory requirements of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1980 (as amended).

Page 12 of the EIA Scoping Opinion Request confirms that tree and hedgerow removal would be kept a minimum, and any vegetation removal would be replaced by appropriate replanting in the first appropriate planting season following the completion of the works. Any impacts to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order would require consent from the Local Planning Authority and any important hedgerows are protected by the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 (as amended).

The Arboricultural Technical note also advises that the construction of the development should be supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, including a Tree Protection Plan, an Arboricultural Method Statement, and temporary physical protection methods. Any impacts that cannot be mitigated using methodological mitigation would be mitigated or offset by new planting.

Subject to the development being undertaken in complete accordance with the recommendations of the submitted details, including, but not limited to, the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and the Arboricultural Technical Note, and the provision of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, approved by the County Council's Ecology Department, it is considered that the impacts of the construction of the development on the environment and biodiversity within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth could be mitigated to prevent any significant effects.

Conclusion

The proposed development of a below-ground water pipeline would represent a Schedule 2 development infrastructure project that exceeds the relevant threshold requirements in Column 2 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations. Following the Local Planning Authority's screening assessment of the proposed development, the impacts of the development would be considered to be predominantly from the construction phase of the scheme. Through the appropriate mitigation measures highlighted within the Applicant's submitted documents and within this Report, it is not considered that the development of a 9.42 kilometre below-ground water pipeline and 0.2 kilometre cross-connection would be likely to have significant effects on the environment within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth that would require the submission of further information at this stage, or the submission of an Environmental Statement, in these site-specific circumstances for the reasons set out below.

In summary, the proposed works within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth would not be considered to represent Environmental Impact Assessment Development, and an Environmental Statement would not be required in these site-specific circumstances.

Yours faithfully



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