

17. Population and Human Health

17.1 Introduction

- 17.1.1 Consideration has been given at scoping stage to the potential effects of the Proposed Development on population and human health, in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment requirements applicable to Significant Infrastructure Projects under the Infrastructure (Wales) Act 2024 (Senedd Cymru, 2024), as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Welsh Government, 2017).
- 17.1.2 This section of the Scoping Report sets out the legislative context, baseline conditions and scoping rationale for population and human health. It establishes whether a standalone assessment of population and human health effects is required within the Environmental Statement (ES).

17.2 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

- 17.2.1 The requirement to consider population and human health arises from the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process applicable to Infrastructure Consent applications under the Infrastructure (Wales) Act 2024 (Senedd Cymru, 2024). These requirements are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Welsh Government, 2017), which apply to Significant Infrastructure Projects in Wales.
- 17.2.2 There is no separate statutory requirement for a standalone “human health” assessment within EIA. For the Proposed Development, population and human health is therefore considered as a cross-cutting topic, with relevant health pathways (for example, noise, traffic, air quality, water environment and community amenity) identified and, where necessary, addressed within the relevant topic chapters of the Environmental Statement. The legislation, policy and guidance listed below provides the overarching framework for this approach:
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974) (UK Parliament, 1974);
 - Environmental Protection Act 1990 (Environmental Protection Act 1990) (UK Parliament, 1990);
 - Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (WSI 2017 No. 567 (W.136)) (Welsh Government, 2017);
 - Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 (including provisions relating to Health Impact Assessments, where applicable) (Welsh Ministers, 2017);

- Health Impact Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2025 (WSI 2025 No. 1215 (W.198)) (where applicable) (Welsh Ministers, 2025);
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (Welsh Government, 2015);
- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) (Welsh Government, 2024);
- Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Welsh Government, 2021);
- Health Impact Assessment: A Practical Guide (Public Health Wales, 2020);
- Technical Advice Note 12: Design (Welsh Government, 2021);
- Technical Advice Note 11: Noise (Welsh Government, 2021);
- Local Development Plan 2007–2022 (as adopted): Policies relating to community health and well-being (Ceredigion County Council, n.d.);
- Replacement Local Development Plan – Preferred Strategy: Health, Well-being and Communities (Ceredigion County Council, n.d.); and
- Well-being Plan for Ceredigion (Ceredigion County Council & Hywel Dda University Health Board, 2023).

17.2.3 Collectively, these documents set the statutory and policy context for how potential population and human health effects are to be considered within EIA for the Significant Infrastructure Projects (SIP) regime. In line with established practice, and consistent with the scoping position set out in this chapter, any relevant health pathways will be considered within the appropriate topic assessments reported elsewhere in the Environmental Statement (for example, noise and vibration, transport and access, air quality, hydrology and flood risk, and shadow flicker), rather than through a standalone population and human health assessment.

17.2.4 This approach reflects established EIA practice, whereby population and human health effects are considered through embedded assessment within relevant technical chapters, rather than through a standalone assessment where no distinct health pathways are identified.

17.3 Study Area

17.3.1 A discrete study area is not defined for population and human health. The scoping exercise has considered the Proposed Development in relation to nearby communities and receptors, insofar as they could be affected by environmental changes associated with construction, operation or decommissioning.

17.4 Methodology

17.4.1 The assessment of population and human health has been undertaken as a qualitative, scoping-level appraisal, consistent with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (Welsh

Government, 2017), which require consideration of the effects on population and human health where these are significant.

17.4.2 The methodology is based on a pathway-led approach, which identifies whether the Proposed Development could reasonably give rise to changes in the environment that may, in turn, affect population or human health. The assessment does not seek to duplicate detailed technical analyses undertaken elsewhere in the EIA but instead draws on those assessments to determine whether any likely health effects could be significant in EIA terms.

17.4.3 The assessment process comprised the following steps:

- a) Identification of receptors, focusing on human populations that could reasonably be affected by the Proposed Development, including nearby residents, local communities, recreational users and sensitive receptors such as schools or healthcare facilities, where present;
- b) Identification of potential health pathways, informed by the characteristics of the Proposed Development and relevant guidance. Pathways considered include noise, traffic and transport, air quality, water environment, shadow flicker, landscape and visual change, community amenity and access to land;
- c) Review of embedded mitigation and regulatory controls, including industry design standards, statutory limits and consenting controls that are expected to avoid or substantially reduce effects on human health; and
- d) Professional judgement, drawing on experience of comparable onshore wind developments, to determine whether any residual effects could reasonably be significant and therefore require further assessment within this chapter.

17.4.4 For each identified pathway, the assessment considers the nature of the effect (beneficial or adverse), the likely duration (temporary or long-term), and whether the effect is direct or indirect. Particular regard is given to whether effects would be widespread, severe, or affect vulnerable groups, as these factors are relevant to determining significance in EIA terms.

17.4.5 Where potential pathways between the Proposed Development and population or human health relate to matters that are commonly assessed using established technical methodologies (for example, noise, traffic and transport, air quality, water environment, landscape and visual change, or shadow flicker), this chapter draws on the principles, standards and outcomes of those types of assessments, where available, to inform professional judgement on the likelihood of significant effects on population or human health. With the exception of Other environmental effects, which are assessed in a dedicated chapter of the ES, this approach is used to inform scoping decisions only and does not assume that all such matters will necessarily be subject to separate, detailed assessment within the ES.

- 17.4.6 The consideration of cumulative effects on population and human health has been undertaken at a scoping level, with the purpose of identifying whether the Proposed Development could contribute, in combination with other relevant developments, to effects on population or human health that may be significant in EIA terms.
- 17.4.7 The cumulative review focused on the potential for overlapping or interacting health-related pathways associated with the Proposed Development, including those arising from construction and operational activities, which could reasonably act in combination with similar pathways from other developments within the surrounding area. This review was qualitative in nature and informed by the characteristics of the Proposed Development, the nature of the receiving environment, and professional judgement.
- 17.4.8 The cumulative screening process was used to inform the decision on whether population and human health required assessment as a standalone topic within the Environmental Statement, rather than to quantify or predict cumulative health outcomes.
- 17.4.9 The methodology has been informed by relevant national guidance on health considerations in environmental assessment and by the principles underpinning Health Impact Assessment in Wales, noting that a standalone Health Impact Assessment is not required for the Proposed Development at this stage (Welsh Ministers, 2025)

17.5 Baseline Context

- 17.5.1 The Proposed Development is located in a rural area characterised by a dispersed pattern of residential receptors and land uses associated with agriculture and forestry. There are no sensitive population receptors, such as hospitals or care facilities, located within close proximity to the site.
- 17.5.2 Baseline population characteristics for the Proposed Development have been reviewed with reference to published demographic data for Ceredigion, including population density statistics and Census 2021 settlement information. Official datasets indicate that Ceredigion has a low population density of approximately 40 persons per square kilometre, which is substantially below the Wales average, and that population is predominantly distributed across small settlements and dispersed rural households.
- 17.5.3 In the context of this receiving environment, and noting the absence of concentrated population centres or clusters of sensitive health receptors in proximity to the Proposed Development, the baseline population and health context does not indicate evidence of unusual sensitivity or vulnerability that would, at scoping stage, necessitate a bespoke standalone population and human health assessment in relation to the Proposed Development. (Welsh Government , 2024) (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2021).

17.6 Consideration of Potential Effects on Population and Human health

Construction

- 17.6.1 Potential effects during construction, such as temporary changes in noise levels, traffic movements and general disturbance, are common to large construction projects. These effects are temporary, localised and are addressed through standard mitigation measures and topic-specific assessments.

Operation

- 17.6.2 During operation, potential effects on population and human health could arise indirectly through factors such as operational noise, shadow flicker, changes in landscape character or amenity, and traffic associated with maintenance activities. These matters are assessed within the relevant technical chapters and are subject to established standards and controls.

Decommissioning

- 17.6.3 Potential effects during decommissioning are similar in nature to those during construction and are temporary and reversible. These effects are managed through established construction and environmental management practices.

17.7 Scoping Assessment

- 17.7.1 No distinct population or human health effects have been identified that would not be adequately addressed through the assessment of other environmental topics within the ES.
- 17.7.2 Potential health-related pathways, including noise, traffic, air quality, water environment, shadow flicker and community amenity, are appropriately considered within topic-specific chapters using established assessment methodologies and regulatory standards.
- 17.7.3 The Proposed Development does not introduce unusual or hazardous activities that would give rise to significant effects on human health, nor does it result in changes to population patterns or access to services that would warrant a standalone assessment.
- 17.7.4 On this basis, population and human health are proposed to be scoped out as a standalone topic from the Environmental Statement

Table 17.1 - Matters to be scoped out of the assessment

Matters to be scoped out of the assessment	
Matter	Rationale
Standalone human health assessment	Health pathways addressed within topic-specific chapters
Population change	No population displacement or demographic change anticipated
Public health effects	No exposure pathways beyond those assessed elsewhere

17.8 Summary of Scoping position

- 17.8.1 On the basis of the scoping-level review undertaken, the Proposed Development is not considered likely to give rise to significant effects on population or human health, either alone or through identifiable health-related pathways, that would warrant assessment within a standalone topic chapter. In accordance with the proportionate approach required by the EIA Regulations, population and human health are therefore proposed to be scoped out of the ES as a separate assessment topic.
- 17.8.2 Potential effects on population and human health arising from noise have been considered through the application of established noise assessment methodologies, recognised standards and appropriate significance criteria. The noise assessment therefore provides the relevant evidence base for consideration of any health-related effects associated with the Proposed Development. No additional or standalone assessment of population and human health is required in relation to noise.
- 17.8.3 Potential effects on population and human health arising from changes in traffic conditions, including road safety, severance, driver delay and amenity, have been assessed as part of the Traffic and Transport chapter (Chapter 11, section 11.6) using established guidance and assessment methods. These matters do not give rise to distinct or additional health effects that would warrant a standalone population and human health assessment.

17.9 References

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