

**PELHAM SPRING SOLAR FARM  
ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT  
MAIN STATEMENT**

**CHAPTER 7 – SOCIO ECONOMIC ISSUES**

On behalf of Low Carbon Solar Park 6 Limited

Date: January 2023

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## Document Management.

Version	Date	Author	Checked/ Approved by:	Reason for revision

## **7 SOCIO ECONOMIC ISSUES**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

- 7.1.1 This chapter establishes the baseline socio-economic conditions and then considers the likely socio-economic effects of the Proposed Development.
- 7.1.2 This chapter assesses the potential effects on the local population anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development and, in turn, assesses the effects this could have on relevant services, facilities and the economy. It identifies the socio-economic baseline in relation to key issues, specifically the economy and labour force, and the potential effects that could occur, both direct and indirect, arising from the construction (temporary effects) and operation of the Proposed Development.

### **7.2 ASSESSMENT APPROACH**

#### **Methodology**

- 7.2.1 There is no specific guidance available which establishes a methodology for undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the socio-economic effects of a Proposed Development. Accordingly, the approach adopted for this assessment is based on professional experience and best practice, and in consideration of the policy requirements/tests set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local planning policy.
- 7.2.2 The Infrastructure Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017<sup>1</sup> state that an ES should contain:
- 7.2.3 "A description of the factors specified in regulation 5(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development: population."
- 7.2.4 Following this guidance, the assessment specifically includes the following:
- Identification of the socio-economic baseline in respect of each of the key socio-economic issues identified, focussing on the characteristics of the economy and labour force. These characteristics have been used as a measure for assessing future changes associated with or resulting from the Proposed Development.
  - Qualification of the full range of socio-economic effects, both direct and indirect, arising from the construction (temporary effects) and operation (permanent effects) of the Proposed Development.
- 7.2.5 The baseline information has been collated with reference to the following:
- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1).
  - National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy (EN-3).
  - The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
  - Office for National Statistics (ONS) data (various outputs as individually referenced within this chapter).
  - Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (for deprivation data).

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<sup>1</sup> *The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017)*, available from: [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/572/pdfs/ukxi\\_20170572\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/572/pdfs/ukxi_20170572_en.pdf)

- The Government’s Levelling Up White Paper<sup>2</sup>.
- Energy South2East Local Energy Strategy<sup>3</sup>
- Uttlesford Climate Crisis Strategy 2021-2030<sup>4</sup>
- Information obtained from the client.

**Assessment of Significance**

7.2.6 The first step in the assessment is to identify the sensitivity of the receptors. In socio-economic assessments, receptors are not sensitive to changing environmental conditions in the same way as many environmental receptors are. To address this, the assessment draws on a combination of measurable indicators and a consideration of the importance of the receptor in policy terms to gauge the receptor’s sensitivity. For example, the number of jobs in the area may increase as new developments are completed and occupied by businesses. This is considered alongside the weight attached to these issues in local policy. For example, the Local Plan may have identified that employment and business growth is a particular priority. Table 7.1 shows the sensitivity criteria followed in this assessment.

Table 7.1: Sensitivity Criteria

<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Evidence for Sensitivity Assessment</b>
High	Evidence of direct and significant socio-economic challenges relating to receptor. Accorded a high priority in local, regional or national economic regeneration policy.
Medium	Some evidence of socio-economic challenges linked to receptor, which may be indirect. Change relating to receptor has medium priority in local, regional and national economic and regeneration policy.
Low	Little evidence of socio-economic challenges relating to receptor. Receptor is accorded a low priority in local, regional and national economic and regeneration policy.
Negligible	No socio-economic issues relating to receptor. Receptor is not considered a priority in local, regional and national economic development and regeneration policy.

7.2.7 The magnitude of change upon each receptor has been determined by considering the predicted deviation from baseline conditions, both before and, if required, after mitigation. The criteria used for the assessment of magnitude of change, which can be either positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) are shown in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Magnitude of Change Criteria

<sup>2</sup> *Levelling Up*. HM Government (2022).

<sup>3</sup> *Energy South2East Local Energy Strategy: Coast to Capital, Enterprise M3 and South East Local Enterprise Partnership*, March 2019.

<sup>4</sup> *Uttlesford Climate Crisis Strategy 2021-2030*: Uttlesford District Council, February 2021.

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<b>Magnitude of Impact</b>	<b>Description / Criteria</b>
High	Proposed Development would cause a large change to existing socio-economic conditions in terms of absolute and/or percentage change.
Medium	Proposed Development would cause a moderate change to existing socio-economic conditions in terms of absolute or percentage change.
Low	Proposed Development would cause a minor change to existing socio-economic conditions in terms of absolute and or percentage change.
Negligible	No discernible change in baseline socio-economic conditions.

7.2.8 In reporting the effects of significance resulting from the Proposed Development, at construction and operational stages, the assessment contextualises both the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change. The method uses the matrix shown in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Significance Matrix

<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<b>Sensitivity of Receptor</b>			
	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Negligible</b>
<b>High</b>	Major	Major	Moderate	Negligible
<b>Medium</b>	Major	Moderate	Minor to Moderate	Negligible
<b>Low</b>	Moderate	Minor to Moderate	Minor	Negligible
<b>Negligible</b>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

7.2.9 Using this scale, effects identified as major or moderate are regarded as being significant. Effects of minor or lesser significance are also identified but regarded as not significant.

**Legislative and Policy Framework**

National Policy Statements

Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

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- 7.2.10 The Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (EN-1)<sup>5</sup> notes that where a project is likely to have socio-economic impacts at local or regional levels, an assessment of such impacts should be undertaken. The existing socio-economic conditions in the areas surrounding the Proposed Development should be described as well as how the Proposed Development's socio-economic impacts correlate with relevant local planning policies. EN-1 stipulated the importance of evidence-based socio-economic assessment.
- 7.2.11 In making their decision, EN-1 noted that the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) (now superseded by the Secretary of State (SoS)) should consider any relevant positive provisions and legacy benefits made by the Applicant in relation to socio-economics.
- 7.2.12 An update to the EN-1 (2011) was published in September 2021<sup>6</sup> (2021 Draft EN-1) and is currently in consultation. Key updates in the 2021 Draft EN-1 compared to the 2011 publication relate to range of impacts to be considered and suggested specific mitigation relating to potential impacts during each of the phases of development.
- 7.2.13 Firstly, 2021 Draft EN-1 makes reference to an extended list of potential impacts to consider (as relevant) including (but not limited to) creation of jobs and training opportunities, contribution to low-carbon industries, provision of additional local services and improvements to local infrastructure, any indirect beneficial impacts for the region, effects on tourism, impact of a changing influx of workers, and cumulative effects.
- 7.2.14 Secondly, the Draft EN-1 (2021) makes reference to the need to consider development of accommodation strategies, if appropriate, to address any potential impacts during the construction and decommissioning phases. In addition, it also refers to the potential for the SoS to require the approval of an employment and skills plan detailing arrangements to promote local employment and skills development opportunities.

#### National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy (EN-3)

- 7.2.15 Socio-economic impacts were referenced only in respect of onshore wind and biomass power in the National Policy Statement (NPS) for Renewable Energy (EN-3) published in July 2011<sup>7</sup>. An update to the EN-3 (2011) was published in September 2021<sup>8</sup> (Draft 2021 EN-3) and is currently in consultation. In this latest draft, consideration of solar and potential for associated socio-economic effects is referenced in respect of the potential for socio-economic benefits of the site infrastructure being retained after the operational life of solar photovoltaic generation.

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<sup>5</sup> *Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)*, Department of Energy and Climate Change, July 2011.

<sup>6</sup> *Draft Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)*, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, September 2021.

<sup>7</sup> *National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy (EN-3)*, Department of Energy and Climate Change, July 2011.

<sup>8</sup> *Draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy (EN-3)*, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, September 2021.

National Planning Policy Framework

7.2.16 The most recent NPPF<sup>9</sup> was published in July 2021. A key focus of the framework is to achieve sustainable development which requires three interdependent objectives that need to be pursued in a mutually supportive way:

- **Economic Objective:** Ensure that the economy is strong, responsive and competitive to support growth.
- **Social Objective:** Ensure there is a sufficient supply and range of homes available to meet present and future demand.
- **Environmental Objective:** Ensure the natural, built and historic environment is protected including mitigating and adapting to climate change

7.2.17 Other relevant points to note from the revised NPPF include:

- Paragraph 152 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future and tackling climate change. It should help shape places in ways that contribute to a radical reduction in greenhouse gas emissions including supporting renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
- Paragraph 155 states that the planning system should increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat and provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources that maximises the potential for suitable development.
- The NPPF places significant weight on the need to support economic growth and productivity with chapter 6 setting out the objective of building a strong and competitive economy. Paragraph 82 states that the planning policies should:
  - Set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration.
  - Set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period.
  - Seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment.
  - Be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.
- Paragraph 83 finds that alongside this, planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.

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<sup>9</sup> *National Planning Policy Framework*. HM Government, July 2021.

Levelling Up White Paper

7.2.18 The strategy presented by the UK Government's **Levelling Up White Paper**<sup>10</sup> is underpinned by the fact that, although the UK as a whole is successful when compared to other countries globally, there is great disparity in respect of the shared value of that success within the UK itself and realising each communities' potential. As such, the White Paper sets out a programme to 'level up' the UK to transform places and boost local growth, including through, but not limited to, encouraging strong innovation, private sector investment, climate conducive development, and improvement in workers' skill and transport systems. The key missions set by the White Paper are, in summary:

- Boost in productivity, wages, jobs and living standards by investment and growth in the private sector.
- Provide opportunities and improvement in public services.
- Contribute to and encourage a sense of community, local pride and belonging.
- Empowerment of local leaders and communities.

7.2.19 It is imperative that the needs of an area are reflected in the proposals made, so that the benefits brought by development will appropriately contribute to, and ultimately result in, true levelling up of the economy, the environment, and society within the UK.

Energy South2East Local Energy Strategy

7.2.20 The Energy South2East Local Energy Strategy<sup>11</sup> was produced by Coast to Capital, Enterprise M3 and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) with the aim for the area to experience clean growth up to 2050. The vision of the Strategy is:

7.2.21 "To become a leader for sustainable energy production within the UK, powering innovative, decarbonised and clean growth".

7.2.22 The Local Energy Strategy has two main goals, the first is that the tri-LEP region will play a leading role in the UK's decarbonisation efforts by making targeted interventions to reduce emissions in the electricity, heat and transport sectors. The second goal is to achieve clean growth by supporting public and private investment in low carbon technologies to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the emerging low carbon economy.

7.2.23 The five key themes of the Local Energy Strategy are outlined below:

1. Low carbon heating: this will include off-gas grid homes, hydrogen injection into the national grid and new homes built on hydrogen grid.
2. Energy saving and efficiency: this will focus on ensuring energy efficiency in homes and support for small to medium enterprises to become energy efficient.
3. Renewable generation: there will be a priority to increase the generation of renewable energy including solar, off-shore wind, biomass and biofuel evolution.

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<sup>10</sup> *Levelling Up*: HM Government (2022).

<sup>11</sup> *Energy South2East Local Energy Strategy*: Coast to Capital, Enterprise M3 and South East Local Enterprise Partnership, March 2019.



4. Smart energy systems: this will include supporting the development of carbon capture and increasing EV-charging and hydrogen-fuelling infrastructure.
5. Transport revolution: there will be a modernisation of energy infrastructure at ports and EV-charging and hydrogen-fuelling infrastructure.

Uttlesford Climate Crisis Strategy 2021-2030

7.2.24 The Uttlesford Climate Crisis Strategy<sup>12</sup> covers the period from 2021 to 2030 and outlines the key priorities in Uttlesford in tackling climate change. The Strategy has seven key themes and priorities which are outlined below:

1. Resources: this priority will focus on protecting the natural resources, reducing waste, increasing recycling, improving air quality and reducing single use plastics.
2. Energy conservation: this includes increasing the local generation of renewable energy, improving energy efficiency in homes and offices and improving energy efficient infrastructure.
3. Planning and development: this will include developing zero carbon buildings, reducing energy and water consumption in existing buildings and implementing low energy and low waste construction practices.
4. Transport: this will focus on increasing sustainable transport such as prioritising walking and cycling, improving air quality, promoting public rights of way and growing the electric vehicle charging network and infrastructure.
5. Council assets and operations: this will include tree planting on council owned land and the introduction of carbon offsetting of emissions.
6. Natural environment: this will focus on improving air quality, biodiversity and water quality and increasing rural and urban tree planting.
7. Adapting to climate change: this will aim to support communities in building resilience and maintaining council and parish emergency plans.

**Scoping Criteria**

7.2.25 The scope and contents of this socio-economic assessment are based on professional experience and best practice. Consideration has been given only to the following socio-economic factors for which there is a potential for likely significant effects or which are relevant to assessing these effects:

- Construction Phase – local employment opportunities.
- Operational Phase – local employment opportunities.
- Operational Phase – socio-economic characteristics of local population.

**Extent of Study Area**

7.2.26 The assessment primarily focuses on the effects in the local authority area of Uttlesford. Data on East Hertfordshire has also been considered given the proximity

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<sup>12</sup> Uttlesford Climate Crisis Strategy 2021-2030: Uttlesford District Council, February 2021.

of the Proposed Development to the LPA. Where appropriate, benchmark data at a regional and national level are also provided.

**Limitations to the Assessment**

7.2.27 Baseline information is derived from the latest available statistics, however, there is often a time-lag associated with the publication of this data.

**7.3 BASELINE CONDITIONS**

**Site Description and Context**

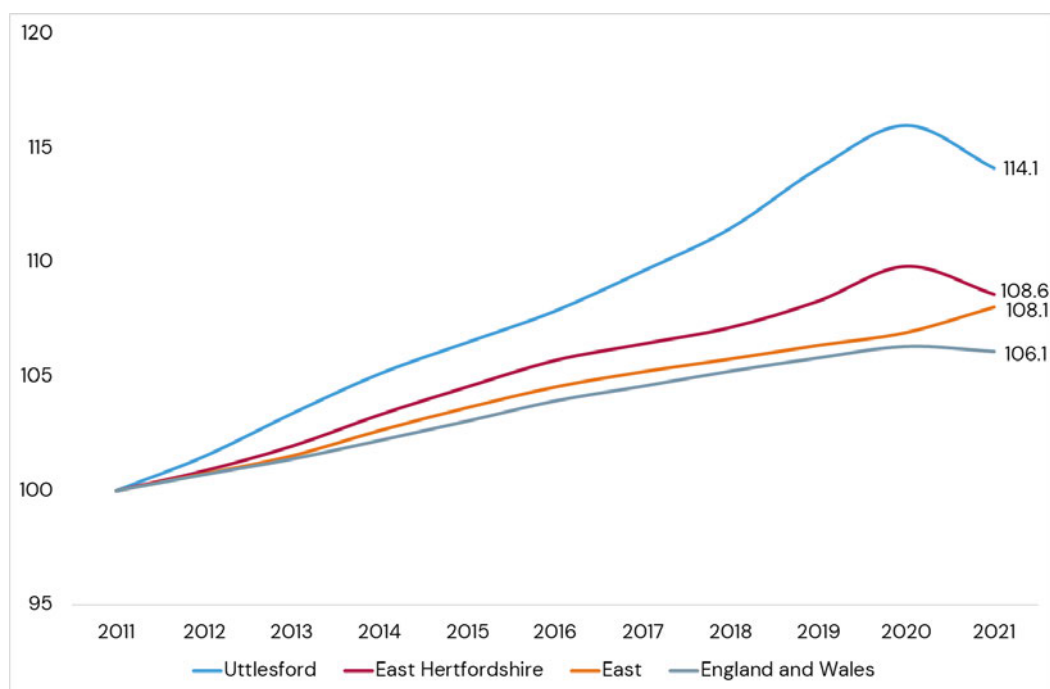
7.3.1 The Proposed Development is for the construction and operation of a renewable energy scheme comprising ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays and battery storage with ancillary equipment on agricultural land located near Pelham Substation, Maggots End. It is estimated that the Proposed Development would generate up to 49.9 MW of renewable energy.

**Baseline Survey Information**

Population

7.3.2 Data from the 2021 Census shows the total population of Uttlesford is around 91,300 and the population of East Hertfordshire is around 150,100. Figure 7.1 presents population change between 2011 and 2021. Over this timeframe, Uttlesford’s population increased by 14.1% – equating to 11,308 more people, whilst the population growth seen in East Hertfordshire was relatively lower at 8.6% (12,005). The corresponding population increases in the East of England was 8.1% and England and Wales saw population growth of 6.1%.

Figure 7.1: Population Change, 2011-21



**Source:** ONS, Mid-Year Population Estimates & 2021 Census

7.3.3 Data on population change by age in Uttlesford show that from 2011 to 2021, the young dependant population group (aged 0-15) increased by around 1,759 (11%), the number of economically active people (16-64) grew by 4,833 (9.6%) and people aged 65+ increased by approximately 4,716 (a rise of 34.4% - see Table 7.4. Table 7.5 shows that in East Hertfordshire the fastest growing age group between 2011 and 2021 were those aged 65 and over, with an increase of 27.5% (5,911). In the same time period, East Hertfordshire saw a growth of 5.3% (1,463) in those aged 0-15 and an increase of 5.2% (4,631) in those aged 16-64. All three age groups experienced growth over the same timeframe in the East of England and England and Wales, however it was the 65+ cohort that grew the fastest in all areas - 20.2% in the East of England and 19% in England and Wales.

Table 7.4: Uttlesford Population Change by Age, 2011-21

	2011	2020	Absolute Change	% Change
0-15	16,060	17,819	1,759	11.0%
16-64	50,258	55,091	4,833	9.6%
65+	13,714	18,430	4,716	34.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,032</b>	<b>91,340</b>	<b>11,308</b>	<b>14.1%</b>

**Source:** ONS, Mid-Year Population Estimates

Table 7.5: East Hertfordshire Population Change by Age, 2011-21

	2011	2020	Absolute Change	% Change
0-15	27,543	29,006	1,463	5.3%
16-64	89,130	93,761	4,631	5.2%
65+	21,482	27,393	5,911	27.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>138,155</b>	<b>150,160</b>	<b>12,005</b>	<b>8.7%</b>

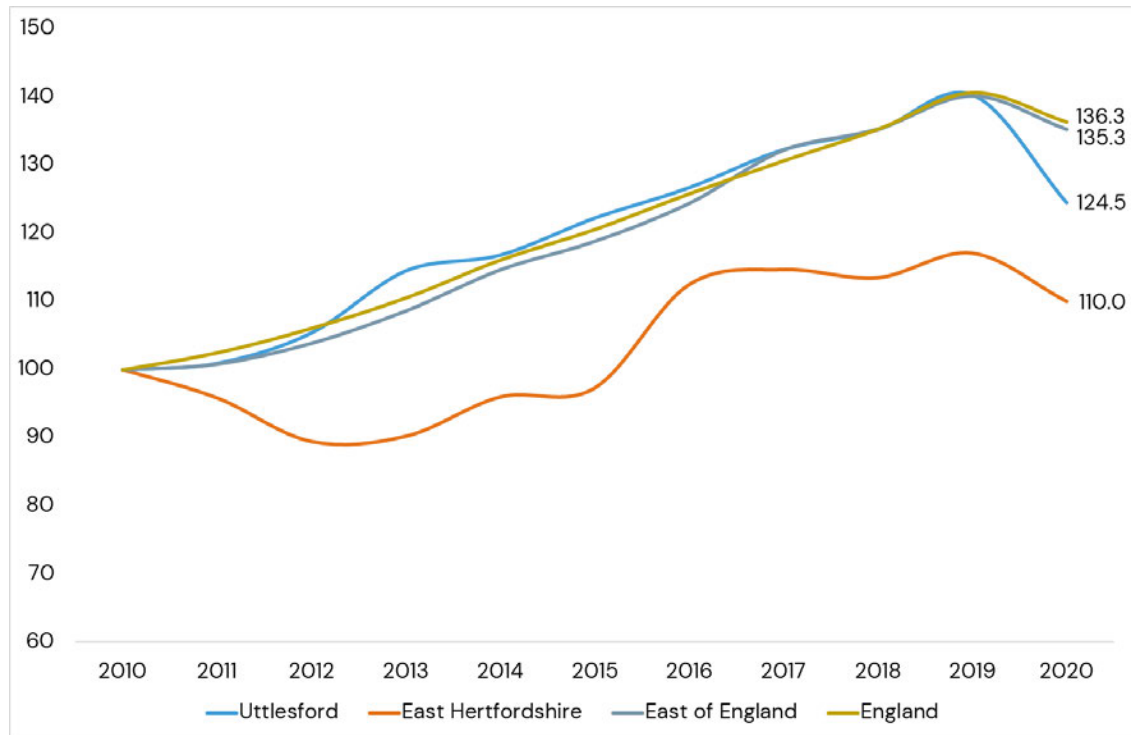
**Source:** ONS, Mid-Year Population Estimates

Economic Output

7.3.4 Figure 7.2 shows the GVA in Uttlesford, East Hertfordshire, the East of England and England between 2010 and 2020. In this time the GVA in Uttlesford increased by 24.5%. This was above the increase in GVA seen in East Hertfordshire (10%), but below the increase seen in the East of England (35.3%) and England (36.3%).

7.3.5 Between 2010 and 2020, the GVA of the construction sector in Uttlesford increased by 57.6%. This compares to a 69.8% increase in construction GVA in East Hertfordshire, 52.9% increase in the East of England and a 38.8% increase in England.

Figure 7.2: Gross Value added at current basic prices, 2010-20 (2010 = 100)

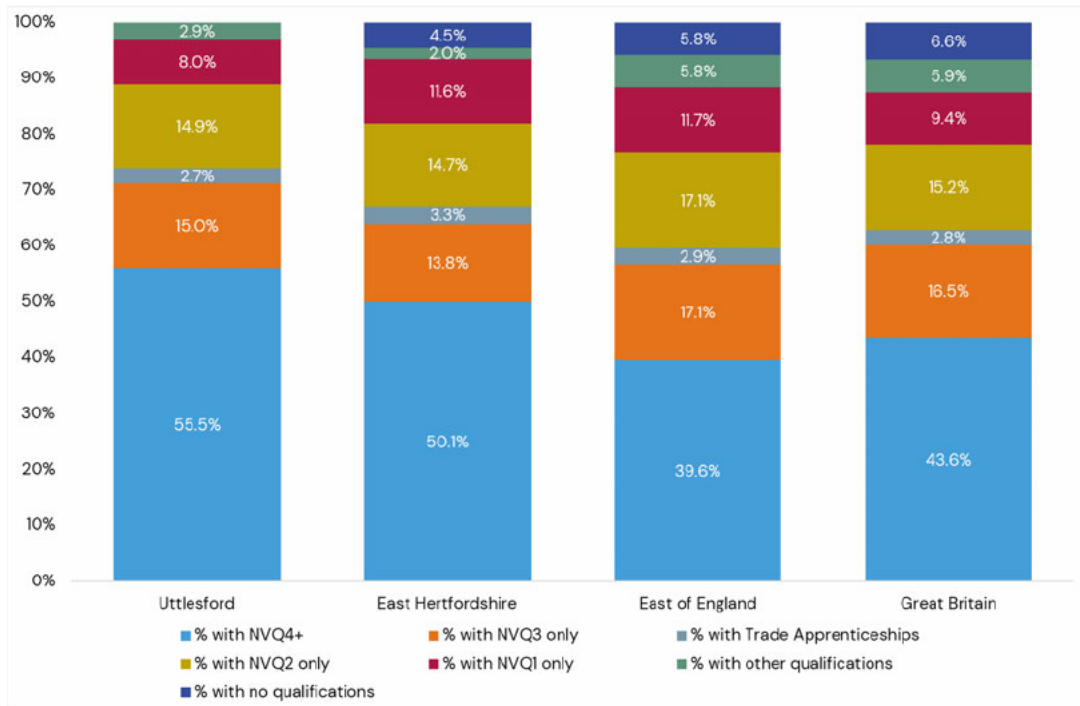


Source: ONS

**Skills**

7.3.6 In 2021, 55.5% of working age residents (16-64) in Uttlesford had a degree level qualification or higher (NQF4+); 15% had NQF3 only, which equates to 2 A Levels and 4 AS Levels; and 14.9% had NQF2 only (5+ GCSEs or equivalent). East Hertfordshire had a slightly lower proportion of the working age population with a degree level qualification at 50.1%. Of all comparator areas, the East of England had the lowest proportion of those aged 16-64 that had a degree level qualification at 39.6%. Great Britain had the highest proportion of the working age population that had no qualifications at 6.6%. Figure 7.3 shows the full skills breakdown.

Figure 7.3: Skill Levels of the Resident Working Age (16-64) Population, 2021



**Source:** Annual Population Survey, January-December 2021

**Deprivation**

- 7.3.7 The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation provides an indication of the average levels of deprivation for Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) across England. The index provides an overall assessment of the average levels of deprivation as well as an assessment against domains of deprivation. In total, England has 32,844 LSOAs, with 41 in Uttlesford.
- 7.3.8 The Proposed Development falls within the LSOA Uttlesford 005G, which is ranked 23,453 and placed it in the top 50% least deprived LSOAs in England. Looking at the individual domains of deprivation, Uttlesford 005G has its highest level of deprivation for the barriers to housing and services domain where it has a rank of 1,164, placing it in the top 10% most deprived LSOAs for this indicator. It has its lowest rank in health with a rank of 32,020, putting it in the top 10% least deprived LSOAs for this domain. Table 7.6 shows the rank of each domain in detail.

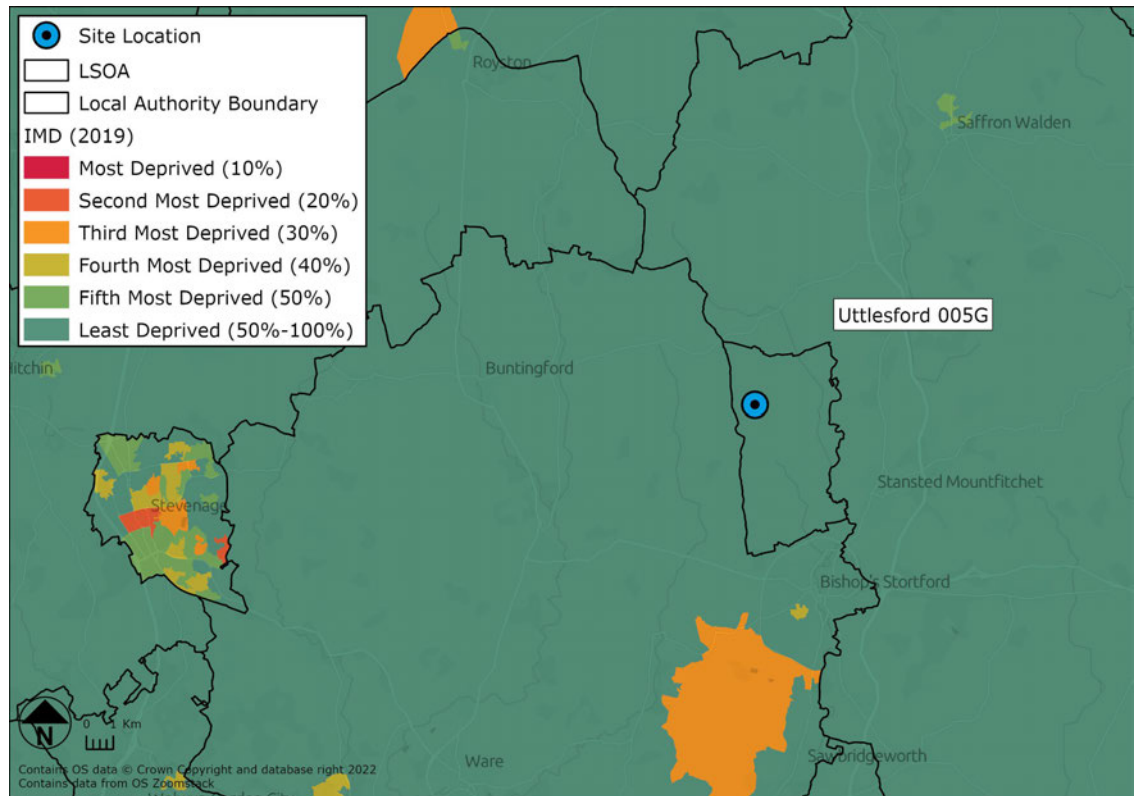
**Table 7.6: Index of Multiple Deprivation for Uttlesford 005G**

IMD 2019 Domain	Uttlesford 005G Rank (out of 32,844, 1 being the most deprived)
<b>Overall IMD</b>	<b>23,453</b>
Income	29,408
Employment	28,048
Education & Training	25,747
Health	32,020
Crime	31,873
Barriers to Housing and Services	1,164
Living Environment	11,804

**Source:** Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government

7.3.9 Figure 7.4 maps the overall level of deprivation in Uttlesford 005G and its neighbouring LSOAs. As can be seen from Figure 7.4 that there are some areas of deprivation to the south and west of the site, with some of the LSOAs falling into the top 20% and top 30% most deprived LSOAs in the country.

Figure 7.4: Index of Multiple Deprivation for Site Location, 2019

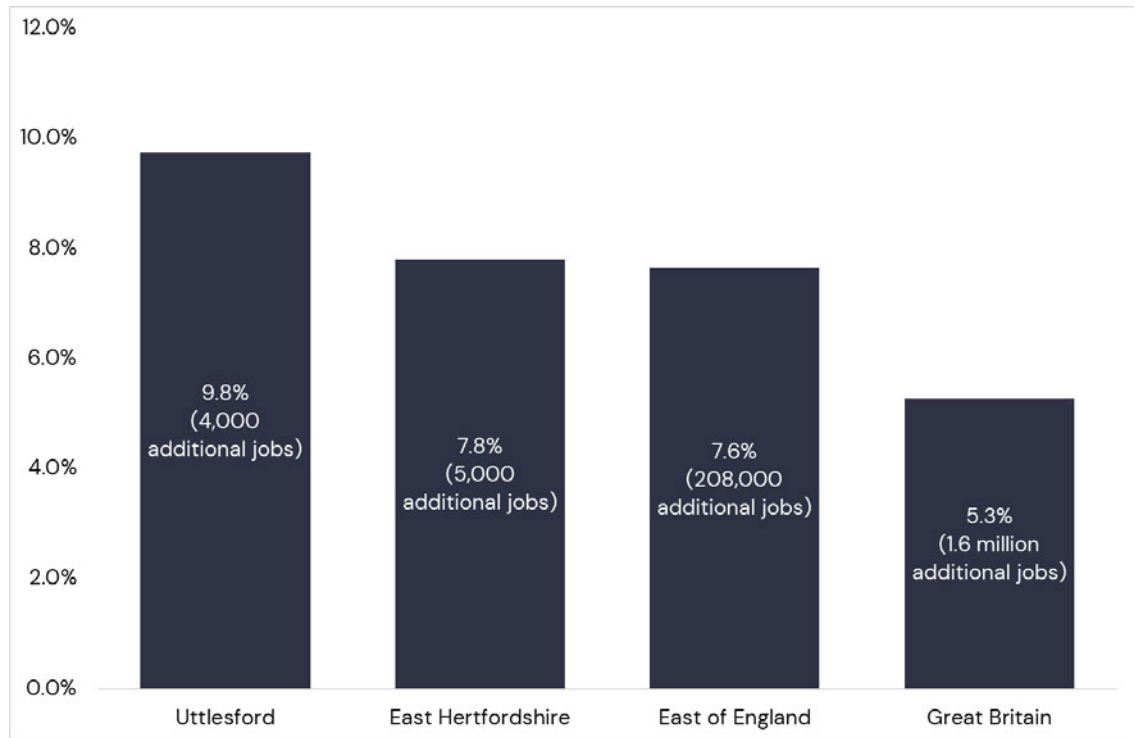


**Source:** Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

### Employment

7.3.10 In absolute terms, Uttlesford saw job numbers increase by around 4,000 between 2015 and 2021 (growing from 41,000 to 45,000 – see Figure 7.5). In relative terms, this equated to a rise of 9.8%. Uttlesford’s growth rate was above that for East Hertfordshire (7.8% - 5,000 additional jobs), the East of England (7.6% - 208,000 additional jobs), and Great Britain (5.3% - 1.6 million additional jobs).

Figure 7.5: Employment Change, 2015-21



**Source:** ONS, Business Register & Employment Survey

7.3.11 The largest sector in Uttlesford as of 2021 is business, financial and professional services, with 22,250 jobs – representing 31.9% of total employment. Job numbers in the sector increased by 3,100 between 2015 and 2021, equating to growth of 16.2%. This sector also accounted for the largest proportion of total employment in East Hertfordshire along with transport and storage, with both sectors accounting for 19.9% of total employment in the LPA and supporting 9,000 jobs.

7.3.12 Between 2015 and 2021, the fastest growing sector in Uttlesford was arts, entertainment and recreation, growing by 40% (1,000 additional jobs) in this time. In East Hertfordshire, the fastest growing sector between 2015 and 2021 was manufacturing growing by 40% (1,000 additional jobs). The construction sector, which is likely to see increased employment opportunities during the Proposed Development’s build phase, supports around 4,500 jobs in Uttlesford. This represents 6.5% of total employment in the District, above the proportion of total jobs in the East of England (6.1%) and Great Britain (5%). In East Hertfordshire, the construction sector accounted for 6.6% of employment and supported 3,000 in 2021. Table 7.7 shows total employment by sector in more detail.

Table 7.7: Employment by Sector, 2021



	<b>Uttlesford</b>	<b>East Hertfordshire</b>	<b>East of England</b>	<b>Great Britain</b>
Agriculture, mining, utilities etc.	1.8%	3.5%	2.5%	2.9%
Manufacturing	6.5%	7.7%	7.2%	7.4%
Construction	6.5%	6.6%	6.1%	5.0%
Wholesale & retail	13.6%	11.5%	15.1%	14.3%
Transport & storage	1.8%	19.9%	5.5%	5.1%
Accommodation & food services	7.2%	7.7%	6.8%	7.5%
Information & communication	3.6%	2.8%	4.0%	4.3%
Business, financial & professional services	31.9%	19.9%	24.4%	23.0%
Public admin, education & health	22.2%	17.1%	24.4%	26.2%
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	5.0%	3.3%	4.1%	4.3%

**Source:** ONS, Business Register & Employment Survey

#### Business Numbers

7.3.13 Table 7.8 shows the change in the number of businesses in Uttlesford and East Hertfordshire between 2012 and 2022. It also presents the change for comparator areas of the East of England and Great Britain. Uttlesford saw business growth of 20.1% (1,030 new businesses) between 2012 and 2022. This is above the growth in businesses seen in East Hertfordshire (16.9% - 1,295 new businesses), however it was below the growth seen in the East of England (22.5%) and Great Britain (23.7%).

Table 7.8: Change in Business Numbers, 2011-21

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Absolute Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Uttlesford	5,115	6,145	1,030	20.1%
East Hertfordshire	7,655	8,950	1,295	16.9%
East of England	255,130	312,530	57,400	22.5%
Great Britain	2,527,640	3,126,800	599,160	23.7%

**Source:** ONS, UK Business Count

#### Commuting

7.3.14 Based on data from the 2011 Census, around 13,000 people live and work in Uttlesford. Around 17,652 people work in Uttlesford and live elsewhere, with the top origin destinations being Braintree (3,830), East Hertfordshire (3,418) and South Cambridgeshire (1,178).

7.3.15 Around 17,992 people currently live in Uttlesford and work elsewhere, with the top locations to commute to being East Hertfordshire (2,972), Westminster, City of London (1,978) and Harlow (1,412).

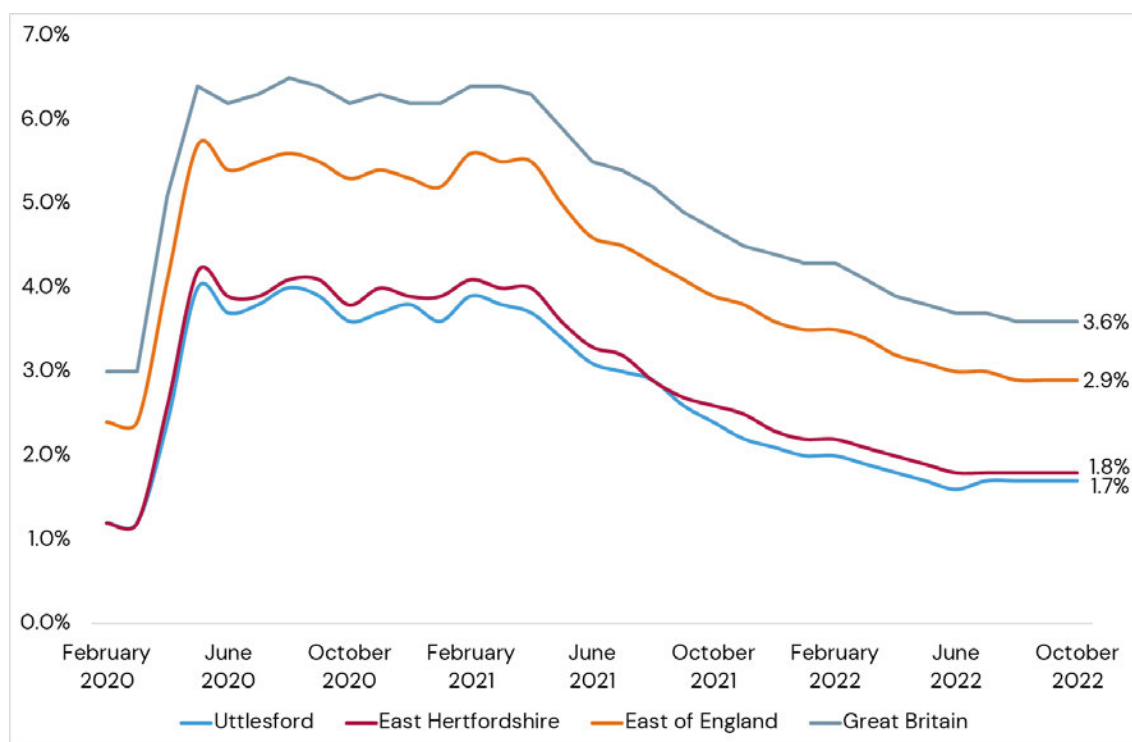


- 7.3.16 With an inflow of 17,652 people commuting into Uttlesford and an outflow of 17,992 people commuting out of Uttlesford, there is a net outflow of 340 from the LPA.
- 7.3.17 Around 21,543 people live and work in East Hertfordshire. There are 22,140 people that work in East Hertfordshire and live elsewhere, with the top origin destinations being Broxbourne (3,553), Uttlesford (2,972) and Harlow (2,737).
- 7.3.18 There are around 36,018 people living in East Hertfordshire and working elsewhere with the top locations to commute to being Westminster, City of London (4,692), Broxbourne (3,601) and Welwyn Hatfield (3,530).
- 7.3.19 With an inflow of 22,140 people commuting into East Hertfordshire and an outflow of 36,018 people commuting elsewhere from East Hertfordshire, there is a net outflow of 13,878 workers from East Hertfordshire.

#### Claimant Count

- 7.3.20 The claimant count records the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work.
- 7.3.21 Figure 7.6 shows the claimant count as a proportion of people aged 16-64 in Uttlesford, East Hertfordshire, the East of England and Great Britain for the period February 2020 to October 2022, for all residents aged 16+. A sharp rise is evident in the claimant count between March and April 2020, which will be down to the impact of Covid-19. This is down in part to more people claiming unemployment-related benefits and also because of changes made to the system by government which means more people are eligible to claim benefits. Further details on this are provided below.
- 7.3.22 ONS state that enhancements to Universal Credit as part of the UK Government's response to the coronavirus mean that an increasing number of people became eligible for unemployment-related benefit support despite still being in work. Consequently, changes in the claimant count will not be wholly because of changes in the number of people who are not in work. It is not possible to identify to what extent people who are employed or unemployed have affected the numbers.
- 7.3.23 In February 2020, the claimant count in Uttlesford was 1.2% and by October 2022 it had risen to 1.7%. This is an increase of 290 more people claiming benefits. This is currently below all other comparator areas. In February 2020, the claimant count in East Hertfordshire was 1.2% and by October 2022 it had risen to 1.8%, which represented an increase of 575 more people claiming benefits. The claimant count in both LPAs was below the rate seen in the East of England (2.9%) and Great Britain (3.6%) as of October 2022.

Figure 7.6: Claimant Count, February 2020-October 2022



Source: ONS, Claimant Count

## 7.4 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

### Construction

- 7.4.1 The socio-economic effects will apply largely during the construction phase of the solar farm.

### Economy

- 7.4.2 Economic benefits will arise through the provision of temporary jobs during the construction phase at the site. Based on information provided by the client, it is estimated that the total cost of the Proposed Development is in the region of £25million.
- 7.4.3 Investment in the proposed scheme is likely to create opportunities for local businesses through the supply chain, during the construction process. It is estimated that there will be around 50 workers on-site during the peak times of the construction period, which is expected to be around 5-months. In the *Solar powered growth in the UK* report, Cebr<sup>13</sup> give an employment multiplier for large-scale solar PV investments of 2.33 – i.e. for every job supported on-site, 1.33 indirect/induced jobs are supported in the wider economy. Applying this multiplier to the 50 on-site jobs, the Proposed Development could support 67 temporary jobs in the wider economy during the peak times of the 5-month build phase.
- 7.4.4 In total, the Proposed Development could support 117 temporary jobs, both direct jobs on-site and indirect/induced roles in the wider economy, during peaks times of the 5-month construction period.

<sup>13</sup> *Solar powered growth in the UK – the macroeconomic benefits for the UK of investment in solar PV*: Cebr (report for the Solar Trade Association), September 2014.

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- 7.4.5 The significance of construction phase effect in respect of employment is assessed as follows:
- 7.4.6 The sensitivity of the receptor (employment in construction and other sectors of the economy in Uttlesford) is assessed as being medium, in line with the criteria set out in Table 7.1. Construction employment represents around 6.5% of total employment in Uttlesford. The construction jobs created during the build period are unlikely to add any significant pressure to the labour supply, the 50 peak on-site jobs will still be created within a relatively short timeframe.
- 7.4.7 The magnitude of the impact is assessed as low, in line with the criteria in Table 7.2. The peak of 117 jobs supported by the construction phase (both direct and indirect) represents a small temporary increase in the number of new employment opportunities for local residents, for a short period of time. This is acknowledged in the context that 19.4% of commuters into Uttlesford live in East Hertfordshire and therefore there will be a small amount of leakage to this adjacent authority.
- 7.4.8 The significance of the temporary effect is therefore considered to be minor to moderate beneficial in Uttlesford, which is not significant in EIA terms.

#### Gross value added

- 7.4.9 The contribution of the site to economic output has been calculated by taking the 50 peak on-site jobs associated with the scheme, and multiplying this by an estimate of average levels of gross value added (GVA) per construction employee in the East of England. The CEBR report gives a GVA multiplier of 2.39. Factoring this into the analysis, the maximum GVA impact associated with the construction phase is estimated at £3.6million over a 5-month build timeframe.
- 7.4.10 The significance of construction phase effect in respect of contribution to economic output is assessed as follows:
- 7.4.11 The sensitivity of the receptor in Uttlesford is assessed as being medium, in line with the criteria set out in Table 7.1. GVA in the Uttlesford construction sector increased 57.6% between 2010 and 2020.
- 7.4.12 The magnitude of the impact is assessed as low, in line with the criteria in Table 7.2. The £3.6million in GVA generated by the construction phase would cause an uplift of 1.4% in construction GVA in Uttlesford.
- 7.4.13 The significance of the temporary effect is therefore considered to be minor to moderate beneficial in Uttlesford, which is not significant in EIA terms.

#### Operation

- 7.4.14 The main socio-economic effects of the operational phase can be placed into three categories; employment; gross value added; and business rates.

#### Employment

- 7.4.15 Based on information provided by the client, it is estimated that once operational there will be up to 2 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs supported on-site.
- 7.4.16 For consistency, to account for indirect effects, the same multiplier has been applied as the on-site construction jobs (2.33, as per the CEBR report). Applying this multiplier to the estimated 2 gross FTE jobs, it is estimated that the scheme will

support around 5 net additional FTE jobs in Uttlesford and the wider economy once it is built and fully operational.

- 7.4.17 There is an existing farming business on the site, however there will be no net loss of jobs because existing employees at the business will be deployed elsewhere on the farm. Therefore, the net jobs figure identified in the paragraph above remains the same.
- 7.4.18 The significance of the operational phase effect in respect of employment has been assessed as follows:
- 7.4.19 The sensitivity of the receptor (labour market of Uttlesford) is considered to be medium, in line with the criteria set out in Table 7.1 and given employment in Uttlesford increased by 9.8% between 2015 and 2021.
- 7.4.20 The magnitude of the impact is identified as being negligible, in line with the criteria in Table 7.2. The number of on-site jobs created in the operational phase (5) would represent a small increase on current employment levels in Uttlesford, although the employment supported by the operational phase will be long-term.
- 7.4.21 The significance of the operational effect is therefore considered to be negligible beneficial in Uttlesford, which is not significant in EIA terms.

Gross value added

- 7.4.22 The contribution of the site to economic output has been calculated by taking the job creation associated with the scheme, and multiplying this by an estimate of average levels of GVA per employee in the East of England. It is estimated that once operational and fully occupied, GVA associated with the Proposed Development will be around £271,910 per annum, allowing for multiplier effects<sup>14</sup>.
- 7.4.23 Over the 40-year operational lifespan of the solar farm the GVA generated is estimated to be around £6million (present value<sup>15</sup>).
- 7.4.24 The significance of the operational phase effect in respect of contribution to economic output has been assessed as follows:
- 7.4.25 The sensitivity of the receptor in Uttlesford is considered to be medium, in line with the criteria set out in Table 11.1 given GVA in Uttlesford increased by 24.5% between 2010 and 2020.
- 7.4.26 The magnitude of the impact is identified as being negligible, in line with the criteria in Table 7.2. The annual GVA generated by the Proposed Development once operational of £271,910 accounts for 0.01% of total GVA in Uttlesford.
- 7.4.27 The significance of the operational effect is therefore considered to be negligible beneficial in Uttlesford, which is not significant in EIA terms.

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<sup>14</sup> For the GVA estimate, the same multipliers used are the same as the construction GVA multipliers outlined above.

<sup>15</sup> Where future benefits are calculated over a longer timeframe, they have been discounted to produce a present value. This is the discounted value of a stream of either future costs or benefits. A standard discount rate is used to convert all costs and benefits to present values. Using the Treasury's Green Book, the recommended discount rate is 3.5% up to 30 year and 3% thereafter.

Business Rates

- 7.4.28 Business rates are an important economic contributor to an area. It is estimated that the solar project element of the proposed scheme could generate up to £165,120 per annum in business rates<sup>16</sup>. Over the intended 40-year lifespan of the scheme, business rates generated could total around £3.7million (present value).
- 7.4.29 The significance of the operational phase effect in respect of business rates has been assessed as follows:
- 7.4.30 The sensitivity of the receptor in Uttlesford is considered to be medium, in line with the criteria set out in Table 7.1.
- 7.4.31 The magnitude of the impact is identified as being low, in line with the criteria in Table 7.2. Given agricultural land and buildings are exempt from business rates, the business rates revenue generated from the Proposed Development would represent an uplift on current activities.
- 7.4.32 The significance of the operational effect is therefore considered to be minor to moderate beneficial in Uttlesford, which is not significant in EIA terms.

**Decommissioning Phase**

Employment

- 7.4.33 Employment benefits are expected to be similar to those outlined for the construction phase.

Contribution to Economic Output

- 7.4.34 Contribution to economic output is expected to be similar to that outlined for the construction phase.

Significance of the Decommissioning Phase Effects

- 7.4.35 The significance of decommissioning phase effects is assessed as follows:
- 7.4.36 The sensitivity of the receptor is assessed as being medium, informed by the potential effects identified for the construction phase.
- 7.4.37 The magnitude of the impact is assessed as low, informed by the potential effects identified for the construction phase.
- 7.4.38 The significance of the temporary effect is therefore considered to be minor to moderate beneficial, which is not significant in EIA terms.

**7.5 MITIGATION, ENHANCEMENT AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS**

**Mitigation by Design**

- 7.5.1 When the Proposed Development is considered in isolation it may generate a small number of additional commuting flows. However, these are considered to be outweighed by the other positive effects that the Proposed Development would

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<sup>16</sup> Based on information on price per MW of £6,450 in 2017 sourced from Photovoltaic Memorandum of Agreement.

have on the economy, such as the provision of temporary jobs and contribution to business rates mentioned above.

**Additional Mitigation**

- 7.5.2 Due to the beneficial impacts identified in this assessment, no specific mitigation measures have been identified from a socio-economic perspective.

**Enhancements**

- 7.5.3 Without mitigation being proposed, there will be no enhancements arising from such mitigation.

**Residual Effects**

- 7.5.4 Given no specific mitigation measures are required, the 'residual' effects remain as those identified in the above section.

**7.6 CUMULATIVE AND IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS**

- 7.6.1 The cumulative assessment approach aims to enable a robust assessment whilst also presenting a realistic consideration of the cumulative effects at the local scale.
- 7.6.2 Six cumulative schemes have been identified, of which three have been assessed in terms of socio-economic effects. Of these three schemes, only the operational impacts have been assessed as the information for the construction phase of the developments was not available. Table 7.9 gives the six schemes and shows whether they have been scoped in or out of the assessment.

Table 7.9: Cumulative schemes

Cumulative Scheme	Scoped in?
<b>Planning Application Ref S62A/22/0006</b> , Land at Berden Hall Farm. Application by Berden Solar Limited for the development of a ground mounted solar farm with a generation capacity of up to 49.99MW and an operational life of 40 years, together with associated infrastructure and landscaping.	Yes
<b>Planning Application UTT/21/0688/FUL</b> , land at Cole End Farm Lane, Wimbish. Application relates to the construction and operation of a 30MW ground mounted solar farm with an operational lifespan of 40 years together with associated infrastructure, including inverters, customer switchgear, DNO substation, medium voltage power station, security cameras, perimeter fence, access tracks and landscaping.	Yes
<b>Planning Application UTT/21/2846/FUL</b> , land at Chesterford Park, Little Chesterford, Essex. Planning application relates to the construction of a Green Energy Hub for the Chesterford Research Park comprising solar array development, a battery energy storage system, associated transformers, underground cabling and other electrical equipment, related landscaping scheme, fencing and CCTV.	No – the size of the scheme is unlikely to generate a significant number of jobs.
<b>Cross Boundary Application – East Herts Planning Application 3/22/0806/FUL / Uttlesford District Council Planning Application UTT/22/1203/FUL</b> , Land off Crabbs Lane and Pelham Substation. Planning application by Renewable Connections for the construction and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure.	No – Battery energy storage system unlikely to generate a significant number of jobs.
<b>Planning Application – Est Herts Ref 3/21/2601/FUL</b> , Land at Wickham Hall Estate. Application relates to the temporary construction of a solar photovoltaic farm with an output capacity not to exceed 49.9MW of energy, with supporting infrastructure and battery storage, inverters and transformers, fencing and landscaping works.	Yes
<b>Planning Application – East Herts Ref 3/21/0969/FUL</b> . Planning Application by Pelham Power Ltd for the construction of a 50MW battery energy storage system facility and associated access, landscaping and other infrastructure works.	No – Battery energy storage system unlikely to generate a significant number of jobs.

### Employment

- 7.6.3 In combination with the Proposed Development, using the same multipliers as above, the cumulative schemes assessed are estimated to generate 16 net additional FTE jobs on-site and in the wider Uttlesford economy once the schemes are operational<sup>17</sup>. Job numbers have been calculated based on experience of working on solar farms elsewhere in England and Wales.
- 7.6.4 The significance of the operational phase effect in respect of employment has been assessed as follows:
- The sensitivity of the receptor (labour market of Uttlesford) is considered to be medium, in line with the criteria set out in Table 7.1 and given employment in Uttlesford increased by 9.8% between 2015 and 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Figure may not sum due to rounding.

- The magnitude of the impact is identified as being negligible, in line with the criteria in Table 7.2. The number of on-site jobs created in the operational phase (16) would represent a small increase on current employment levels in Uttlesford, although the employment supported by the operational phase will be long-term.
- The significance of the cumulative operational effect is therefore considered to be negligible beneficial in Uttlesford, which is not significant in EIA terms.

#### Gross Value Added

7.6.5 The contribution of the site to economic output has been calculated by taking the job creation associated with the cumulative schemes, and multiplying these by an estimate of average levels of GVA per employee in the East of England. It is estimated that once operational and fully occupied, GVA associated with the Proposed Development and the cumulative schemes will be around £951,686 per annum, allowing for multiplier effects.

7.6.6 The significance of the operational phase effect in respect of contribution to economic output has been assessed as follows:

- The sensitivity of the receptor in Uttlesford is considered to be medium, in line with the criteria set out in Table 11.1 given GVA in Uttlesford increased by 24.5% between 2010 and 2020.
- The magnitude of the impact is identified as being negligible, in line with the criteria in Table 7.2. The annual GVA generated by the Proposed Development and the cumulative schemes once operational of £951,686 accounts for 0.05% of total GVA in Uttlesford.
- The significance of the cumulative operational effect is therefore considered to be negligible beneficial in Uttlesford, which is not significant in EIA terms.

#### Business Rates

7.6.7 It is estimated that the combined Proposed Development and cumulative schemes could generate up to £593,772 per annum in business rates. Over the intended 40-year lifespan of the scheme, business rates generated could total around £13.2million (present value).

7.6.8 The significance of the operational phase effect in respect of business rates has been assessed as follows:

- The sensitivity of the receptor in Uttlesford is considered to be medium, in line with the criteria set out in Table 7.1.
- The magnitude of the impact is identified as being low, in line with the criteria in Table 7.2.
- The significance of the cumulative operational effect is therefore considered to be minor to moderate beneficial in Uttlesford, which is not significant in EIA terms.



## **7.7 SUMMARY**

### **Baseline Conditions**

7.7.1 Uttlesford experienced population growth of 14.1% between 2011 and 2021 (11,308 additional people), and in East Hertfordshire there was a relatively lower population growth of 8.7% (12,005 additional people). Relative to the benchmark areas of East of England and England and Wales, Uttlesford and East Hertfordshire's population grew at a faster rate over this timeframe. Employment growth in Uttlesford between 2015 and 2021 has been strong with 9.8% increase in job numbers, especially when compared to the picture at a regional and national level (7.6% and 5.3% respectively). In the same time period, East Hertfordshire saw jobs growth of 7.8%. The construction sector, which is likely to see increased employment opportunities during the Proposed Development's build phase represents 6.5% of total employment in Uttlesford and 6.6% of total employment in East Hertfordshire, which is above the proportion of total jobs at the regional scale (6.1%) and Great Britain (5%). Both Uttlesford and East Hertfordshire have a net outflow of commuters.

### **Likely Significant Effects**

7.7.2 In respect of the construction phase, the assessment indicates that the Proposed Development will have the following temporary effects:

- **117** direct and indirect/induced construction jobs and indirect/induced supply chain jobs at peak times over the 5-month construction programme.
- Up to **£3.6million** of gross value added over the 5-month construction programme.

7.7.3 In EIA terms, these impacts are considered to have a minor beneficial effect in the short-term.

7.7.4 Regarding the operational phase, the assessment suggests that the Proposed Development will have the following permanent effects:

- **5** net additional jobs in the Uttlesford economy.
- **£0.27million** of gross value added per annum in the Uttlesford economy or **£6million** over 40-year operational lifespan (present value).
- **£165,120** per annum of business rates or **£3.7million** over the expected lifetime of the solar park (circa 40 years).

7.7.5 The significance of the permanent jobs and GVA is negligible beneficial and the significance of the business rates is minor to moderate beneficial. None of these effects are significant in EIA terms.

### **Mitigation and Enhancement**

7.7.6 It has been found that no mitigation is required for socioeconomic effects created by the Proposed Development.

**Conclusion**

- 7.7.7 Overall the Proposed Development provides positive socio-economic effects.
- 7.7.8 Table 7.10 provides a summary of effects, mitigation and residual effects.

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Table 7.10: Summary of Effects, Mitigation and Residual Effects.

Receptor / Receiving Environment	Description of Effect	Nature of Effect	Sensitivity Value	Magnitude of Effect	Geographical Importance	Significance of Effects	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Residual Effects
<b>Construction</b>								
Employment	Increase in employment in the construction sector	Short term	Medium	Low	District	Minor to moderate beneficial	N/A	Minor to moderate beneficial.
Gross value added	Increased contribution to economic output.	Short term	Medium	Low	District	Minor to moderate beneficial	N/A	Minor to moderate beneficial.
<b>Operation</b>								
Employment	Increase in employment once operational	Long term	Medium	Negligible	District	Negligible beneficial	N/A	Negligible beneficial
Gross value added	Increased contribution to economic output	Long term	Medium	Negligible	District	Negligible beneficial	N/A	Negligible beneficial
Business rates	Increase in business rate revenue	Long term	Medium	Low	District	Minor to moderate beneficial	N/A	Minor to moderate beneficial
<b>Cumulative and In-combination</b>								

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<b>Operation</b>								
Employment	Increase in employment once operational	Long term	Medium	Negligible	District	Negligible beneficial	N/A	Negligible beneficial
GVA	Increased contribution to economic output	Long term	Medium	Negligible	District	Negligible beneficial	N/A	Negligible beneficial
Business Rates	Increase in business rate revenue	Long term	Medium	Low	District	Minor to moderate beneficial	N/A	Minor to moderate beneficial

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)  
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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