COUNCIL OF THE ISLES OF SCILLY

Planning Department
Town Hall, The Parade, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly, TR21 0LW
01720 424350
planning@scilly.gov.uk

Application Number: EIA-24-002 \ (2)	**Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (SI No. 571)**
Screened by: Lisa Walton Chief Planning Officer	**Regulation 6: screening opinion checklist**
Date: 24 July 2025	**Screening request under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 SI No. 571**

Request for a formal EIA Screening Opinion		**Yes or No**
1	**Is this a Schedule 1 development?**	**No**
	If YES – EIA development, EIA required, If NO – go to Box 2.	
2	**Is this a Schedule 2 Development?**	**Yes**
	Which category	**10 (l)**
a)	**Is it of a description mentioned in column 2 of the table in Schedule 2?**	**No**
	If YES – go to 2(b) and (c); If NO – not Schedule 2 development, **no EIA required**.	
b)	**Is any part of the site in a 'sensitive area'?**	**Yes**
	(i.e. SSSI, AONB, World Heritage site, SAC, scheduled monument etc)	
c)	**Is any applicable threshold or criterion in the table in Schedule 2 exceeded or met in relation to the development?**	**No <5km**
	If YES to either 2(b) or (c) – Schedule 2 development – go to Box 3. If NO to both 2(b) AND (c) – not Schedule 2 development, no EIA required.	
3	**Would the development site/proposal be likely to have significant effects on the environment because of factors such as its nature, size or location?**	**Yes**
	If YES – EIA development, EIA required. If NO – not EIA development, no EIA required.	

Screening Opinion - reason(s) for decision:

The development falls within Schedule 2 part 10(b).

NOTE: Use the following headings taken from Schedule 3 of the Regs to help define the proposal and its potential for generating significant environmental effects.

1. The characteristics of development must be considered having regard in particular to:	
a) the size of the development;	**The works include a proposed intake pumping stations and reverse osmosis (RO) water treatment works and associated and peripheral installations including 1.07km pipeline and radon tower, boreholes, tanks etc) at Lower Town.**
b) the accumulation with other development;	**At the time of writing there is already pipeline works taking place to connect middle town to Higher Town on St Martins but no other significant developments in St Martins.**
c) the use of natural resources;	**The area is rich in coastal and terrestrial biodiversity, including SSSIs, SACs, SPAs, and MCZs.** **Habitats include dunes, heathland, intertidal zones, and marine sediment.** **The regenerative capacity is high, but sensitive to disturbance.** **Uses land, groundwater, and seawater.** **Designed to minimise land-take, reuse soil, and explore renewable energy options.** **The regenerative capacity is high, but sensitive to disturbance.**
d) the production of waste;	**The EIA screening report submitted notes that the works area will be delineated prior to excavation commencing to ensure waste and materials are controlled and monitored. Minimal waste expected. Soil reused for backfilling; Site Waste Management Plan in place.**
e) pollution and nuisances;	**Risks include dust, noise, vibration, light, and brine discharge. Controlled via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and operational modelling.**
f) the risk of accidents, having regard in particular to substances or technologies used.	**As with any maritime or coastal development/construction project there is some risk of incidents and accidents. The site area is partly located in flood zone 1, so critical risks of tidal ingress/ flooding is reduced. However, there are sections that are noted as being in Flood Zones 2 and 3 where there is an increased risk of flooding. Appropriate safety control measures, including those proposed within the flood risk assessment, would be implemented in such areas to reduce the potential for significant flooding events. Construction compounds / storage areas will not be located within Flood Zones 2 or 3. There is no record of unexploded bombs, as noted in the screening report.**

	The EIA Screening report notes that the principal contractor will have an emergency plan in place during construction in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The emergency plan must detail planned procedures that should be followed, should an emergency arise such as flooding, explosions and serious injuries. It is unlikely that there will be a significant effect from major accidents or disasters. **Low risk overall.** **Flood zones 2 and 3 are avoided for compounds.** **Emergency plans and UXO risk assessment in place.**
g) The risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).	**Risks include dust, noise, vibration, light, and brine discharge.** **Controlled via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and operational modelling.**

2. The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered having regard, in particular, to:	
a) the existing land use;	**The land affected by the proposed development is largely undeveloped and consists of agricultural fields, green spaces, and coastal margins.** **It includes areas used for horticulture, pasture, and tourism-related activities, such as St Martin's Campsite and Shepherd's Huts.** **The proposed pipeline route crosses private farmland, tracks, and natural habitats, some of which are adjacent to or within designated sensitive areas (e.g. SSSI Impact Risk Zones, SAC, SPA).** **There are no significant built structures within the development footprint, and the land is currently used in a low-intensity, rural capacity.**
b) the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area;	**In this context 'natural resources' has been taken to mean those resources which exist naturally and can be used to attribute or derive value, including biodiversity interests and the natural landscape.** **Due to the location, it is considered that the impact of the works, if care is taken, would be very unlikely to have a significant impact.** **Overall, there is a high abundance of high-quality natural resources, both coastal at countryside of both designated international importance and local nature reserves.**

c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas: I. **Wetlands;** II. **Coastal zones;** III. **Mountain and forest areas;** IV. **Nature reserves and parks;** V. **Areas classified or protected under Member states' legislation; areas designated by Member States pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of Wild Birds (a) and Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (b);** VI. **Area in which the environmental quality standards laid down in Community legislation have already been exceeded;** VII. **Densely populated areas;** VIII. **Landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance;**	**Wetlands: Nearby but not directly impacted.** **Coastal Zones: Intake and outfall are within a Marine Conservation Zone; mitigation includes bubble curtains and slow start techniques.** **Nature Reserves/Parks: Adjacent to Wildlife Trust Reserve and SPA/SAC.** **Protected Areas: Within National Landscape, near Scheduled Monuments and SSSIs.** **Exceedance Areas: The Scilly Isles Water Body failed chemical status in 2019.** **Populated Areas: Low population density, but receptors include residents, businesses, and tourists.** **Historic/Cultural Landscapes: Within Heritage Coast and Conservation Area.** **The absorption capacity of the natural environment is considered to be high. However, there are a number of delicate natural environment (V) and historic designations (VIII):** • **Plains & Great Bay (St Martin's) SSSI 14.45ha in 100% favourable condition.** • **Isles of Scilly Special Protection Area (SPA)** • **St Martin's Sedimentary Shore SSSI** • **Isles of Scilly National Landscape (AONB) (archipelago-wide)** • **Isles of Scilly Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** • **Porth Seal (St Martin's) Geological SSSI (SSSI) 0.99ha 100% in favourable condition.** • **Isles of Scilly Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) this is a collection of inshore sites around the Isles of Scilly, located approximately 45 km southwest of the Cornish coast. Designated in 2013, the MCZ aims to protect a variety of marine habitats and species. It consists of 11 separate sites covering over 30 km², each with specific features and habitats** ➢ **11 Scheduled Monuments, the closest of which are:** • **PREHISTORIC CAIRN CEMETERY, FIELD SYSTEM AND SETTLEMENTS ON TOP ROCK HILL, ST MARTIN'S – located approximately 5m from scheme extents north of St Martin's Island Hall & Reading Room; and** **The north east side of the site boundary, at Middle Town, extends into this designation.**

3. The potential significant effects of development must be considered in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and having regard in particular to:	
a) The extent of the impact (geographical areas and size of the affected population);	**The landscape and visual impacts would be experienced by receptors, including those living nearby, by those travelling between the islands and to some limited extent from longer distance views.** **The development affects St Martin's, a small island with a low population.** **Impacts are localised, primarily along the pipeline route and at the intake, treatment, and storage sites.** **Sensitive receptors include residents, tourists, agricultural land, and designated ecological sites.**
b) The nature of the impact;	**Temporary impacts during construction: noise, dust, vibration, light, and access disruption.** **Permanent impacts: minor land take, visual change from above-ground assets, and brine discharge into marine waters.** **No significant operational impacts anticipated due to underground infrastructure and mitigation.**
c) The trans-frontier/transboundary nature of the impact;	**Minimal risk due to small scale and localised nature.** **Marine discharge is well within UK waters and dilution modelling shows limited spread. Water Quality: Pipelines can pose risks to water bodies through potential leaks or spills, which can lead to contamination of coastal waters and affect marine life. This contamination can spread across borders, impacting neighbouring countries' coastal ecosystems.** **Habitat Disruption: The construction and maintenance of pipelines can disrupt coastal habitats, affecting both terrestrial and marine ecosystems. This disruption can lead to habitat fragmentation and loss, which can have transboundary effects on migratory species and shared ecosystems.** **Soil Erosion and Sedimentation: Pipeline construction often involves significant land disturbance, which can lead to soil erosion and increased sedimentation in coastal waters. This sediment can travel across borders, and although low risk in this case does have the potential to impact water quality and marine habitats in neighbouring countries.** **Transboundary Water Management: Coastal pipelines can impact shared water resources, such as transboundary aquifers for example. In this case the small-scale level of the impact would suggest effective management would mitigate these impacts and ensure sustainable use of shared water resources for St Martins.**

	Pollution and Waste: The operation of pipelines can generate pollution and waste, which can affect air and water quality. These pollutants can travel across borders, impacting the health and environment of neighbouring regions. **The scale of the works could result in trans-frontier boundary impacts due to small scale nature.**
d) The magnitude and complexity of the impact;	**Impacts are moderate in complexity, involving multiple environmental receptors (marine, terrestrial, heritage). The impacts from construction on the site would be permanent or at least long-term in nature.**
e) The probability of the impact;	**Construction impacts, although temporary, could result in some impacts upon the locality.** **Construction impacts are likely but well understood and mitigable.** **Operational impacts are unlikely, especially with mitigation and monitoring in place.**
f) The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;	**Construction: April 2025 to June 2026, with commissioning by December 2026. No delayed** **Impacts are short-term, intermittent, and reversible but with permanent land take to be minimised and mitigated through BNG.** **The development of the site for the purposes indicated would be in perpetuity and unlikely to be reversible. The characteristics of the completed development would be unchanging in the broader sense.**
g) The cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development;	**One overlapping project (Lower Town Quay slipway) has minimal overlap in time and space.** **No significant cumulative effects identified with other developments.**
h) The possibility of effectively reducing the impact.	**Yes, through Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)** **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)** **Underwater noise modelling and mitigation** **Sustainable design and materials reuse** **Consultation with statutory bodies (e.g. Natural England, MMO)**
Q1 **Is it a major development which is of more than local importance?**	**No**
Q2 **Does it affect a particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable location?**	**Yes**

Q3	**Does it have unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects?**	**Yes**

Conclusion

Having regard to the characteristics, scale and potential impacts of the development, the proposal has potential likely significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes, and further consideration is required, particularly the proposed mitigation:

- **Further assessments, including a Report to Inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and a Water Framework Directive (WFD) Assessment, will need to guide mitigation and ensure regulatory compliance.**
- **Operational phase impacts are expected to be minimised, with most infrastructure located underground, and brine discharge designed for rapid dilution.**
- **The project aims to achieve a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) through habitat reinstatement and ecological enhancements.**
- **Marine noise mitigation will include the use of bubble curtains and slow-start techniques to reduce acoustic disturbance to marine fauna.**

Based on the information known at the time and selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development (Schedule 3) and the indicative thresholds and paragraphs 017, 018 and 023 of Planning Practice Guidance, it is determined:

Environmental Impact Assessment	**Required**