

18. MAJOR ACCIDENTS AND DISASTERS

Introduction

18.1 This Chapter has been prepared by LUC and considers the Proposed Development in relation to major accidents and disasters which can potentially result in Significant adverse environmental and human health effects. Through identifying the potential for major accidents and disasters at an early stage, it is possible to prevent such events, reduce the risk of them occurring, or decrease the extent of their potential harm to the local area and local communities.

18.2 The assessment has been carried out in line with the EIA Regulations which require consideration of:

“A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/ or disasters...’ (Schedule 4, Paragraph 8)”.

18.3 This Chapter, therefore, considers whether:

- The Proposed Development would be more vulnerable to major accidents and disasters than the surrounding areas.
- The Proposed Development would be a source of hazard that could result in a major accident or would interact with an external source of hazard.
- The presence of the Proposed Development could be expected to increase the risk of serious harm to people or the environment, in the event of an external disaster or accident.

Definitions

18.4 Reference is made throughout this Chapter to IEMA’s ‘Major Accidents and Disasters in EIA: A Primer’ⁱⁱ (hereafter referred to as ‘the Primer’) which provides guidance for impact assessment practitioners undertaking a major accidents and disasters assessment. The Primer is structured around a typical assessment approach that offers a proportionate method for considering major accidents and disasters through screening, scoping and assessment.

18.5 Although ‘accident’, ‘risk’ and ‘disaster’ are well known terms and used in everyday language, there is potential for their meaning to be interpreted differently. The ‘Primer’ provides definitions for these in an EIA context, which are adopted throughout this Chapter.

18.6 The Primer defines ‘major accidents’ as:

“Events that threaten immediate or delayed serious environmental effects to human health, welfare and/or the environment and require the use of resources beyond those of the client or its appointed representatives to manage. Whilst malicious intent is not accidental, the outcome (e.g., train derailment) may be the same and therefore many mitigation measures will apply to both deliberate and accidental events.”

18.7 The Primer's definition of 'disaster' is:

“May be a natural hazard (e.g., earthquake) or a man-made/external hazard (e.g., act of terrorism) with the potential to cause an event or situation that meets the definition of a major accident”.

18.8 Risk is defined in this Primer as:

“The likelihood of an impact occurring, combined with the effect or consequence(s) of the impact on a receptor if it does occur...”

Legislation and Policy

National

18.9 As the consideration of major accidents and disasters is a relatively recent EIA requirement, most currently available guidance has principally been developed to meet the requirements of other UK regulatory processes, particularly the Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations 2015 (COMAH) which came into force on 1st June 2015ⁱⁱ. The COMAH Regulations aim to prevent and mitigate the effects of major accidents involving dangerous substances which can cause serious damage/harm to people and/or the environment. It is important to note that COMAH treats risks to the environment as seriously as those to people.

18.10 The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 (EPR)ⁱⁱⁱ are another key regulatory process. Permits are obtained for specific industrial and waste activities which have the potential to cause harm to human health or the environment.

Local

18.11 The Civil Contingencies Act (2004)^{iv} creates a set of roles and responsibilities for emergency preparation and response at the local level. Under this Act, Cherwell District Council maintains an Emergency Plan^v which details the Council's arrangements for responding to emergencies. Part B of this document is an internal document detailing emergency response arrangements. The emergency plan is used as a guide and point of reference for further information within this Chapter.

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

Study Area

18.12 The Study Area encompasses all areas of potential activities relating to the Proposed Development as detailed in Chapter 3 of the ES.

Methodology

18.13 The methodology has been informed by the Scoping Opinion from Cherwell District Council which stated that, whilst most potential major accidents and disasters do not require detailed consideration, potential impacts associated with terrorism should be considered further in the ES, particularly given related concerns raised by Thames Valley Police (see paras. 7.26-7.27 for further detail).

18.14 All effects are considered to be adverse in a major accidents and disaster assessment. As the purpose of this Chapter is to identify risks that could result in a 'significant effect', this is defined in the Primer as:

"The loss of life, permanent injury and temporary or permanent destruction of an environmental receptor which cannot be restored through minor clean-up and restoration".

18.15 For the purposes of this assessment, two categories of effects are identified: 'significant effects' or 'not significant effects'; there are no varying degrees of significance identified.

18.16 In addition to the Primer, the assessment takes account of the following relevant documentation and datasets to ensure that all potential major accidents and disasters are identified:

- The Cabinet Office National Risk Register (2023 Edition)^{vi}: a government assessment of the likelihood and potential impact of national security risks. These include natural hazards, industrial accidents, malicious attacks, and others.
- The Thames Valley Community Risk Register (2022)^{vii}: local application of the national risk register, prepared by the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum.
- Police.UK website datasets.
- The Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters (CTPHQ) Coordination Centre datasets.

18.17 It is recognised that the EIA Regulations apply to a wide range of development types. It is reasonable to assume that development types such as nuclear power stations and chemical installations would be more vulnerable to major accidents and/ or disasters than the Proposed Development. It is also noted that some risks are covered by other legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work etc.

Act 1974. It, therefore, follows that the consideration of the risks of major accidents and/ or disasters in the context of EIA needs to be proportionate to the likelihood of the risks.

- 18.18 In line with the Primer, only “*low-likelihood but potentially high-consequence events*” are taken forward for further consideration. Low likelihood and low consequence events, such as minor spills, have been scoped out as these events are unlikely to result in significant adverse effects as they do not fall into the category of a major accident or disaster. Highly likely and low consequence events are also scoped out as they will not lead to significant adverse effects. Furthermore, high likelihood and high consequence events are also scoped out, as it is assumed that existing legislation and regulatory controls would not permit the project to be progressed under these circumstances. When considering the baseline risks with the receptors, events and hazards which have no credible source-pathway-receptor linkage are removed from further consideration.
- 18.19 The significance of the remaining risks alongside the relevant receptors and pathways considers the magnitude of impact, defined by the geographic area, duration of effects, and severity and consequence or effort required to restore any damage; the likelihood of occurrence; and the sensitivity of receptors, defined by the adaptability, tolerance, and recoverability of the receptor; and effort required to restore any damage. Mitigation measures, standard construction and operational good practice, and further discussion with the designer and operator also inform a number of these risks.
- 18.20 The potential sensitive receptors considered in the assessment are:
- Population and human health (stadium users, pedestrians, road users);
 - Biodiversity (species and habitats);
 - Land, soil, water, air and climate;
 - Material assets, cultural heritage, and landscape; and
 - The interaction between the factors above.

Baseline Conditions

- 18.21 The Proposed Development will be constructed on vacant land situated in the Green Belt, east of Frieze Way and south of Kidlington roundabout. It is assumed that, in its current condition, the Site of the Proposed Development is no more vulnerable to major accidents and disasters than the surrounding areas.

Potential Effects

- 18.22 The potential significant effects considered for the Proposed Development, which are of “low-likelihood but potentially high-consequence” as noted in the Primer, are set out in **Table 18.1** below.

This takes account of the data sources noted above, the type of development in question (a sports stadium) and its location.

- 18.23 In considering potential effects, it is anticipated that the design of the Proposed Development will be informed by a suite of health and safety regulations, design codes, other legislation and best practice guidance such as the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide) 6th edition^{viii}. Adhering to these requirements minimises the risk of major accidents and disasters from occurring.

Table 18.1: Summary of potential major accidents and disasters

Group	Effect	Could the Proposed Development cause/ worsen a major accident or disaster?	Could the use of the Proposed Development be affected by the major accident or disaster?	Further consideration required?
Natural risks	Fluvial flooding	No	Yes	No – not significant According to the Government’s surface water flooding map ^x , the Site has a very low risk (less than 0.1% each year) of flooding from rivers and the sea. Therefore, this effect is not anticipated to be significant and the risk during the construction or operational phase is anticipated to be low. As such, this effect is not considered further.
	Surface water flooding	No	Yes	No – not significant The north of the Site indicates a risk of surface water flooding due to its topography; as such the site could have a flash response to rainfall events and subsequent water runoff. The impact of surface water flooding is considered further in ‘Chapter 14: Flood Risk and Drainage’ concluding that the impacts on relevant receptors are not significant. This takes account of mitigation measures detailed in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which will be applied prior to commencement of construction of the Development, and the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which will meet the requirements of CIRIA C735, PPG, water quality guidance, and Policy ESD 7 within the Cherwell District Local Plan, during the operation of the Development. Both will include best practice and site-specific measures to control flood risk and drainage. Additionally, potential changes due to climate change are given further consideration in ‘Chapter 16: Climate Change’ and it is stated that the SuDS system will be designed to provide attenuation storage for the 1% annual exceedance probability (AEP) plus 40% climate change event. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the drainage system will remain operational during an extreme event and will not contribute to the flood event. As such, surface water flooding is not expected to pose a significant risk during the construction or operational phase. This effect is therefore not anticipated to be significant and is not considered further in the major accidents and disasters assessment.
	Flooding from reservoirs and groundwater	No	Yes	No – not significant According to the Government’s surface water flooding map, flooding from reservoirs and groundwater is unlikely in the study area. Additionally, it is stated in ‘Chapter 14: Flood Risk and Drainage’ that “ <i>the nearest areas of flood risk from reservoirs are 600m to the east and 500m to the west</i> ”, and that “ <i>the reservoirs will be subject to strict maintenance and inspection regimes under the Reservoirs Act 1975.</i> ”

				<p>Furthermore, potential changes due to climate change are given further consideration in 'Chapter 16: Climate Change'.</p> <p>As such, the potential for flooding from reservoirs and groundwater is not anticipated to be significant and is not considered further in the major accidents and disasters assessment.</p>
	Cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons, storms, and gales	No	Yes	<p>No – not significant</p> <p>Cyclones, hurricanes, and typhoons are the same weather phenomenon, but hurricane is the correct term for locations in the North Atlantic Ocean. Hurricanes cannot form in or around the United Kingdom as the sea temperatures are not warm enough to sustain a wind of 120km/h, which is one of the main measurements used to classify a hurricane. However, deep depressions (also known as 'low pressure systems') that originate from hurricanes are experienced in the United Kingdom, and gusts from storms and gales are not uncommon. Historical weather records indicate that the highest gust speed recorded in the South East of England was a gust of approximately 196km/h in February 2022.</p> <p>Extreme storms can have significant adverse effects on structural, human and environmental receptors; however, it is anticipated that weather warnings issued by the Met Office and Environment Agency for forecasts on extreme adverse weather conditions, using the National Severe Weather Warning Service and Flood Information Service, respectively, will be considered in the management of the Proposed Development both during construction and operation. Additionally, it is anticipated that safety and management procedures will be implemented to mitigate any effects caused by severe storms and gales during the construction phase.</p> <p>The effects of cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons, storms, and gales, and the impacts on relevant receptors, are also given further consideration in 'Chapter 16: Climate Change' in relation to 'Wind speeds and storms', and 'Higher winter rainfall and intense rainfall events'.</p> <p>Therefore, effects associated with storms and gales, and other extreme weather, are not anticipated to be significant and are not considered further in the major accidents and disasters assessment.</p>
	Extreme temperatures (heatwaves and sub-zero temperatures)	No	Yes	<p>No – not significant</p> <p>The latest UK climate projections^x suggest that the UK will experience hotter and drier summers as well as wetter winters. Warming UK temperatures may lead to an increased risk of overheating and the occurrence of sub-zero temperatures can cause disruptions to human receptors. The occurrence of these extreme temperatures is expected to increase as a result of climate change. Measures will be implemented to comply with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015^{xi} to disclose and reduce the risks from extreme temperatures to employees during the construction period.</p> <p>It is expected that design and mitigation measures will be implemented once the Proposed Development is operational, to comply with TM52: Limits of Thermal Comfort^{xii}. To further reduce the risk of users suffering during heatwaves, the stadium will provide adequate drinking facilities and educate users prior and during matches or events of the importance of remaining</p>

				<p>hydrated during heatwaves. Similar measures would be put in place during periods of extreme cold.</p> <p>The effects of extreme temperatures (heatwaves and sub-zero temperatures) on relevant receptors are given further consideration in 'Chapter 16: Climate Change' in relation to 'Higher summer average temperatures and heatwaves'.</p> <p>As the risks associated with extreme temperatures can be mitigated for during construction and operation, these are not considered significant and are therefore scoped out of further detailed assessment in the EIA</p>
	Droughts	Yes	Yes	<p>No – not significant</p> <p>It is suggested in the latest UK climate projections (Met Office, 2022) that summers are projected to become drier. Droughts are caused by insufficient rainfall and in the UK, a drought is defined as at least 15 consecutive days where there is no more than 0.2mm of precipitation. Periods of drought are projected to be increasingly common as a result of climate change. Drought planning is, however, undertaken by the Environment Agency and water utility companies. It is anticipated that management plans and strategies will be informed by warnings from these organisations during the construction and operation period and that measures would be put in place to conserve water during a drought.</p> <p>The effects of Droughts, and the impacts to relevant receptors, is given further consideration in 'Chapter 16: Climate Change' in relation to 'Higher summer average temperatures and heatwaves combined with lower summer rainfall and drought conditions'.</p> <p>As this risk can be reduced with sufficient mitigation measures, risk to or from drought is not considered significant and not considered further in the major accidents and disasters assessment.</p>
Technologic al or Man- made risks	Transport accidents	Yes	Yes	<p>No – not significant</p> <p>Increased transits to/from the Proposed Development during construction and operational periods could increase the risk of accidents. It is expected that the risk of any major transport accidents during the operational and construction phases will be included in management plans, such as the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), and mitigated for, to reduce the risk to employees, residents, and other road users. These are discussed in more detail in the assessment of effects on traffic and transport (Chapter 8: Highways and Access).</p> <p>As the risk can be reduced with the implementation of mitigation measures, and is assessed separately in the ES, transport accidents are not considered further in the assessment of effects associated with major accidents and disasters.</p>
	Building fires	No	Yes	<p>No – not significant</p> <p>Depending on the severity and scale of a fire, the Proposed Development could be Significantly adversely affected, resulting in structural damage and, potentially, a danger to human life. In addition, there could also be Significant adverse effects on environmental receptors depending on water and/or other gases and powders applied to suppress fires and thermal events. However, it can reasonably be assumed that the building will be subject to a range of fire related</p>

				statutory legislation including the Building Regulations (2010) ^{xiii} and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 ^{xiv} . In addition, It is anticipated that evacuation and safety measures will be put in place to comply with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (UK Government, 2015). Therefore, it is anticipated that this effect will not be significant and is not considered further in the major accidents and disasters assessment.
	Employee safety	Yes	Yes	No – not significant As with most new buildings, the construction period has the potential to have a Significant adverse effect on human receptors, specifically employees should an accident or serious injury occur. However, it is anticipated that employee safety during both construction and operation will be managed in compliance with the CDM Regulations, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995. Therefore, it is anticipated that this effect will not be significant and is not considered further in the major accidents and disasters assessment.
	Disease, epidemics, and pandemics	Yes	Yes	No – not significant Public Health England, the executive agency of the Department of Health, is responsible for protecting the nation from public health hazards preparing for and responding to public health emergencies. The Proposed Development will encourage large crowds to congregate which could increase the risk of transmission of a disease, epidemic or pandemic. However, it is anticipated that any required quarantine procedures and additional health and safety measures will be adhered to during the construction and operation of the stadium and its facilities in the event of an outbreak. On the assumption that public health measures and controls will be in place, outbreaks of human diseases as a result of the Proposed Development are unlikely to be a significant risk and are not considered further in the major accidents and disasters assessment.
	Terrorism and war	No	Yes	Requires more detailed consideration. <u>Terrorism</u> : The Proposed Development will encourage large crowds to congregate which could increase the risk of terror attacks. The Scoping Opinion from Cherwell District Council stated that whilst it was generally appropriate for major accidents and disasters not to be subject to more detailed consideration, potential impacts associated with terrorism should be considered further in the ES, particularly given related concerns raised by Thames Valley Police. <u>War</u> : As England is politically stable with no direct border with countries experiencing conflicts, war effects are not taken further for detailed consideration.

Terrorism

- 18.24 Due to high concentrations of people, stadiums could be potential targets for terrorist attacks. The National Risk Register (2023 edition) considers the risk of terrorist attacks in venues and public spaces to be medium-high. In addition, a desk-based review of decadal crime and terrorism statistics between 2012 and 2022, from the Police.UK website, local news archives, and data provided by the Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters (CTPHQ) Coordination Centre, shows that there is a risk of terrorism, vandalism, sabotage, and theft. Whilst, locally, it is stated in the Thames Valley Community Risk Register (2022) that “*the probability of getting caught up in a terror attack is small*”, it is recognised that the factors taken into consideration in reaching this judgement did not include the Proposed Development.
- 18.25 When consulted by Cherwell District Council at the EIA scoping stage, Thames Valley Police stated that:
- “The threat of terrorism in a crowded place and publicly accessible location such as this is a risk that must be considered at this stage...”*
- 18.26 Further details were requested on measures to protect the Proposed Development and its users from terrorism, both on match days and during normal community use. ‘Hostile Vehicle Mitigation’ was highlighted as of fundamental importance for the Proposed Development as there will be large volumes of people walking alongside main arterial roads and the railway line, where the restricted width of the road and existing lack of separation could create significant safety risks. The fan route to and from the proposed car parking and coach pick up/drop off and the train station must have sufficient vehicle mitigation measures in place to prevent any ‘Vehicle as a Weapon’ attacks. It was also advised that all counter terrorism measures should be designed in from the outset as it is difficult and extremely expensive to add them on at a later stage.
- 18.27 On the basis of the above, in the absence of any proposed mitigation, there is potential for a significant effect on human health and/or the environment as a consequence of terrorism.

Mitigation Measures and Residual Effects

- 18.28 A Security Threat and Risk Assessment (STRA)^{xv} has been completed to inform the design of the Proposed Development by Restrata, on behalf of Mott MacDonald. A summary of the STRA is provided in the Design & Access Statement (DAS) which accompanies the planning application^{xvi}. The STRA identifies security hazards, threats and vulnerabilities based on the design information, consultation with key stakeholders and the team’s professional experience.

18.29 The STRA identifies a number of risk scenarios, including a range of 'high risk' terrorism-related 'security events' scenarios, including the following:

- Attacks from vehicle borne improvised explosive devices (IEDs);
- Attacks from person borne IEDs;
- Covertly placed bombs/IEDs/delivered IEDs;
- Drones as a weapon;
- Shooting from conventional weapons;
- Hoaxes.

18.30 Following identification of a number of Protection Objectives and a strategy of 'Deter, Detect, Delay, Response, and Recover', the STRA then identifies recommended mitigation solutions for the high risks based on industry best practice and standards to achieve a risk reduction considered 'As Low As Reasonably Practical (ALARP)'. These mitigation solutions, as outlined in the DAS, include but are not limited to:

Technical Measures

- A site wide video surveillance plan for buildings, infrastructure, and external areas;
- Intelligent video analytics to detect, track, and analyse moving objects;
- The integration of infrastructure and building systems with security to allow for 24/7 monitoring;
- An integrated access control system incorporating pedestrian access restrictions and utilising access cards for critical areas;
- Intrusion detection for infrastructure and high security areas;
- Secure site-wide mobile radio communications;
- Vehicle screening throughout multiple layers of the development;
- Personnel screening for visitors, staff and contractors to critical buildings;
- Security screening capability or provision at site entrances for detection of illicit material, weapons and explosive trace detection.

Physical Measures

- Segregation of spaces through the use of natural access control and environmental design;
- The use of fixed and automated hostile vehicle mitigation to protect people and assets from vehicle intrusion and to facilitate adequate standoff distances;
- Stepped terraces, natural contour changes and walls to define boundaries and deter unauthorised access;
- Multiple dedicated security networks, and system redundancy, and integration with supporting systems (e.g., fire);
- Dedicated site-wide security control rooms staffed 24/7;
- Gatehouses at roads leading to the site to control access.

Operational Measures

- Security policies and procedures developed in line with varying site requirements;
- Security manpower licensed and trained to the highest standards;
- Coordination with emergency services for effective incident response;
- The creation of an onsite response methodology;
- The establishment of a site-wide operational hierarchy and coordination plan;
- Background checks and monitoring of staff.

- 18.31 No risks remain in the 'High' category following mitigation, and all risks are considered to be reduced to a manageable and acceptable level.
- 18.32 It is anticipated that the Protection Objectives will be further developed during the future design stages, culminating in a coordinated and approved Security Strategy. As security risks change over time, the STRA will be considered a live document and will be regularly updated. Where changes to the site's assets, threat levels or other operations that could impact on security occur, the risk assessment within the document will be repeated.
- 18.33 As all risks are considered to be reduced to a manageable and acceptable level following the adoption of the above security mitigation measures, no significant residual effects on human health and/or the environment are predicted as a consequence of terrorism.

Cumulative Effects

Inter-Project Effects

- 18.34 Whilst some potential major accidents and disasters could lead to cumulative effects, it is anticipated that the developments considered in the cumulative assessment, the majority of which relate to residential or residential-led mixed development, (Chapter 2: Approach to EIA) will be regulated by environmental protection legislation, health and safety regulations and design standards, as with the Proposed Development, all of which are focussed on preventing and/or mitigating major accidents and disasters.

Intra-Project Effects

- 17.1 The potential for in-combination effects is considered in **Table 18.1** above, particularly in relation to Chapter 8: Highways and Access, Chapter 14: Flood Risk and Drainage, and Chapter 16: Climate Change. No significant intra-project effects are predicted.

Conclusions

17.2 Residual effects are summarised in **Table 18.2** below. These relate only to terrorism as no other potential major accidents or disasters required detailed consideration.

Table 18.2: Major accidents and disasters summary table

Effect	Mitigation	Residual Effect
Construction Phase		
Effects on human health and/or the environment as a consequence of terrorism	Regulatory compliance Mitigation measures as outlined in the Security Threat and Risk Assessment	Not significant
Operational Phase		
Effects on human health and/or the environment as a consequence of terrorism	Regulatory compliance Mitigation measures as outlined in the Security Threat and Risk Assessment	Not significant
Cumulative Effects		
Inter-project effects on human health and/or the environment as a consequence of terrorism	Regulatory compliance	Not significant

References

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- ^{xvi} OUFC New Stadium Development Design & Access Statement.