



# The Planning Inspectorate

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Alistair Andrew  
Head of Planning Services  
MAG London Stanstead Airport

Your Ref:

Our Ref: S62A/22/5000001

**Sent by email**

Date: 26 April 2022

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Dear Mr Andrew

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - SECTION 62A  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)  
REGULATIONS 2017 (SI 571/2017 ('THE EIA REGULATIONS'))**

**Applicant:** Manchester Airports Group (MAG) and Stanstead Airport Limited (STAL).

**Site Address:** Land southeast of Stansted Airport, near Takeley, Bishops Cleeve.

We refer to your letter dated 06 April 2022 (sent via email on 07 April 2022) requesting a Screening Opinion. The Proposed Development has been screened by the Secretary of State under Regulation 5(6)b and therefore comprises a Screening Direction.

The development proposed, namely a solar farm including battery storage units, with approximately 14.3MW total maximum capacity, is located to the immediate southeast of Stansted Airport, Essex. It falls within the description at 3(a) of Schedule 2 to the EIA Regulations and exceeds the threshold in Column 2 of the table in that Schedule. Having taken into account the criteria in Schedule 3 to the above EIA Regulations, the Proposed Development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment for the following reasons:

The Proposed Development application site comprises approximately 22.5ha of land currently utilised for arable farming. Stansted Airport lies to the north, with agricultural fields to the east, south and west. The Proposed Development exceeds the applicable threshold of the EIA Regulations as the area of the development exceeds 0.5ha. The site is also located within proximity to 'sensitive areas' as defined in the EIA Regulations, namely two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Hatfield Forest SSSI and Elsenham Wood SSSI) and two Scheduled Monuments (The Grange and the site of Waltham Hall).

Considering the nature and characteristics of the Proposed Development and the extent of the likely impacts it is unlikely that significant effects on Hatfield Forest SSSI or Elsenham Wood SSSI would occur.

The Proposed Development would not directly impact on the Scheduled Monuments or above ground heritage assets (including the Grade II listed Le Knells Cottage and Grade II listed Old House Farmhouse) but would result in a change to their setting. Whilst there is the potential for adverse impacts, considering the scale of the Proposed Development, the distances involved, and the existing and proposed visual screening, it is considered unlikely that significant effects would occur. Potential impacts from ground disturbance on buried archaeology could be addressed by appropriate mitigation measures (such as further proportionate archaeological investigation during construction).

The Proposed Development has potential to give rise to adverse landscape and visual impacts. Such impacts are likely to reduce over time as the proposed landscaping becomes established. Given the scale, nature and location of the development and proposed mitigation, it is considered that significant effects are unlikely. Although the majority of the site comprises Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land (Grade 3a), there is no indication that agricultural land is in short supply in the locality and the effects of the scheme are considered to be reversible at the end of the operational life of the Proposed Development. Grazing of small livestock may be able to continue in conjunction with operation of the Proposed Development. It is considered unlikely that the temporary loss of this area of agricultural land would result in a significant effect.

If structures or plant/maintenance facilities are to be located in the area of infilled water features adjacent to McMillan's Engineering to the north of the site, potential risks of contamination could be addressed through localised site investigations and appropriate mitigation measures.

Overall, subject to implementation of appropriate mitigation measures in relation to noise from any piling, to avoid any risks of contamination and to protect archaeological assets and species including badgers and birds, the Proposed Development is considered unlikely to result in significant effects on the environment, either alone or cumulatively with other development.

Accordingly, in exercise of the powers conferred on the Secretary of State by Regulation 5(6) of the EIA Regulations, the Secretary of State hereby directs that this development is not Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development.

Under Regulation 28(1) of the EIA Regulations, the relevant planning authority must take steps to secure that this screening direction is placed on the part of the Planning Register which relates to the application.

A copy of this letter will be sent to Uttlesford District Council for information.

Yours sincerely

*Richard Hunt*

**RICHARD HUNT**  
**Operations Lead – Environmental Services**  
**(Signed with the authority of the Secretary of State)**

cc: Uttlesford District Council

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