Highview

Environmental considerations

EIA

We're pleased that our proposed development is expected to have minimal environmental impact due its location on previously developed (brownfield) land.

Even so, we're taking environmental protection seriously and have made the decision to undertake a voluntary Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This is because, even though the BESS is not likely to have significant environmental effects on its own, we want to demonstrate that the cumulative effects of the LAES and BESS phases will be minimal.

EIA is a statutory process that assesses and documents the significance of any potential environmental effects. It is applied where development proposals meet certain thresholds and criteria set out in EIA-specific legislation.

We've appointed independent environmental specialists to carry out the EIA, who will ask Scottish Ministers for an opinion on which environmental topics should be included in the EIA. This process is known as EIA scoping, during which Scottish Ministers will consult organisations such as NatureScot, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and North Ayrshire Council to help form an EIA scoping opinion.

Transport

Road traffic will route from the south via the A78, accessing the site through the existing south coal yard gate or main north gate. All traffic will approach from the south to avoid Fairlie village, following a Construction Traffic Management Plan.

There may be the opportunity to use existing port facilities, in order to reduce road traffic.

After the build phase, operational traffic will be limited to approximately 10 staff vehicles per day plus periodic maintenance and supply vehicles.

For these reasons, it is unlikely transport will be scoped into the EIA as significant environmental effects are not likely.

Regardless of the scope of the EIA, comprehensive surveys, assessments and management plans will be completed across all key areas, including traffic and transport, flood risk, noise, visuals and ground conditions.

The findings of all surveys and appraisals will be reported on as part of the consent application process. Some key aspects of the environment are explained here.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Southannan Sands SSSI – an important coastal wildlife area – is to the west of our site.

Because our works will be within 100 metres of the SSSI, we will include biodiversity in the scope of the EIA.

This will assess the nature and significance of impacts and describe the measures Highview will need to put in place to ensure the SSSI is protected from harm.

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