

Stokes Lane Solar Farm, Basingstoke

Environmental Statement

Volume 1: Primary Reporting and Supporting Graphics

October 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) is part of a suite of documents submitted by Stokes Lane Solar Farm Limited (the 'Applicant') to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) for the construction and operation of an electricity generating station known as Stokes Lane Solar Farm (the 'Proposed Development'). The Proposed Development will be delivered on approximately 87.5 hectares (ha) and is located on land north and south of Rookery Farm Lane, south of the village of Monk Sherborne, North of Basingstoke (the 'Site'). The Site is shown on **Figure 1.1**.
- 1.2 The Proposed Development comprises the installation and operation of ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) panels fixed to a dual-axis solar tracking system, and associated infrastructure including access roads, substation, cabling, power stations, control room; a Distribution Network Operator (DNO) station; storage containers; security fencing and CCTV; and temporary construction compound. The Proposed Development includes a solar farm with an export capacity of up to 28 megawatts (MW), along with the grid connection cable route beyond the main solar farm site.
- 1.3 Turley was commissioned by the Applicant to undertake the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and prepare this ES, with support from a competent expert team (as set out in **Table 1.1**). The ES reports the outputs of the EIA process undertaken in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended)¹ (the 'EIA Regulations').
- 1.4 The ES, alongside a series of other application documents and plans, has been submitted to BDBC and is available on the BDBC planning portal website for viewing and downloading at the following link:
- <https://publicaccess.basingstoke.gov.uk/online-applications/>
- 1.5 Members of the public may comment via BDBC, either in writing or through BDBC planning portal website.
- 1.6 Readers may also view the electronic version of the application, which is available on the project website at: <https://stokeslanesolarfarm.co.uk/>

Planning Application History and Purpose of this ES

- 1.7 A full planning application was submitted by the Applicant in June 2025 (BDBC ref: 25/01612/FUL) for "*Proposed solar farm, associated infrastructure including underground cable route, internal access tracks and landscaping*". The planning application was supported by an ES prepared by Atmos Consulting. Following

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended). SI No. 571 [online] Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/contents> (Accessed: October 2026)

consultation comments from BDBC's landscape and conservation & heritage teams, amendments to the design of the Proposed Development have been made to respond to these comments. Subsequently, this ES (referred to as the '2026 ES') has been prepared by Turley to provide an updated assessment of the Proposed Development.

Definition and Aims of EIA

- 1.8 EIA is defined by Regulation 4, Paragraph 1 of the EIA Regulations as “...a process consisting of:
- (a) the preparation of an environmental statement;*
 - (b) any consultation, publication and notification required by, or by virtue of, these Regulations of any enactment in respect of EIA development; and*
 - (c) the steps required under Regulation 26².”*
- 1.9 Under Regulation 4, Paragraph 2 of the EIA Regulations, an EIA must “...identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of the Proposed Development on the following factors -
- (a) population and human health;*
 - (b) biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC³ and Directive 2009/147/EC⁴;*
 - (c) land, soil, water, air and climate;*
 - (d) material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape;*
 - (e) the interaction between the factors referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d)”.*
- 1.10 The aim of EIA, as outlined by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)⁵, is “...to protect the environment by ensuring that a local planning authority when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project, which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects, and takes this into account in the decision making process. The regulations set out a procedure for identifying those projects which should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, and for assessing, consulting and coming to a decision on those projects which are likely to have significant environmental effects.”

² Regulation 26 involves consideration of whether planning permission or subsequent consent should be granted.

³ OJ No. L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.

⁴ OJ No. L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7.

⁵ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, (2014) (updated 2020). *Planning Practice Guidance: Environmental Impact Assessment*. Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 4-002-20140306. Revision date: 06 03 2014. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment> (Accessed: October 2026)

- 1.11 The EIA Regulations do not require an ES to assess compliance with planning policy or guidance with respect to the Proposed Development. A **Planning Statement** has been prepared and submitted with the Application that examines the merits of the Proposed Development against relevant national and local planning policy. However, where planning policy has informed assessments within the ES (i.e. the level of effect or assessment methodology) this has been clearly referenced.

Legal Framework for EIA

Overview of the EIA Process

- 1.12 The EIA Regulations require that prior to consent being granted, for certain types of development, an EIA must be undertaken. The EIA Regulations set out the types of developments which must always be subject to an EIA (referred to as ‘Schedule 1 development’) and other development which may require an EIA, if they are likely to give rise to significant environmental effects (referred to as ‘Schedule 2 development’). The EIA process is summarised below.

EIA Screening

- 1.13 The Proposed Development has been compared to descriptions of development set out within Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations. This indicates that the Proposed Development is considered to fall under Schedule 2, Paragraph 3(a) for “*Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water*”. The Proposed Development was screened as ‘EIA Development’ by BDBC in January 2021 (ref: 21/03566/ENSC).

EIA Scoping

- 1.14 In accordance with Regulation 15, Paragraph 1 of the EIA Regulations, a formal request for a Scoping Opinion, supported by an EIA Scoping Report, was prepared by Atmos Consulting, and submitted to BDBC in February 2023.
- 1.15 A Scoping Opinion was adopted by BDBC in June 2023. Further details of the EIA Scoping process are provided in **Section 1.2: Approach to EIA**.

Environmental Statement (ES)

- 1.16 As above (**Paragraph 1.7**), an ES was submitted in 2025 to support the planning application. The findings of this new EIA are presented in this 2026 ES, which has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 18, Paragraphs 3 – 5 and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations as well as the PPG.
- 1.17 The ES is provided in four volumes:
- **Volume 1: Primary Reporting and Supporting Graphics** – provides the main text of the ES, under the following structure:
 - **Chapter 1:** Introduction;
 - **Chapter 2:** Landscape and Visual;
 - **Chapter 3:** Cultural Heritage; and

- **Chapter 4:** Summary of Mitigation and Residual Effects.
 - **Volume 2: Technical Appendices to the Primary Report** – encompasses a range of technical reports which have informed the technical assessments presented in **Volume 1**.
 - **Volume 3: Non-Technical Summary** – provides a summary of the ES in a non-technical language to aid communication and understanding of the Proposed Development and the EIA process undertaken.
- 1.18 The full suite of chapters/documents within **Volume 1: Primary Report and Supporting Graphics** and **Volume 2: Technical Appendices to the Primary Report** have been listed in the Contents Page.

Project Team

- 1.19 Regulation 18, Paragraph 5(a) of the EIA Regulations requires an EIA to be prepared by competent experts.
- 1.20 Turley is responsible for the coordination, compilation and procedural review of the ES. The Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals has awarded Turley the EIA Quality Mark in recognition of our technical quality and commitment to improvement in practice.
- 1.21 All technical assessment has been undertaken by a suitably qualified project team, inclusive of a thorough technical review to assure technical credibility, followed by a subsequent procedural review by the EIA coordination team and EIA Project Director.
- 1.22 A statement outlining the relevant expertise / qualifications of the EIA project team is provided as **Appendix 1.1**. The full project team is identified in **Table 1.1**.



Table 1.1: Project team

Team Member	Role
Stokes Lane Solar Farm Limited	Applicant
Turley	EIA Landscape and Visual Cultural Heritage

Application Documents and Plans

- 1.23 The ES is one of the documents submitted alongside the full planning application to BDBC for the Proposed Development. For a full list of documents and plans and their planning status (i.e. for approval or supporting information), please refer to the **Planning Statement**.

1.2 Approach to EIA

Introduction

- 1.21 This Section sets out the approach and methodology that has been undertaken to complete the assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development (as described in **Section 1.4: The Proposed Development** and supporting plans).
- 1.22 This Section sets out the following:
- Adoption and application of best practice within the EIA process;
 - Scope of the ES, including a summary of the EIA Scoping process and the technical topics scoped in and out of the ES;
 - Stakeholder and public engagement, summarising the level of engagement with statutory and non-statutory consultees, and other forms of engagement; and
 - Approach to the assessment of likely significant effects, specifically covering: consideration of the full extent of development; approach to the assessment against a consistent baseline; future baseline; identification of sensitive receptors; information to inform assessment; assessment scenarios; implementation of mitigation; criteria for determining the level of effects and significance; and limitations/assumptions.

Scope of the ES

EIA Scoping

- 1.23 In accordance with Regulation 15, Paragraph 1 of the EIA Regulations, a formal request for a Scoping Opinion supported by an EIA Scoping Report was submitted to BDBC in the February 2023, for which BDBC provided their Scoping Opinion in June 2023, supported by technical responses from statutory and non-statutory consultees (ref: 23/00411/ENS).

Scope of the 2025 ES

- 1.24 Following the EIA Scoping exercise, the following technical topics and their associated likely significant environmental effects were taken forward and assessed within the 2025 ES:
- Landscape and Visual (Chapter 2 of the 2025 ES); and
 - Cultural Heritage (Chapter 3 of the 2025 ES).
- 1.25 As part of the EIA process, there were several technical topics and their associated environmental effects which were not considered to be significant and were therefore 'scoped out' of the 2025 ES as part of the EIA Scoping Report. These are as follows:

- Air Quality;
- Agricultural Land and Soils;
- Biodiversity;
- Climate Change;
- Ground Conditions and Contamination;
- Lighting;
- Risk of Major Accidents and/or Disasters;
- Transport and Accessibility;
- Waste and Resources;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Socio-Economics and Human Health; and
- Water Environment.

Scope of the 2026 ES

- 1.26 An informal scoping process took place prior to the production of this 2026 ES. A review of all technical topics were undertaken to consider the potential for new or different likely significant effects to those reported within the 2025 ES as a result of changes to the Proposed Development.
- 1.27 Landscape and Visual, and Cultural Heritage remain scoped into the ES. However, effects to non-designated below ground heritage assets⁶ are scoped out of this 2026 ES. AOC Archaeology, authors of the [2025 ES Cultural Heritage chapter](#)⁷, produced a technical note (**Appendix 1.2**) which assesses the changes to the design against the conclusions of the 2025 ES. This technical note concludes that with existing mitigation in place, effects for all receptors remain either as reported in the 2025 ES, or in the case of Asset 162 Medieval or post medieval Ridge and Furrow, the effect has been reduced from minor to none. Therefore, assessment of these archaeological features has been scoped out of the 2026 ES.
- 1.28 All other technical topics as listed under **Paragraph 1.26** remain scoped out of this 2026 ES, as there is no potential for new or different likely significant effects as a result of changes to the design of the Proposed Development.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 1.29 Technical consultation with relevant consultees has been undertaken throughout the EIA process to inform the scope, assessment methodology/approach and in some instances the outputs of baseline studies/surveys. This 2026 ES has been produced to respond to and address consultation comments received.

⁶ This includes the following receptors assessed in the 2025 ES: 105 Rectilinear features, probably field boundaries removed in the modern period; 107 Trackway S of Monk Sherborne, possible prehistoric trackway; 113 Probable Iron Age Settlement; 116 Trackway, Weybrook Golf Course, possible prehistoric trackway; 162 Medieval or postmedieval Ridge and Furrow; 173 PRoW, possible minor Roman transportation route; and 174 Bronze Age Ring Ditch.

⁷ Available online at: <https://publicaccess.basingstoke.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=SYOC6RCRFZ900&activeTab=summary>

Approach to Assessment

Overview

- 1.30 This Section outlines the approach to the assessment of likely significant environment effects adopted, as reported within this ES. The methodologies for the assessment of likely significant effects of the Proposed Development during the construction, operation and decommissioning stages varies across the technical topics considered within the EIA, largely due to technical specific guidance and best practice. Therefore, each of **Technical Chapters 2** and **3** specifically set out the relevant technical assessment methodologies.

Existing Baseline

- 1.31 Schedule 4, Paragraph 3 of the EIA Regulations, states that an ES should include:

“a description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario)”.

- 1.32 Likely significant effects as a result of the Proposed Development have been described in the ES in relation to the deviation from the baseline environment within the Site and relevant technical study areas. The baseline environment comprises the prevailing environmental characteristics and conditions of the Site and relevant technical study areas. The baseline has been established through:

- Site visits and surveys;
- Desk-based studies;
- Review of existing Site-specific information or public literature;
- Modelling; and
- Review of relevant national and local planning policies.

- 1.33 The baseline conditions for the purpose of the ES may vary dependent on the timing of the survey or the date when data sources will have been accessed.

Table 1.2: Summary of Baseline Adopted within Technical Chapters 2 and 3

Chapter	Data Collection Type	Timeframe
Chapter 2: Landscape and Visual	Preliminary Desk Study	January 2026 to July 2026
	Field Study	January 2026
	Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)	February 2026
	Accurate Visualisations of the Proposed Development (AVRs) prepared by Ocean CGI (within Appendix 3 of the LVIA: Appendix 2.1)	
Chapter 3: Cultural Heritage	Desk-Based Heritage Assessment	January to March 2026
	Site Survey	20 January 2026
	Heritage Statement	January to July 2026
	Views Assessment	January to February 2026

Extent of Baseline Data Collection

- 1.34 The boundary upon which baseline data has been collected (i.e. study areas) varies between the technical topics and therefore these are reported specifically within **Technical Chapters 2 and 3**. However, all study areas include the Site, as defined in the Site Location Plan shown on **Figure 1.1**. This represents the maximum extent of permanent and temporary development and associated works for which permission will be sought.

- 1.35 Throughout the EIA, the origin of all third-party data, the dates of surveys and the dates when data sources have been accessed are clearly outlined within the relevant **Technical Chapters 2 and 3**, alongside any limitations or assumptions.

Consideration of Future Baseline

- 1.36 Schedule 4, Paragraph 3 of the EIA Regulations states that an ES should include:

“...an outline of the likely evolution thereof (without implementation of the development) as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.”

- 1.37 As required by the EIA Regulations, the ES reports the future baseline scenario under a ‘do nothing’ scenario, which is further discussed in **Section 1.5: Consideration of Alternatives**. The future baseline scenario is discussed within each of the **Technical Chapters 2 and 3** which consider potential changes to the Site and study area assuming no further development and the continuation of the existing management regime.

- 1.38 As set out under 'Approach to the Assessment' (**Paragraph 1.34**), the assessments presented in the ES are largely based on the deviation from the existing baseline scenario (as future baseline conditions are presented for information purposes only). 'Assessment Scenarios' section below specifies instances where there is a deviation from this approach.

Identification of Sensitive Receptors

- 1.39 Schedule 4, Paragraph 4 of the EIA Regulations states that an ES should include:
- "...a description of the factors specified in Regulation 4(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora); land (for example land-take), soil, (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaption), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape."*
- 1.40 Consistent with the EIA Regulations, the identification of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development has been set out within the 'Sensitive Receptors' section of each **Technical Chapters 2 and 3**. These are summarised in **Table 1.4** in **Section 1.3: Site Context**.

Information to Inform the Assessment in the ES

- 1.41 The ES is required to provide sufficient information about the Proposed Development to meet the requirements of the EIA Regulations and to ensure that BDBC can reasonably be satisfied that they have sufficient information of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development in its entirety.
- 1.42 The assessments undertaken as part of the EIA and reported in this ES are based on Section 1.4: **The Proposed Development**, Site Layout plan (**Figure 1.2**) and Landscape and Ecology Strategy Plan (**Figure 1.3**) which together contain all information required to inform the EIA.

Assessment Scenarios

- 1.43 In accordance with the EIA Regulations, the EIA has assessed the likely effects arising from the Proposed Development, taking account of Site preparation / enabling works, earthworks, remedial works where required, and construction (collectively referred to as 'construction') and operation stages.
- 1.44 The following key scenarios have been assessed where relevant to each environmental topic (and likely significant effects):
- Peak construction – this has not been attributed to a specific timepoint, rather it is determined at what point the worst-case effect could occur across the period; and
 - Operation – this considers environmental effects associated with the full operation of the Proposed Development, once completed as anticipated in 2029 with an operational lifespan of 40 years.

- 1.45 Due to similarities between effects of the construction and decommissioning stages, decommissioning has not been assessed separately as its own independent stage to maintain a proportionate assessment. Any effects associated with the removal of the Proposed Development are anticipated to be temporary and broadly comparable in nature and extent to those identified for the construction phase. The duration of decommissioning is anticipated to be shorter than construction, however under EIA assessment terminology all effects would still be classed as short term.
- 1.46 As set out in **Section 1.4: The Proposed Development**, construction is anticipated to commence in 2028, and comprise a period of 12 months, with final completion anticipated in 2029. Where relevant, the assessments within **Technical Chapters 2 and 3** have therefore considered the construction and operation stages of the Proposed Development in line with these dates. Exceptions to this include **Chapter 2: Landscape and Visual**. The operation stage assessment utilises a Year 15 (in addition to a Year 1) of operation to appraise the effectiveness of proposed vegetation planting upon its maturity.

Implementation of Mitigation and Monitoring

- 1.47 Schedule 4, Paragraph 7 of the EIA Regulations states that an ES should include:
- “...a description of the measures to avoid, prevent, reduce, or if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover construction and operational phases.”*
- 1.48 Regulation 26 states that when determining an application consideration should be given to “...whether it is appropriate to impose monitoring measures...” including the parameters to be monitored and the duration of the monitoring.
- 1.49 In accordance with ISEP Guidance,⁸ three types of mitigation have been identified and used within the ES, comprising;
- **Primary:** modifications to the location or design of the Proposed Development made during the pre-application stage that are an inherent part of the project;
 - **Secondary:** actions that will require further activity in order to achieve the anticipated outcome. These would be included within the ES following the assessment of effect, under the ‘Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement’ section, before the reporting of the ‘residual’ effects. It is anticipated that such measures would be secured by condition or planning obligation; and
 - **Tertiary:** actions that would occur with or without input from the EIA feeding into the design process. These include actions that will be undertaken to meet other existing legislative requirements, or actions that are considered to be

⁸ Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) (formerly Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)), (2024). *Implementing the Mitigation Hierarchy from Concept to Construction*

standard practices used to manage commonly occurring environmental effects. There needs to be confidence that these will be implemented, and they need to be specific with a clear timescale for implementation and responsibility.

- 1.50 **Technical Chapters 2 and 3** have considered relevant primary and tertiary mitigation for both the construction and operation stages prior to undertaking their assessment of likely significant effects. Following the conclusion of effects based on the Proposed Development (inclusive of primary and tertiary mitigation), any further mitigation measures or monitoring arrangements have been identified (i.e. secondary mitigation). The application of secondary and tertiary mitigation is only considered appropriate if there is a high level of confidence in the mechanism for implementation (by the Applicant or third party). If relevant, consideration is then also given to any indirect effects of the secondary mitigation alongside the likelihood and confidence of implementation which is evaluated when determining the residual effect. The primary, tertiary and secondary mitigation detailed within **Technical Chapters 2 and 3** and are summarised in **Chapter 4** within the **Environmental Management Plan**.

Determining Level of Effect and Significance Criteria

- 1.51 A four-step approach has been adopted to define effects. The four steps comprise the following, which are discussed further below:
- **Step 1: Define environmental sensitivity;**
 - **Step 2: Define magnitude of change;**
 - **Step 3: Define level of effect; and**
 - **Step 4: Conclude on significance.**
- 1.52 The method for assessing the level of effect has varied between technical topics but in principle has been based on:
- The environmental sensitivity (or value / importance etc., as appropriate to the environmental topic) of a receptor or receiving environment to change, including aspects such as adaptability, tolerance or recoverability; and
 - The magnitude of change (or impact) from the baseline conditions, including aspects such as probability / likelihood of occurrence, geographical extent, complexity, duration, frequency and reversibility (i.e. temporary and permanent).
- 1.53 Sensitivity (or value/importance etc.) has been assessed on a scale of high, medium, low and negligible and magnitude of change on a scale of large, medium, small and negligible. Where deviations from these scales is required to meet specific technical guidance, this is outlined, where relevant, in **Technical Chapters 2 and 3**.
- 1.54 Other factors such as feedback from stakeholders, relevant legislation, international / national / regional / local standards and guidance and the inter-relationship between effects (both cumulatively and in terms of potential effect interactions) have also been considered, where appropriate.

- 1.55 The assignment of the level of effect has been based on professional judgement, and the matrix below (**Table 1.3**) is intended to be a tool to assist with the process. Whilst the matrix provides ranges, this is to guide the competent expert and a definitive assessment of level of effect has been provided for each effect.

Table 1.3: Matrix to support determining the level of effect

Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity (or value / importance)				
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
	Large	Major	Moderate to Major	Minor to Moderate	Negligible
	Medium	Moderate to Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Small	Minor to Moderate	Minor	Negligible to Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

- 1.56 The following terms have been used to define the level of the effects identified and these can be 'beneficial' or 'adverse':
- Major effect:** Where the Proposed Development is likely to cause a considerable change from the baseline conditions and the receptor has limited adaptability, tolerance or recoverability or is of the highest sensitivity. This effect is considered to be 'Significant';
 - Moderate effect:** Where the Proposed Development is likely to cause either a considerable change from the baseline conditions at a receptor which has a degree of adaptability, tolerance or recoverability or a less than considerable change at a receptor that has limited adaptability, tolerance or recoverability. This effect is considered more likely to be 'Significant' but will be subject to professional judgement;
 - Minor effect:** Where the Proposed Development is likely to cause a small, but noticeable change from the baseline conditions on a receptor which has limited adaptability, tolerance or recoverability or is of the highest sensitivity or a considerable change from the baseline conditions at a receptor which can adapt, is tolerant of the change and / or can recover from the change. This effect is considered less likely to be 'Significant' but will be subject to professional judgement; and
 - Negligible:** Where the Proposed Development is unlikely to cause a noticeable change at a receptor, despite its level of sensitivity or there is a considerable change at a receptor which is not considered sensitive to a change. This effect is 'Not Significant'.

- 1.57 For some specific environmental topics, guidance on the nature of the effect requires that differing criteria or scales for determining significance are to be used. Where this is the case, this is set out in **Technical Chapters 2 and 3**.
- 1.58 A conclusion has then been provided as to whether the effect is 'Significant' or 'Not Significant' based on professional judgement. As such, significance has only been concluded for residual effects (i.e. following the application of 'Secondary Mitigation or Enhancement' measures).
- 1.59 Effects have also been described in line with the requirements of the EIA Regulations (i.e. as direct or indirect, short / medium / long-term and temporary or permanent).
- 1.60 **Technical Chapters 2 and 3** provide summary of effects tables which outline the effects assessed, associated sensitive receptors, residual effects and whether the effect is 'Significant' or 'Not Significant'.

Assessment of Cumulative Effects

- 1.61 The EIA Regulations require the provision of an assessment of cumulative effects, and therefore the following types of cumulative effects have been considered in this ES:

- **Cumulative Project Effects:** the combination of environmental effects of the Proposed Development in conjunction with / alongside environmental effects from other projects affecting the same receptor; and
- **Effect interactions:** the interactions of environmental effects of the Proposed Development affecting the same receptor, either within the Site or in the surrounding area.

Cumulative Project Effects

- 1.62 In order to identify Cumulative Projects that could give rise to in-combination effects with the Proposed Development, a review of the following sources has been undertaken:
- BDBC online register of projects⁹; and
 - Planning Inspectorate online register of projects¹⁰.
- 1.63 As such, the search has been focused on projects within 5km of the Site, acknowledging the maximum extent of likely receptors and nature of effects to be reported within the ES.
- 1.64 The following additional criteria have also been used to define the list of Cumulative Projects:
- Applications dating from August 2021 onwards. It is anticipated that applications prior to this date will already have been built out (and therefore form part of the

⁹ <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/view-planning-applications>

¹⁰ <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

baseline) and / or where subsequent applications have been submitted these would be captured within the search dates;

- Applications that have been submitted, consented/granted planning permission, or part implemented; and
- Applications that have been refused but are subject to an undetermined appeal.

1.65 The Cumulative Project effects assessment is provided in the relevant **Technical Chapters 2 and 3**. The Cumulative Projects considered within the cumulative assessments of **Technical Chapters 2 and 3** are confirmed in **Table 1.4** and their locations are shown in **Figure 1.4**.

Table 1.4: List of Cumulative Projects

ID	Planning Reference and Address	Description	Distance and direction from Site (km)	EIA Development?	Status
1	23/02622/OUT Weybrook Park Golf Club Rooksdown Lane Basingstoke Hampshire	Outline planning application for up to 220 homes, with vehicular access from Aldermaston Road (A340), and the provision of; cycle and pedestrian accesses, open space, landscaping, SuDS, and other associated infrastructure. All matters reserved except for access.	700m west	No	Pending Determination Submitted October 2023
2	17/00818/OUT Many down Lane, Basingstoke	Residential development of approximately 3,200 homes (up to a maximum of 3,520 homes) within Class C2 and C3; local centres including non-residential development (Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1, D2, B1); development of two primary schools; land for one secondary school; open spaces including a Country Park with related ancillary facilities (Class A1, A3, D1, D2), Neighbourhood Parks, natural green spaces, allotments, outdoor sports facilities and associated amenities, play provision, informal open space and landscaping; indoor sports facilities (Class D2); primary means of vehicular access from the surrounding highway network; a central street (The Main Street) through the Site; associated secondary means of access, parking,	900m south	Yes	Approved December 2021

ID	Planning Reference and Address	Description	Distance and direction from Site (km)	EIA Development?	Status
		footpaths, cycle links and related transport facilities; provision of 5 permanent gypsy and traveller pitches and infrastructure works to provide drainage, utilities and associated services. All matters are reserved except the primary means of vehicular access onto the A339, B3400 and Roman Road.			
3	23/00205/OUT Land At Kiln Farm Kiln Road Sherborne St John	Outline planning application with all matters reserved except access for up to 350 dwellings, landscaping, public open space and associated infrastructure.	1.8km east	No	Pending Determination Submitted January 2023
4	20/00854/FUL Phase 2C Merton Rise Chineham Lane Basingstoke Hampshire	Erection of 138 dwellings, public open space and associated car parking and levels for Phase 2C.	2.2km west	No	Approved July 2023
5	23/03012/FUL Land Adjacent to Hook Lane	Solar farm and associated development	2.6km southwest	Yes	Approved February 2026
6	25/02934/OUT Land West Of Upper Cufau de Farm Cufau de Lane Bramley Hampshire	Outline planning application for residential development, with vehicular access to be provided from the access approved under Outline permission: 19/00018/OUT and Phase 1 Reserved Matters permission: 23/02003/RES; and the provision of; cycle and pedestrian accesses, open space, landscaping, SuDS, and other associated infrastructure. All matters reserved except for access.	3.1km east	No	Pending Determination Submitted December 2025
7	19/00018/OUT Land At Upper Cufau de Farm Cufau de Lane	Residential development for up to 350 dwellings and land reserved for a primary school with associated access, community facilities, drainage works (SuDS), areas of open space and landscaping. Demolition of existing farm buildings.	3.6km east	No	Approved April 2025

Effect Interactions

- 1.66 The assessment of effect interactions considers changes to baseline conditions at common sensitive receptors due to the Proposed Development. Common sensitive receptors are receptors that would experience two or more effects as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 1.67 To identify where there are common sensitive receptors, the receptors assessed have been categorised into the ‘factors’/ ‘receptor groups’ (termed ‘receptor categories’) outlined in Regulation 4, Paragraph 2 (and expanded on in Schedule 4, Paragraph 4) of the EIA Regulations. These are as follows:
- Population and human health;
 - Biodiversity (for example fauna and flora);
 - Land (for example land take);
 - Soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing);
 - Water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality);
 - Air;
 - Climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation);
 - Material assets;
 - Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects; and
 - Landscape.
- 1.68 As all receptors under **Chapter 2** fall within the Landscape category, and all receptors within **Chapter 3** fall within the Cultural heritage category, there are considered to be no common sensitive receptors that could be subject to effect interactions. As such, further consideration of effect interactions is scoped out of this ES.

Limitations and Assumptions

- 1.69 Schedule 4, Paragraph 6 of the EIA Regulations state that an ES should include:
- “...details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.”*
- 1.70 Where **Technical Chapters 2 and 3** experience limitations or are based on assumptions these have been clearly identified within the relevant chapter.

1.3 Site Context

Introduction

- 1.71 This Section aims to provide a description of the Site and identifies the sensitive receptors considered in the EIA.

- 1.72 The relevant detailed baseline characteristics of the Site and the surrounding area in relation to the technical topics ‘scoped into’ the EIA are considered within **Technical Chapters 2 and 3**. A summary of the sensitive receptors included in **Technical Chapters 2 and 3** is included in **Table 1.4**.

Site Location and Context

- 1.73 The Site lies on 87.5ha over two parcels of agricultural land made up of five large arable fields located to the north and south of Rookery Farm Lane, to the south of Monk Sherborne, and north of Basingstoke (**Figure 1.1**). The Site is approximately 0.7km north-west of Basingstoke’s urban edge. Rookery Farm Lane runs through the Site from south-west to north-east and connects with the A339 to the south.
- 1.74 The fields are joined by existing common access tracks, and consist of a series of interlinked agricultural fields, enclosed by typical field boundary hedgerows which contain occasional trees.
- 1.75 The land sits on gently sloping terrain falling generally from south to north and north-east, at elevations of approximately 95m to 125m above ordnance datum (AOD).
- 1.76 The Site is bound by:
- Open arable farmland and the A339 corridor to the south;
 - Lower-lying, wooded and settled landscape character and Manor Farm to the north;
 - Weybrook Park Golf Course, woodland, settlement expansion and the urban edge of Basingstoke to the east; and
 - Open agricultural land and rural lanes to the west.
- 1.77 The Site lies immediately adjacent to the Monk Sherborne Conservation Area and in close proximity to the Sherborne St John Conservation Area.
- 1.78 The wider surrounding area is characterised by expansive, open arable farmland. To the south are major road corridors and agricultural land, while to the north the landscape becomes more wooded and settled. To the east are mixed land uses including a golf course, woodland and the urban fringe of Basingstoke and Sherborne St John. To the west lies further open agricultural land.

Identification of Sensitive Receptors

- 1.79 **Table 1.4** lists the sensitive receptors on which likely significant effects may occur and their relationship to the ‘factors’ or ‘receptor groups’ (termed ‘receptor categories’) outlined in Regulation 4, Paragraph 2 (and expanded on in Schedule 4) of the EIA Regulations. These are assessed within **Technical Chapters 2 and 3** and **Chapter 4: Assessment of Cumulative Effects**, where appropriate, and further detail on the receptors is provided within these Chapters.

Table 1.5: Sensitive Receptors Identified for Assessment in this ES

Chapter	Sensitive receptor(s)	Receptor Category
Chapter 2: Landscape and Visual	Landscape Receptors: Site/Landscape Fabric	Landscape
	Visual Receptors: Public Right of Way users of St James' Way long distance footpath (Ref: 267/7013; 208/1/3; 161/4/1 and 161/5/1).	Population
Chapter 3: Cultural Heritage	- Monk Sherborne Conservation Area. - Sherborne St John Conservation Area - All Saints Church, Monk Sherborne (Grade I Listed Building). - Keyhole Enclosure SE of Field Barn Farm (Scheduled Monument). - Rookery Farmhouse (Grade II Listed Building) - Appletree Cottage (Grade II Listed Building). - Eastrop Cottage (Grade II Listed Building) - Thames Dell (Grade II Listed Building). - Monk Sherborne War Memorial (Grade II Listed Building). - Manor Farm (Non-Designated Heritage Asset). - Queen's Cottages (Non-Designated Heritage Asset).	Cultural Heritage

1.4 The Proposed Development

1.80 The Proposed Development would comprise the installation and operation of a ground-mounted solar PV farm and associated infrastructure with an export capacity of up to approximately 28MW. The layout of the Proposed Development is presented in **Figure 1.2: Site Layout Plan** in Volume 4 of the ES.

1.81 The Proposed Development would comprise:

- A series of linear rows (also known as arrays) of PV solar modules;
- Eight power stations;
- Internal access roads;

- Underground cabling;
- Customer and DNO substations;
- Spare parts containers;
- Security fencing and CCTV;
- A temporary construction compound; and
- Landscape planting.

1.82 In a solar energy generation system, the solar module comprises multiple PV cells. The PV cells are composed of semiconducting materials and when daylight hits the module, a voltage develops between the semiconductor materials, and a direct current is generated.

1.83 As the current generated by this process is Direct Current (DC) and the distribution system is designed for Alternating Current (AC), solar generation facilities require the use of inverters to convert DC to a useable AC.

1.84 The inverters convert the DC to AC immediately after generation. The AC is then fed through the transformer, where the voltage is stepped up and transmitted to the distribution network. The modules will be fixed to a dual-axis solar tracker system able to take advantage of the most optimum angle for solar panels for renewable energy generation.

PV Solar Modules

1.85 The solar farm will use polycrystalline PV modules. The modules ensure optimal use of solar irradiation and perform very efficiently at different angles to the sun. The PV modules will generate electricity with no air emissions, no waste production and no water use. The modules are fixed to a simple galvanised steel supporting frame with a 60 to 60 degree inclination during operation hours.

PV Arrays

1.86 In order to avoid shading by adjacent rows and to ensure optimum energy yield in the winter months the rows will be spaced approximately 2.1m apart, depending on local variations in topography. The rows will be aligned north to south, to enable the panels to move east to west to track the sun for maximum efficiency. There will be a stand-off around the end of each array to allow for facility maintenance, access and ecological and landscape enhancements.

1.87 The supporting structure is pile driven vertically into the ground to a depth of approximately 1.5m. When the modules are fixed to the supporting frame, the modules will reach a maximum height of 3.1m above the ground level. The lowest point of the modules is approximately 1.0m above ground and designed to allow sheep to graze underneath the arrays.

Site Access

- 1.88 Primary access to the Proposed Development would be taken from two new priority junctions from Rookery Farm Lane.
- 1.89 Site access point 1 is an existing field access opposite Manor Farm; to access the area of the Site west of Rookery Farm Lane and is on the outside of a bend so visibility splays are maximised in each direction from the access point.
- 1.90 Site access point 2 is an existing agricultural access located on the east side of Rookery Farm Lanes.

Proposed Access Tracks

- 1.91 A new internal access track is proposed and would be approximately 3.5m wide. The tracks have been designed to have sufficient radii for turning of the construction vehicles and plant. The access tracks have been designed to avoid sensitive features and are constructed, where possible, along the path of existing farm tracks and utilising existing gates.
- 1.92 The access track and internal tracks would be constructed using compacted graded crushed aggregate from the Site. At the end of the construction works a main track will be built through the interior of the plant made of ballast to a minimum depth of 30cm. No puddles or ponds should form at the sides of the track.

Power Stations

- 1.93 The solar farm requires four power stations, which are standard infrastructure required for export of the electricity generated by the solar panels. The power stations comprise an intelligent inverter system and a small transformer. The power station is a power conversion device which changes the DC electricity generated by the PV modules into grid-compliant AC electricity and feeds this into the local electricity distribution network.
- 1.94 The transformer is an electrical device that alters the ratio of current and voltage in power to meet the requirements of transmission grids and devices. The power stations are 12.2m long, 2.4m wide and 2.9m high.

Customer Cabin

- 1.95 One customer cabin is required for the Proposed Development and to contain electrical safety switchgear, used to control, protect and isolate electrical equipment at the solar farm. The customer cabin will be 12.72m long, 4.03m wide and 3.0m high. It will be coloured dark green to ensure it blends into the existing environment.

Spare Parts Container

- 1.96 There will be one container onsite to store spare parts. The container will be 13.7m long, 2.4m wide and 2.6m high.

Security Fence and Gates

- 1.97 For security and safety purposes the solar farm will be closed to the general public throughout the construction and operation stages via security fencing and a locked access gate.

- 1.98 A 2.6m high security fence will be installed around the perimeter of the solar farm. The fence will be placed around the solar farm at the start of the construction programme and will remain for the duration of the operation of the Proposed Development. A main steel gate will also be erected, approximately 2m high, and 6m wide. The fence will be designed to allow small animals to pass through the solar farm and will be placed behind existing and proposed hedges to ensure it blends into the natural setting and existing environment.

Security Cameras and Lighting

- 1.99 CCTV cameras pointing into the solar farm will be installed within the fencing for security purposes. The CCTV cameras will be mounted on poles up to 2.4m high. There will be no external artificial lighting during operation of the Proposed Development.

Electrical Layout and Grid Connection

- 1.100 The solar farm will connect into the Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) distribution network via a new 33 kilovolt (kV) dual circuit. The dual circuit will be laid underground from a new 33kV metering substation at the Site, to a point of connection (POC) at the existing SSEN overhead line, where it crosses Morgaston Road. The new 33kV cables will exit the ground at the base of two SSEN wood poles, connect to the poles and terminate onto the overhead lines.
- 1.101 The underground grid connection route will run from approximately National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 61404 55834, north to Monk Sherborne Road. The grid connection route will then follow the road east, until it adjoins the A340, heading north on Aldermaston Road. At Morgaston Road, the grid connection route terminates at the power pole at approximate NGR SU 61974 56940.

Landscape Strategy

- 1.102 The landscape strategy has been designed to consider the local landscape character context, and to conserve and enhance where possible the key landscape characteristics within the Site. This will include the following measures, and is demonstrated on **Figure 1.3: Landscape and Ecology Strategy Plan:**

- Preservation and protection of the vegetation along the Site field boundaries, namely the associated mature hedgerows, occasional hedgerow and tree belts northern field boundaries;
- Implementation of a new species-rich native hedgerows with large-growing, occasional feature trees. New hedgerows will be used contain the solar arrays into a traditional field structure as well as reinstate historic field boundaries;
- Standard sized native trees, which grow to a substantial height with dense canopies, to be utilised for softening the Proposed Development;
- Large area of modified grassland within the fenced solar array areas and implementation of species-rich grassland for areas outside of the fence and within the field boundaries. Field boundary margins established with tussock grassland and scrub planting for habitat diversity;

- Large areas of retained agricultural land not required for the Proposed Development; and
- Implementation of new permissive path to link existing Public Rights of Way.

Drainage Strategy

- 1.103 A full **Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment** accompanies the planning application and has been updated with the amended site layout. At the request of the Lead Local Flood Authority, infiltration testing has been carried out since the original 2025 submission of the application to confirm infiltration rates on-site.
- 1.104 The Proposed Development proposes to direct all runoff from the Site to the ground (infiltration), utilising the lowest infiltration rate determined by testing within the vicinity of each access track and the substation compound.
- 1.105 It is proposed to incorporate infiltration swales and basins adjacent to access tracks and power stations (where feasible and required) which will collect surface water runoff and encourage natural processes, including infiltration of runoff into the ground and evaporation where feasible without interfering with the operational performance and maintenance of solar panels. Surface water runoff from the substation area will be conveyed by below ground pipework to an infiltration swale.
- 1.106 Attenuation storage will be provided to store surface water runoff generated across access tracks, power stations and the substation area.
- 1.107 Further details on the drainage strategy including indicative drawings, can be found in the **Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment** accompanying the planning application.

Maintenance Strategy

- 1.108 Panels will be maintained and cleaned on a six monthly basis. No chemicals will be used within the cleaning process, ensuring there will be no contamination from run-off from the panels into soils or surface water.

Development Phases

Construction

- 1.109 The construction of the Proposed Development is anticipated to take approximately 12 months. Construction will be controlled through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which will implement specific measures to ensure good practice and set out control measures and mitigation as required during construction.
- 1.110 A designated construction route has been identified, which is via the A339 from the east, before a right turn on to Rookery Farm Lane where the Site would be accessed from. No construction traffic would arrive from the west of the A339. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and measures will be put in place to prevent traffic from using other routes which are prohibited. A Framework CTMP was produced and has been resubmitted as part of the 2026 planning application (as part of the Transport Assessment) to demonstrate that adequate arrangements can be put in place to minimise and control the construction traffic impacts from the 12-month construction stage of the Proposed Development along with any associated environmental effects.

1.111 To ensure the efficient management of the construction stage, two main temporary construction compounds will be set up for the duration of the estimated 12 month construction stage. The two temporary construction compounds will be located within the Site boundary to facilitate the construction of the Proposed Development. The temporary construction compounds will include sufficient space for:

- Site offices;
- Storage of Site vehicles and materials;
- The safe loading and unloading of materials; and
- Staff vehicle parking.

1.112 The temporary construction compounds require the laying of a temporary roadway and walkway system on the existing ground surface. The temporary construction compounds will be removed at the end of the construction stage and the area restored to its original condition.

Operation and Decommissioning

1.113 The operation stage of the Proposed Development is anticipated to be 40 years. After which the panels and associated infrastructure would be decommissioned and removed, and the Site restored to its original condition.

1.114 At the end of the Proposed Development's lifespan, the predicted effects are reversible as the land would be returned to its former agricultural use, similar in form to its current state and land use. Cables connecting the solar farm to the grid connection will be left within the carriageway to avoid unnecessary disturbance by their removal. The timescales for the decommissioning and Site restoration is anticipated to be six months.

1.5 Consideration of Alternatives

1.51 This Section reports the 'reasonable alternatives' considered with respect to the Proposed Development.

1.52 Schedule 4, Paragraph 2 of the EIA Regulations states that an ES should include:

"A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects."

1.53 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹¹ indicates that where "...where alternative approaches to development have been considered, paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 requires

¹¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government). *Planning Practice Guidance: Environmental Impact Assessment – What should be*

the applicant to include in their Environmental Statement a description of the reasonable alternatives studied (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects."

- 1.54 As such, in line with the EIA Regulations, if no alternatives have been studied by the Applicant, the EIA does not need to report or assess reasonable alternatives.
- 1.55 Neither the EIA Regulations, nor PPG identify a specific methodology for the reporting of alternatives, or the criteria to be used to inform the consideration of reasonable alternatives. Therefore, the methodology to be adopted for the purpose of the EIA is based on professional experience of similar projects and an understanding of the Proposed Development and its characteristics, as well as focus on delivery of a proportionate output, in line with PPG.
- 1.56 The common 'factors' considered with respect to reasonable alternatives, in line with Schedule 4, Paragraph 2 of the EIA Regulations are:
- Alternative sites;
 - Alternative design;
 - Alternative technology; and
 - 'Do Nothing' scenario.

Alternative Sites

- 1.57 Careful site selection has been undertaken in order to ensure that an efficient, technically and economically viable solar farm can be developed. The site selection process consisted of an evaluation of the following:
- Electricity grid connection feasibility including identification of areas with available grid capacity, potential sites with proximity to overhead line (33kV) and with an identified potential point of connection;
 - Site suitability including identification of sites of a suitable size, orientation and topography with suitable insolation levels. The Site must also be accessible for construction and operation purposes;
 - Site availability (i.e., landowners willing to offer land for solar development);
 - Potential planning issues including National and Local level designations (landscape, ecology, heritage); and
 - Potential environmental constraints including the presence of heritage assets, flood risk, visual receptors.

included in the environmental statement? Paragraph Reference ID: 4-020-20170628. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment> (Accessed: 20th July 2026)

- 1.58 The Site has been selected primarily due to the availability of suitable land in close proximity to the proposed grid connection point. Land further south and west falls within North Wessex Downs National Landscape, which is considered unsuitable for development of this nature. To the west of the Site, the only viable land for solar was unavailable due to an existing commercial agreement. To the north, efforts to secure a cable route were unsuccessful, as the landowner declined to engage and requested that no further contact be made.
- 1.59 Taken together, these constraints make the chosen Site the most appropriate and deliverable location for the Proposed Development and was taken forward in the design evolution process. Further detail of the site selection process can be found in the accompanying Site Selection Statement.

Alternative designs

- 1.60 The design principles of the Proposed Development carry forward the principles applied to Site selection through establishing a design that maximises the output of the solar farm, whilst minimising the impact on the environment. Wherever possible enhancement measures (particularly habitat and biodiversity measures) have been incorporated into the Proposed Development with the design adapted to maximise the benefits.

2025 ES

- 1.61 A range of environmental and technical surveys and assessments informed the design assessed within the 2025 ES, including ecology, landscape and visual, heritage, flood risk, transport, noise, arboriculture and glint and glare assessments.
- 1.62 As a result of the survey work, consultation and the need to maximise the output of the solar farm; the design has evolved since its first iteration to take into account the results of the assessments and feedback from consultation. In response to feedback provided and following initial meetings and contact with the Parish Councils, the design of the Proposed Development was amended as follows:
- Feedback regarding landscape and visual impacts led to the movements of proposed solar PV panels away from Rookery Farm Road;
 - The land adjacent to the A339 (Kingsclere Road) was originally considered but then removed on the grounds of its proximity to the North Wessex National Landscape;
 - The most northerly part of the north eastern field was removed due to proximity to Grade I Listed All Saints Church; and
 - The Proposed Development originally extended to the Queens Cottages, but after feedback from Monk Sherborne Parish Council, a 100m buffer between the Site and the cottages, plus additional proposed screening, has been incorporated into the design.
- 1.63 Further measures have been incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development to reduce potential impacts and improve the layout / landscape of the Proposed Development, comprising:

- Removal of panels from higher central Site areas and field sections along both sides of Stokes Lane, which are more visible from the surrounding landscape;
- These set back areas would be retained as farmland with new environmental enhancement buffers to the development edges and adjacent to sensitive receptors such as residents along Stokes Lane. This would also include a new permissive footpath to link and provide better connections within the public right of way (PRoW) network;
- Removal of panels from the northern field sections to the north of field 5 (north western most field) to reduce visibility from adjacent points to the north and west, including the edges of settlement, PRoW and the edges of the Monk Sherborne Conservation Area;
- Management of existing field boundaries which are intermittent scrubby and overmature, with new understory and infill planting to gap up and maximize screening potential of these boundaries;
- Screening elements of the Proposed Development from key receptor locations, (e.g., users of the PRoW and residential properties adjacent to the Site boundaries);
- The Proposed Development panel layout was redesigned in order to avoid direct impacts upon potential archaeological finds or features identified; and
- Proposed solar panels have been set back from the road between Monk Sherborne and Wooton St Lawrence to limit impacts upon the setting and character of the landscape on approach to Monk Sherborne, which is designated as a Conservation Area.

1.64 Furthermore, consultation undertaken with the local community has yielded feedback which has been considered as part of the design. This is presented within the **Statement of Community Involvement**, which provides more information with regards to how the design has taken into account the public's feedback.

2026 ES

1.65 Following feedback received from the BDBC and other stakeholders to the 2025 planning application (25/01612/FUL), the design of the Proposed Development has been further refined through:

- Reduction of panels from the north eastern most field, such that panels are only located in the southern half of this field parcel;
- Redistribution of panels to the west of Rookery Farm Lane, to allow for greater distance between the start of the panels Manor Farm and Queen's Cottages;
- Relocation of the proposed substation from the northern side of Stokes Lane to the southern side; and

- Adjustments to the proposed landscape planting strategy to ensure that proposed areas of new landscape planting are more respectful of existing landscape character.
- 1.66 These design changes have resulted in a reduction in the footprint of the solar array and above ground-built infrastructure by approximately 11%. **Figure 1.5: Layout Comparison Plan** shows the differences between the 2025 layout and the 2026 layout, demonstrating where panels have been relocated and reduced.
- 1.67 The revised proposals have been informed by the following core design principles, and have been secured within **Figure 1.3 Landscape and Ecology Strategy**:
- **Respect for Landscape Character and Openness** - The design aims to conserve the inherent openness and expansive character of the chalk downland landscape, avoiding the introduction of features or planting that would result in undue enclosure or suburbanisation;
 - **Topography-Led Layout** - The siting of solar arrays responds directly to the gently rolling landform, with development directed towards lower-lying and less visually prominent areas, and away from skylines and elevated ground;
 - **Minimisation of Visual Effects through Siting** – The Proposed Development establishes sensitive placement of infrastructure, rather than reliance on extensive new planting. Existing landform and vegetation would be utilised to reduce intervisibility and visual intrusion;
 - **Protection and Enhancement of Existing Landscape Features** - Established hedgerows, tree belts and woodland will be retained and enhanced where appropriate, with measures focused on strengthening structure, improving condition, and infilling gaps in a manner consistent with local character;
 - **Reinforcement of Historic Landscape Pattern** - Where appropriate, the reinstatement of historic field boundaries is proposed to break up the scale of the development and improve landscape integration;
 - **Avoidance of Incongruous Mitigation Measures** - Proposed landscape interventions reflect traditional land management practices and consider the established landscape character of the area. In particular, excessive hedgerow heights or substantial woodland belts that are uncharacteristic of the chalkland landscape have been avoided; and
 - **Targeted Landscape Enhancement** – Where mitigation planting is required, it is to be localised and proportionate, focusing on reinforcing existing features (e.g. hedgerows and tree belts) rather than introducing new large-scale planting blocks.

Alternative technologies

- 1.68 The Proposed Development is a solar energy generation facility. Alternative technologies relate primarily to the type and configuration of solar PV infrastructure rather than the principle of development itself. Alternative technology options were

considered at a high level, including alternative renewable technologies and alternative solar PV mounting systems. Onshore wind and energy storage as standalone developments were discounted due to land take, planning policy constraints, grid connection requirements and potential environmental effects.

- 1.69 Within solar technology, the use of ground-mounted photovoltaic panels represents a reliable and established technology, with the flexibility to respond to Site topography and environmental constraints. No reasonable alternative technologies were identified that would materially reduce environmental effects or improve deliverability.

‘Do Nothing’ Scenario

- 1.70 In the absence of the Proposed Development, it is anticipated that the current land uses would continue as they currently are. Whilst this would mean there would be no adverse environmental impacts due to the Proposed Development, the ‘do nothing’ scenario would also mean that there would be no benefits derived from the Proposed Development and there will be no contribution to national and international net-zero targets.