



Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Land North and South of Rookery Farm Lane

October 2026

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Appraisal Methodology	5
3.	Relevant Planning Policy Context and Designations	9
4.	Baseline Landscape Appraisal	25
5.	Baseline Visual Appraisal	42
6.	Proposed Development	55
7.	Landscape and Visual Assessment of Effects	58
8.	Cumulative Effects	101
9.	Summary and Conclusions	106
Appendix 1: Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal Methodology		
Appendix 2: Supporting Figures		
Appendix 3: Accurate Visual Representations provided by Ocean CGI		
Appendix 4: Illustrative Viewpoint Photography provided by Ocean CGI		

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Client
Stokes Lane Solar Farm Limited

Our reference
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This standalone Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for Land North and South of Rookery Farm Lane has been prepared by Turley Landscape and VIA on behalf of Stokes Lane Solar Farm Limited to assess the effect of a detailed planning application proposal for a proposed solar farm. The description of development, for which planning permission is being sought is as follows:

“Proposed solar farm, associated infrastructure including underground cable route, internal access tracks and landscaping.”

- 1.2 The application was submitted in June 2025 (reference 25_01612_FUL). The application was accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which formed Chapter 2 of the ES Technical Appendices. As part of the LVIA, a series of viewpoints and landscape receptors were scoped in and agreed with the Basingstoke and Deane Council as part of the Scoping Exercise.
- 1.3 Following a period of stakeholder consultation and consideration of the feedback which has been received, SFSFL has taken the decision to amend the proposed development such that its spatial extent has been reduced.
- 1.4 This LVIA considers the amended proposals only.
- 1.5 For the purpose of this LVIA, the general principles of the scope in terms of landscape and visual receptors have been followed. The LVIA uses Turley LVIA methodology which is compliant with Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3)¹ and has been tested at Public Inquiry.
- 1.6 For the purpose of the LVIA the land within the planning application redline boundary is referred to as the ‘Site’ and the application proposal is referred to as the ‘Proposed Development’. The LVIA has been undertaken to inform the preparation of development proposals for the Site and ascertain the likely effect of the Development on landscape and visual receptors. It has been prepared by a chartered landscape architect from Turley Landscape and VIA.
- 1.7 The redline boundary of the Site includes a section of land which extends in a north easterly direction towards and past Sherborne St John. This section is incorporated in the redline boundary for the purposes of creating an underground cable into the associated overhead line tee-off located to the north east of the Site. Although included in the redline boundary this portion of the Site and Proposed Development within it (the instalment of an underground cable along the alignment of an existing tarmac road) is not considered or described in the LVIA. The effects of the connection would not alter the landscape or be visible. There would be some effects of the implementation of this work however these effects would be experienced during construction only and would

¹ Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013

be temporary. Therefore, assessment of the effects of the connection has been scoped out of the LVIA.

- 1.8 The LVIA is set out in eight sections. Section two provides a summary of the methodology used for the appraisal and section three identifies the relevant national and local planning policy and designations. The fourth and fifth sections discuss the baseline situation of the Site and the surrounding area in terms of '*landscape character*', '*landscape elements*' and '*visual amenity*'. The sixth section provides a summary of the Development (including proposed landscape mitigation measures) and an appraisal of effects of the Development on the identified baseline situation is provided in section seven. Finally, a summary of the appraisal and conclusions is provided in section eight.
- 1.9 The LVIA is supported by a series of appendices, which include figures and photos, and can be found within and at the end of this document. The LVIA should be also read in conjunction with the information produced to support the planning application, on which this assessment is based. As follows:
- Site Layout (ref: 110-016H-260410).
 - Various infrastructure elevations produced by the Applicant.
 - Landscape and Ecology Strategy Plan produced by Turley Design.
 - Accurate Visual Representations produced by Ocean CGI (contained at ***Appendix 3***).
- 1.10 The LVIA process and also the heritage analysis undertaken by the Turley Heritage team (as described in the Heritage Statement) played an important role in informing the revised proposals. Initial baseline analysis of the Site identified key landscape opportunities and constraints together with key design principles to inform the Site layout. The Landscape Strategy has also been directly informed by the LVIA and Heritage work.

2. Appraisal Methodology

- 2.1 The methodology and approach adopted in undertaking this appraisal uses structured, informed and reasoned professional judgement taking into account a combination of quantitative and qualitative factors.

Site Location and Description

- 2.2 The Site is located north west of Basingstoke, within the northern part of the county of Hampshire. The site is located within a predominantly rural agricultural landscape characterised by large arable fields enclosed by hedgerows and occasional tree belts. Basingstoke is the nearest urban area located to the east, beyond intervening fields and the Weybrook Park Golf Club.
- 2.3 The site is accessed via the local rural road network including Rookery Farm Lane which is accessed via the A339 to the south and travels through the middle of the Site (outside of the red line), with internal agricultural tracks and field boundaries forming the immediate framework of the land parcels.
- 2.4 To the south-east of the site lies the Weybrook Park Golf Club, an established recreational landscape, comprising managed grassland, water features and tree planting consistent with a golf course setting. The wider landscape context is rural and open, with settlement largely limited to small clusters of residential development and farmsteads.
- 2.5 The Site comprises a series of adjoining arable fields currently under agricultural use. The landform is gently undulating, with shallow slopes and low-lying areas, and is typical of open lowland farmland. Field patterns are medium to large in scale and are defined by hedgerows, occasional mature trees, and drainage ditches.

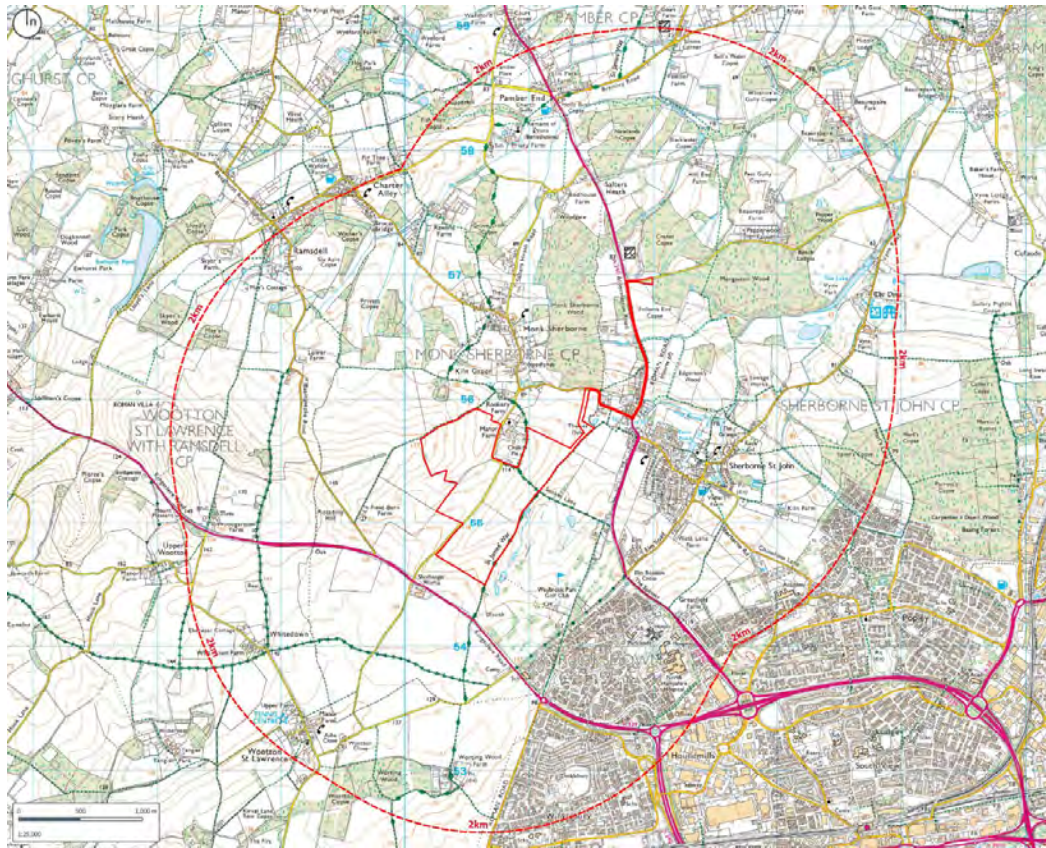


Figure 2.1: Site Location (approximate Site boundary shown)

Surveys

- 2.6 A preliminary desk study was undertaken to establish the physical components of the Appraisal Site and its surroundings along with potential visual receptors. Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and aerial photography were utilised to identify these features. A field study was undertaken by a chartered landscape architect from Turley Landscape and VIA on 14th January 2026, during which the visibility was good. Features of the Appraisal Site and the surrounding area were identified and verified along with the visual receptors previously established. The field study also involved travelling through parts of the study area and producing a working photographic record of key views and features.

Methodology

- 2.7 The appraisal is carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013)²; An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014)³; the Landscape Character Assessment: Technical Information Note

² The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (Third Edition 2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment* (and associated clarifications note LITGN-2024-01)

³ Natural England (2014) *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*

08/2015 (2016)⁴; and Visual Representation of Development Proposals (2019)⁵. The full LVIA methodology is set out in **Appendix 1**.

- 2.8 In summary, the approach is to establish the baseline condition of the existing landscape character and visual receptors of the Site and its surroundings. The Development is then discussed and the potential degree of 'effect' it will have is predicted. Consideration is then given to the residual effect of the Development once proposed landscape planting has matured.

Consultation

- 2.9 The Scoping Report, prepared for the 2025 ES provided the following commentary on consultation:

"As part of the Screening Opinion provided in January 2022 Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council stated concerns over the proximity to North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and can be considered to be in its setting.

Due to the location of roads, lanes, public footpaths and byways running within and near to the site, it is the Councils view that there would be adverse visual impacts arising from the Proposed Development.

As part of the EIA Screening Request in November 2021 and the pre-application advice requested in July 2022, the Applicant sought agreement on the number and location of viewpoints. Confirmation of viewpoints was not provided in the EIA Screening response or pre-application advice response on 11 November 2022.

However, the preapplication response noted that the number of viewpoints were considered low and would need to:

"include all key vantage points around the perimeters of the site, along rights of way which run in close proximity to the proposals, and along the track which runs through the site. Viewpoints will also be needed from key locations further out into the landscape around the site, also capturing public vantage points along rights of way and roads/lanes. Views from within local villages will also need to be included, as well as views from within the North Wessex Downs AONB."

As such the number of viewpoints has been reviewed and a revised list presented in Section 4.4."

- 2.10 The viewpoints considered as part of this LVIA are unchanged and remain the same as those considered within the 2025 ES.
- 2.11 Further to the Scoping carried out as part of the 2025 ES, an email was issued to the Principal Landscape and Planning Officer at North Wessex Downs National Landscape on

⁴ The Landscape Institute (2016) *Landscape Character Assessment: Technical Information Note 08/2015*

⁵ Landscape Institute (2019) *Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Information Note 06/19*

2nd February 2026, requesting any comments on the Proposed Development and the scope of the LVIA assessment. A response was not received. For robustness, an additional viewpoint was included from the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, informed by the ZTV and from the churchyard of the Church of All Saints to demonstrate the potential impact on the visual amenity of receptors using the church and churchyard.

3. Relevant Planning Policy Context and Designations

Statutory Duties

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

- 3.1 Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000⁶, as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023, imposes a general duty on public bodies in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, a National Landscape. Relevant authorities must ‘*seek to further*’ the statutory purposes of the National Landscape. This is referred to as the Protected Landscapes⁷ Duty.
- 3.2 The statutory purpose of the National Landscape (areas of outstanding natural beauty) is:
- *conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty*
- 3.3 Government guidance on the Protected Landscapes Duty⁸ notes the following:
- “When seeking to further the purposes, relevant authorities should consider the information contained in a Protected Landscape’s Management Plan. Management Plans describe the natural beauty, special qualities and key characteristics of and targets and objectives for the designation.”*
- 3.4 A High Court decision in relation to a case concerning the New Forest National Park⁹, has established firstly that the Protected Landscapes Duty has been fulfilled where a proposed development is shown to not harm the natural beauty, wildlife or cultural heritage of the Protected Landscape and secondly, that it is not a necessary prerequisite of the Protected Landscape Duty to also enhance these characteristics. The judge in this case, Mr Justice Mould concluded on this matter by stating:
- “when determining an application for planning permission in relation to land within the area of a National Park, it is necessary for the decision maker to consider whether the proposed development will leave unharmed the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park in its existing state. If the decision maker is satisfied that the proposed development will leave the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park unharmed, he or she may grant planning permission on the basis that he or she has thereby discharged the duty under section 11A(1A) of the 1949 Act to seek to further the statutory purpose under section 5(1)(a) of that Act. In such a case,*

⁶ Or, in relation to National Parks, Section 11A of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

⁷ Protected Landscapes is the collective term for National Parks, National Landscapes and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads

⁸ ‘Guidance for relevant authorities on seeking to further the purposes of Protected Landscapes’, DEFRA, 16th December 2024

⁹ [New Forest National Park Authority v SSHCLG \[2025\] EWHC 726 \(Admin\)](#)

the decision maker will have properly sought to further the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park, by satisfying themselves that to grant planning permission for the proposed development will leave the specified characteristics of the National Park unharmed.”

- 3.5 Accordingly, it is a statutory duty for the decision maker when determining applications for planning permission within a Protected Landscape (or that might affect it), to consider whether the proposed development will leave unharmed the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Protected Landscape.
- 3.6 A recent appeal decision was allowed for “The development of ground mounted solar photovoltaic array, with associated infrastructure, security fencing, CCTV, associated cable route, private and DNO substations, landscaping and onsite biodiversity net gain.” At “*Land at Lower Wyke, St Mary Bourne, SP11 6AW*” (appeal ref: 6002358). The appeal site is within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and therefore relevant to the Proposed Development.
- 3.7 The Inspector concluded that the proposed solar farm would result in harm to landscape character and visual amenity; however, this harm would be localised and largely confined to the immediate area surrounding the site. Taking account of the proposed mitigation planting, the residual landscape and visual effects were found to be no greater than moderate adverse overall. In relation to the wider North Wessex Downs National Landscape, the Inspector considered the effects to be minor adverse overall, as the development would not materially affect the National Landscape’s principal characteristics or its most valued qualities. In the overall planning balance, while the Inspector acknowledged that the proposal would give rise to moderate landscape and visual harm, this harm was considered to be limited in extent, localised, capable of mitigation, and reversible, rather than severe or widespread.
- 3.8 Further relevant case law confirms that, while the planning consequences of development affecting a Protected Landscape must be taken into account, national policy does not designate or protect the setting of a Protected Landscape in the same way as the designated area itself. One of the relevant High Court cases on this issue is *R (Ardleigh Parish Council) v Tendring District Council* [2024] EWHC 648 (Admin), subsequently upheld by the Court of Appeal. The Court confirmed that the protection afforded to National Landscapes by paragraph 189 (formerly paragraph 176) of the NPPF (2024) related to the designated landscape itself, rather than to its setting. The principle remains relevant under the restructured NPPF (2026). Policy N4: Protected Landscapes distinguishes between development within Protected Landscapes and development within their setting. In particular, Policy N4(4) requires that development proposals within the setting of Protected Landscapes should be “*sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the Protected Landscape*”. This wording seeks to protect the designated landscape from harmful effects arising from development in its setting, but does not elevate the setting itself to the status of a Protected Landscape or require the conservation and enhancement of the setting for its own sake. Accordingly, the focus of assessment remains on the extent to which development in the setting would adversely affect the special qualities, natural beauty or statutory purposes of the Protected Landscape itself.

Summary of Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

- 3.9 The National Planning Policy Framework comprises the Government's planning policies for achieving and delivering sustainable development. The latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework was published in August 2026.

Section 19. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 3.10 The NPPF sets out a hierarchical approach to landscape protection. Policy N1, paragraph 1 states that development plans should *"safeguard and enhance the natural environment, and reflect the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, by using Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Protected Landscape Management Plans, River Basin Management Plans, National Forest Strategies, Community Forest Plans and other relevant evidence at the most appropriate level"*

- 3.11 Policy N4 relates to Protected Landscapes and states *"Development proposals within Protected Landscapes should be limited in scale and extent and sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the Protected Landscape. Substantial weight should be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas, and to conserving and enhancing wildlife and cultural heritage in National Parks and the Broads."*

- 3.12 Policy N4, paragraph 4 also makes reference to development within the setting of Protected Landscapes and states:

"Development proposals within the setting of Protected Landscapes should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the Protected Landscape."

- 3.13 The southern edge of the Site is located approximately 300m north east of the edge of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Therefore, impacts on the setting of the National Landscape should be considered as part of this appraisal.

- 3.14 Other core planning principles in the NPPF of relevance to this assessment include:

Section 14 - Achieving well-designed places

- 3.15 This section outlines the Government's policies regarding good design and the great importance of a high-quality built environment. Policy DP3, paragraph 1 states that *"Development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets."*

National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure¹⁰

- 3.16 The National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) provides objectives and policies aimed at the understanding, protecting, managing and planning of the landscape and visual impact of proposals.
- 3.17 Section 2.5, relates to good design for energy infrastructure and states: *“Proposals for renewable energy infrastructure should demonstrate good design, particularly in respect of landscape and visual amenity, opportunities for co-existence/co-location with other marine and terrestrial uses, and in the design of the project to mitigate impacts such as noise and effects on ecology and heritage.”*

National Policy Statement for energy¹¹

- 3.18 NPS EN-1 identifies that there is need for significant amounts of new large-scale energy infrastructure to meet confirmed objectives; that need is described as being “urgent”. There is explicit acknowledgement that it will not be possible to develop the necessary amounts of infrastructure without some significant residual adverse effects.

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.19 National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been issued by the Government as a web-based resource. This is intended to provide more detailed guidance and information with regard to the implementation of national policy set out in the NPPF.
- 3.20 In the Natural Environment guidance category of the NPPG, Paragraph 006 (Reference ID: 8-006-20190721) refers to green infrastructure and states:
- ‘The built environment can be enhanced by features such as green roofs, street trees, proximity to woodland, public gardens and recreational and open spaces. More broadly, green infrastructure exists within a wider landscape context and can reinforce and enhance local landscape character, contributing to a sense of place and natural beauty’.*
- 3.21 Paragraph 037 (ID: 8-037-20190721) supports the use of Landscape Character Assessment as a tool to help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character. It also supports the use of LVIA/LVIAs to demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on a landscape.

¹⁰ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3). Crown copyright. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a7889996a5ec000d731aba/nps-renewable-energy-infrastructure-en3.pdf>

¹¹ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2026) Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), 2025. London: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-2025>

- 3.22 Further guidance on development within the setting of National Parks and AONBs is set out in paragraph 042 (Reference ID: 8-042-20190721). Recognising that land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty and as a result, *‘development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account’*.

Local Planning Context

- 3.23 The adopted Development Plan for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Comprises the following:

- Adopted Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 to 2029)¹².
- Adopted Basingstoke and Deane Policies Map.

Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan

- 3.24 The key policies from the Local Plan relevant to landscape and visual matters are set out below.

- 3.25 **Policy SD1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development** confirms the Council’s approach to sustainable development and states that where relevant policies are absent or out of date, permission will be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:

- *Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

- 3.26 **Policy EM1 – Landscape** requires development to be supported by an appropriate assessment and to be sympathetic to landscape character and visual quality, with particular regard to:

a) The particular qualities identified within the council’s landscape character assessment and any subsequent updates or relevant guidance;

b) The visual amenity and scenic quality;

e) Trees, ancient woodland, hedgerows, water features such as rivers and other landscape features and their function as ecological networks;

f) Intrinsically dark landscapes;

g) Historic landscapes, parks and gardens and features; and

¹² Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (2016) *Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011 to 2029*. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. Available at: <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/1592.pdf>

h) The character of the borough's rivers and tributaries, including the River Loddon and Test, which should be safeguarded.

- 3.27 The Policy further requires proposals to respect “the sense of place, sense of tranquillity or remoteness, and the quiet enjoyment of the landscape from public rights of way”, states that proposals “will not be accepted unless they maintain the integrity of existing settlements and prevent their coalescence”.
- 3.28 Where appropriate, the Policy requires “*a comprehensive landscaping scheme*” to ensure successful integration with the landscape and surroundings, with assessment and mitigation “*proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed.*”
- 3.29 The Policy recognises the national importance of the **North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (now National Landscape) and states that “*Development proposals in the AONB or its setting will also be determined in accordance with national planning policy and criteria set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan.*”
- 3.30 **Policy EM2 – Strategic Gaps** aims to “to prevent coalescence of built up areas and to maintain the separate identity of settlements” and sets out the “generally open and undeveloped nature” of these gaps will be protected. The Site is not within a Strategic gap but sits to the immediate west of the “Basingstoke -Sherborne St John” gap.
- 3.31 **Policy EM4 – Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation** requires proposals to avoid significant harm to biodiversity and/or geodiversity or, where this is not possible, “*adequately mitigated and where it can be clearly demonstrated that:*
- a) There will be no adverse impact on the conservation status of key species; and*
 - b) There will be no adverse impact on the integrity of designated and proposed European designated sites; and*
 - c) There will be no harm to nationally designated sites; and*
 - d) There will be no harm to locally designated sites including Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs); and*
 - e) There will be no loss or deterioration of a key habitat type, including irreplaceable habitats; and*
 - f) There will be no harm to the integrity of linkages between designated sites and key habitats.’*
- The weight given to the protection of nature conservation interests will depend on the national or local significance and any designation or protection applying to the site, habitat or species concerned.’*
- 3.32 The Policy states where development proposals do not comply with the above will only be permitted where “*an overriding public need*” is clearly demonstrated, there is “*no satisfactory alternative with less or no harmful impacts*”, and compensation secures “*no net loss of biodiversity and, where possible, provide a net gain.*” The Policy further

requires that applications *include* adequate and proportionate information to “*enable a proper assessment of the implications for biodiversity and geodiversity*”, and proportionate measures to “*contribute, where possible, to a net gain in biodiversity, through creation, restoration, enhancement and management of habitats and features including measures that help to link key habitats.*”

Approaches to secure improvements could be achieved through:

a) A focus on identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and Biodiversity Priority Areas as identified in the councils Green Infrastructure Strategy (and subsequent updates) where appropriate; and through

b) On-site and/ or off-site provision linked to new development in accordance with the council’s adopted green space standards.”

- 3.33 **Policy EM5 – Green Infrastructure** supports proposals that “improve links and remedy identified deficiencies in the green infrastructure network in accordance with the council’s Green Infrastructure Strategy” and requires that development proposals do not:

“a) Prejudice the delivery of the council’s Green Infrastructure Strategy (and subsequent updates);

b) Result in the fragmentation of the green infrastructure network by severing important corridors/links; or

c) Result in undue pressure on the network which cannot be fully mitigated.”

- 3.34 **Policy EM11 - The Historic Environment** requires all development must “conserve or enhance the quality of the borough’s heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance”, and confirms development proposals “which would affect designated or non-designated heritage assets will be permitted where they:

a) Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, how this has informed the proposed development, and how the proposal would impact on the asset’s significance. This will be proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and the potential impact of the proposal;

b) Ensure that extensions and/or alterations respect the historic form, setting, fabric and any other aspects that contribute to the significance of the host building;

c) Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the significance, character and setting of conservation areas and how this has informed proposals, to achieve high quality new design which is respectful of historic interest and local character;

d) Conserve or enhance the quality, distinctiveness and character of heritage assets by ensuring the use of appropriate materials, design and detailing; and

e) Retain the significance and character of historic buildings when considering alternative uses and make sensitive use of redundant historic assets.”

Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan Update 2021 to 2040 Draft for Regulation 18 Consultation January 2024

- 3.35 From Monday 22 January 2024 to Monday 4 March 2024 the council held a consultation on the draft Local Plan Update (Regulation 18). Due to its draft status this document attracts limited weight but the following relevant draft policies have been considered:
- 3.36 **Draft Policy ENV1: Landscape** requires that proposals are supported by suitable assessment demonstrating that “the proposals are sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area concerned”, and must pay particular regard to:
- “a) The particular qualities identified within the council’s landscape character assessment and any subsequent updates or relevant guidance;*
- b) The visual amenity and scenic quality;*
- e) Trees, ancient woodland, hedgerows, water features such as rivers and other landscape features and their function as ecological networks;*
- f) Intrinsically dark landscapes;*
- g) Historic landscapes, parks and gardens and features; and*
- h) The character of the borough’s rivers and tributaries, including the River Loddon, Test, and Enborne which should be safeguarded.”*
- 3.37 The Policy also requires schemes to respect “sense of place, sense of tranquillity or remoteness , and the quiet enjoyment of the landscape from public rights of way”, take account of “identified features in Neighbourhood Plans, such as views and important open areas”, and include a comprehensive landscaping scheme with an assessment of character and visual quality and the provision proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed.
- 3.38 The draft policy recognises the national importance of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and its setting, confirming that proposals within the National Landscape or its setting will be determined with reference to national planning policy and the North Wessex Downs Management Plan and associated documents.
- 3.39 **Draft Policy ENV2: Strategic Gaps** seeks to protect the generally open and undeveloped nature of the Strategic Gaps around the borough including the “*Basingstoke - Sherborne St John*” gap which the Site sits adjacent to.
- 3.40 **Draft Policy ENV6: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation** requires development proposals to “*avoid harm to biodiversity and/or geodiversity*”, and to include adequate, proportionate information to “*enable a proper assessment of the implications for biodiversity and geodiversity*”.
- 3.41 Where development proposals do not comply with the above and there is “no other satisfactory alternative”, the Policy states that “as a last resort, compensation measures must be secured” to offset impacts “in addition to achieving the required net gain.”

- 3.42 The Policy requires development proposals to “to include proportionate measures to contribute to biodiversity improvement and help address the council’s declared Ecological Emergency”, and “seek to provide environmental gains through the use of nature-based solutions and taking account of natural capital and the associated ecosystem services.”
- 3.43 The Policy identifies approaches to secure measurable improvements and confirms “Where development is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain, and where those developments will be making an impact on biodiversity, development proposals will be expected to provide measurable improvements.”
- 3.44 **Draft Policy ENV7: Green and Blue Infrastructure** states that development proposals will only be permitted provided that:
- “a) It can be demonstrated by an assessment appropriate to the nature of the proposal (such as the Building with Nature accreditation) that it protects and enhances the integrity, quality, connectivity and multi-functionality of the existing green and blue infrastructure network and individual sites; and
- b) It enhances green and blue infrastructure through provision within the site, and supports the guidance, standards and delivery of the Green Infrastructure Strategy (and any updates); and
- c) Any adverse impacts on the green and blue infrastructure network, as well as identified deficiencies, are fully mitigated through the provision of green, or where appropriate, blue infrastructure on site or, through appropriate off-site compensatory measures within the borough where the needs of new residents can be met without harm to the needs of existing residents; and
- d) Where new green and blue infrastructure is provided within new development, suitable arrangements are in place for its future funding, maintenance, management and delivery alongside the requirements of the proposed development.”
- 3.45 The Policy supports proposals which *“improve links and remedy identified deficiencies in the green and blue infrastructure network in accordance with the council’s Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018, or any subsequent updates).”*
- The Policy confirms that development will be permitted *“where it can be clearly demonstrated that green infrastructure and where appropriate blue infrastructure can be provided and phased”*, and requires all proposals for major development to provide a *“high standard of design for green and blue infrastructure”*, and that new developments are considered against *“best practice including the National Design Guide, Building with Nature Standards and the National Framework of Green Infrastructure Standards”*.
- 3.46 **Draft Policy ENV13: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation** confirms that proposals for renewable and low carbon generation will be *“supported and encouraged, where their impact is, or can be made, acceptable”*, with applications assessed by balancing:

“a) the contribution of the proposals, in light of the council’s pledge to be carbon neutral by 2030, to cutting greenhouse gas emissions, decarbonising energy systems and improving air quality.

b) the environmental, economic and social impacts of the scheme, together with any cumulative issues, including in respect of air quality, biodiversity and geological conservation, the loss of high grade agricultural land, flood risk, the historic environment including heritage assets, the landscape and visual appearance (including impacts upon the character, visual quality and setting of the National Landscape), traffic generation, pollution including noise, the local highway network and water quality. The council will take a strategic view of applications, to avoid clusters where inappropriate.

c) the impact on users and residents of the local area, including where relevant, shadow flicker, air quality, vibration and noise.

d) the direct benefits to the area and local community.”

The Policy explains that the Policies Map will identify areas suitable for solar and wind (post-Regulation 18), with an increased likelihood of support in identified suitable areas and requires proposals outside these areas to be clearly justified and demonstrate links to existing infrastructure.

The Policy also confirm that “The council will support neighbourhood planning groups and/or community-led energy project teams with identifying suitable locations for renewable and low carbon technologies that could be brought forward in neighbourhood plans or as part of a community-led energy scheme”, and gives significant weight to community led energy schemes “where evidence of community support can be demonstrated, with administrative and financial structures in place to deliver/manage the project and any income from it.”

3.47 **Draft Policy DES1: Key Design Principles** – this draft policy states that *“All proposals must be based upon a robust design-led approach, driven by a thorough understanding of the context.”*

3.48 **Draft Policy DES6: The Historic Environment** – states that all proposals *“must preserve or enhance the significance of the borough’s heritage assets including their settings.”* This includes demonstrating a *“thorough understanding of the significance of any heritage asset affected by the proposal, including any contribution made to significance by setting, how this has informed the proposal, and how the proposal would impact on the significance of assets affected. Information submitted will be proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset(s) and the potential impact of the proposal;”*

North Wessex Downs National Landscape – An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2025-2030¹³

3.49 The North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan (NWDMP) focusses on the purposes of the National Landscape which is the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty (as defined within Section 82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act)).

3.50 The NWDMP identifies a vision for the National Landscape as:

The vision for the North Wessex Downs National landscape is a place of vast dramatic, undeveloped and distinct chalk downlands with nationally significant areas of semi-natural chalk grassland, contrasting with well-wooded plateaux, arable farmland, heathland, chalk streams and intimate and secluded valleys, all rich in wildlife and cultural heritage; a high quality landscape of national and international significance which persists despite increasingly urbanised surroundings; a place where people live, work and relax; where visitors are welcomed and contribute to a vibrant rural economy; and access to which supports the health and wellbeing of local residents and visitors alike.

3.51 The Special Qualities of the National Landscape are not specifically identified in the current Management Plan. However, twelve Overarching Principles are included which also considers development within the setting of the National Landscape:

1. All change should be landscape-led, seeking to conserve and enhance natural beauty and landscape character.

2. Management and change should respect the cultural landscapes and the communities of the North Wessex Downs.

3. Decisions about future landscape change should always be informed by an understanding of the past, using tools such as historic environment characterisation.

4. No major development should take place either in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape or where it would harm the setting, except where it has been demonstrated through supporting evidence that exceptional circumstances exist which clearly override the highest level of protection.

5. Farming, forestry and other land management systems should be environmentally sustainable and nature-friendly.

6. Nature recovery should be pursued hand in hand with economically viable farming and land management.

¹³ North Wessex Downs National Landscape (2025) *North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2025-30*. North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Available at: <https://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/NWDNL-Management-Plan-2025-30-FINAL-low-res-251110.pdf>

7. Nature recovery should aim to restore ecological connectivity, contributing to the Nature Recovery Network to build and support resilient wildlife populations in the face of climate change.

8. Land management should support climate mitigation and adaptation, using nature-based solutions that deliver multiple benefits and respect landscape character.

9. The importance of engagement, outreach and landscape accessibility for all, including underrepresented communities, removing physical, cultural and perceptual barriers and creating equitable opportunities to connect with the landscape and be active partners in its stewardship, should be recognised.

10. The value of the landscape for access, education, health and well being should be realised in ways that resolve, remove and prevent conflicts between access and biodiversity and the historic environment.

11. Change should not further exceed environmental limits of natural resources, e.g. demand for water must not exceed levels that threaten the ecology of chalk streams.

12. Actions within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape should take place with an awareness of the wider context, including the landscape setting and the geography of Big Chalk.

Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Sensitivity Study (2021)/Landscape Sensitivity Study Addendum (2025)

- 3.52 This document comprises a Sensitivity Study of sites identified by the Council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The Site is not located within a SHELAA site.

Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Sensitivity to Wind and Solar Energy Development November 2024 Rev D¹⁴

- 3.53 The document, commissioned by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, provides a study of the Borough's landscape sensitivity to wind and solar energy development to inform the Local Plan. The wind and solar assessment uses the character areas set out within the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment to provide a suitable level of detail in terms of parcels of land to assess landscape sensitivity. Where necessary further subdivision is provided.
- 3.54 The Site is located within area 16 Basingstoke Down. The Key Characteristics of this area are described as:

Assessment Parcel 16 is formed from three areas of downland separated by the town of Basingstoke (LCA Character Area 16). The rolling and undulating landform is unified by an open character resulting from predominately large scale arable fields with low hedges and limited woodland. There is high intervisibility across the area generally due to the limited landscape structure, enabling views of Basingstoke. There is limited settlement internally, but urban influences affect much of the area, with Weybrook golf

¹⁴ Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (no date) *Landscape Sensitivity to Wind*. Available at: <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/4447.pdf>

course to the north-west of Basingstoke, and Dummer golf course to the south-west of Basingstoke, and significant noise intrusion from the M3 motorway and A-roads.

3.55 The landscape sensitivity of this area has been determined through a combination of susceptibility and value and moderated by professional judgement.

3.56 Susceptibility for Parcel 16 is described as:

*Landscape and visual susceptibility of Assessment Parcel 16 to wind turbines and solar farms is set out in tabulated form on page A40 in Appendix A. Susceptibility of this area to wind turbines is judged to be Medium to Medium/High, **and is Low/Medium to Medium/High for solar farms.***

3.57 The value of Parcel 16 is described as:

*The north-westernmost portion of Assessment Parcel 16 is within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, affording the area the highest level of landscape value. The rest of Assessment Parcel 16 corresponds with Parcels G1, G3, G4 and the eastern portion of G2, with varying qualities, but **none of those four parcels are identified as particularly high landscape value overall.***

3.58 It is noted that “Any proposals would need to have regard for the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and its setting, and reflect guidance related to the National Landscape.” The landscape sensitivity of Assessment Parcel 16 to solar development is summarised in tabulated format as follows and ranges from Low/Medium (small solar farms <5ha) to Medium/High (large solar farms >15ha) – within this context the Site would be considered a large solar farm:

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity to Solar Farms				
Solar Farms	Sensitivity			
	Low	Low / Medium	Medium / High	High
SUMMARY OF SENSITIVITY TO SOLAR FARMS				
Small solar farms: <5ha in area			*	
Medium solar farms: 5-15ha in area			*	
Large solar farms: >15ha in area			*	
				The rectilinear character of rows of solar panels could be accommodated with the arable field pattern, but with limited containing features across the large scale sloping arable fields and extensive nearby settlement, the introduction of solar farms would likely affect a considerable number of receptors, with sensitivity increasing on the steeper slopes to the south and north-west. Introduction of vegetation to adequately screen solar farms may appear out of place and increase sensitivity where boundary vegetation is limited or low level, such as to the west of Basingstoke.

Figure 3.1: Extract from Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Sensitivity to Wind and Solar Energy Development showing sensitivity to solar farms within Parcel 16 Basingstoke Down

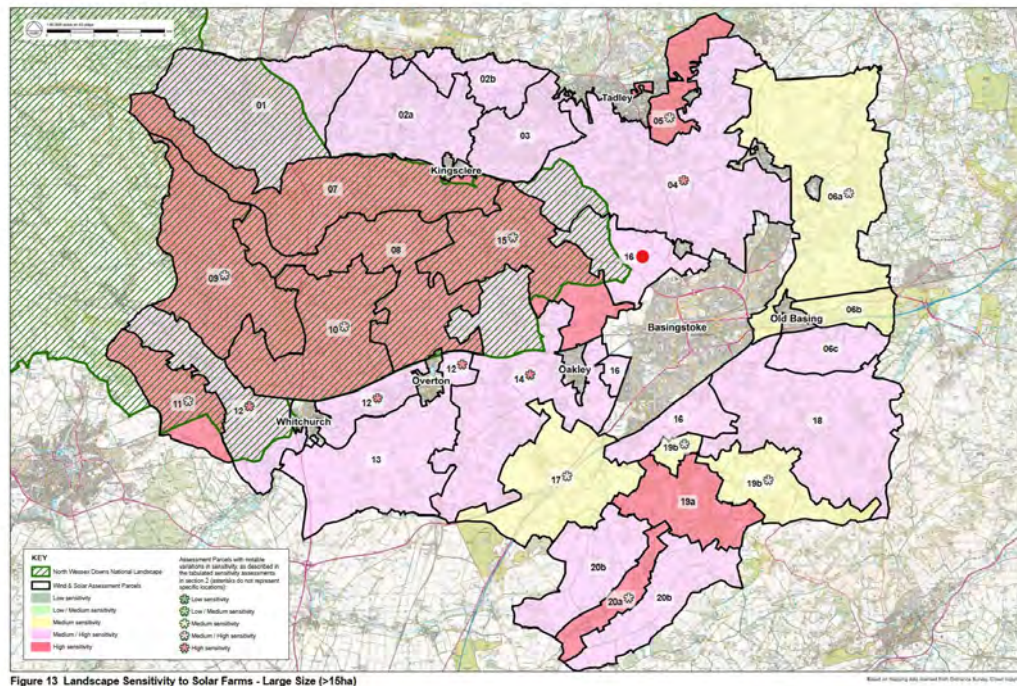


Figure 3.2: Extract from Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Sensitivity to Wind and Solar Energy Development showing sensitivity to solar farms across the borough – approximate Site location shown as red dot.

- 3.59 It is noted that there are only five parcels around the edge of Basingstoke where sensitivity is considered to be lower, and that the Site is located outside of areas considered to have high sensitivity.

Other Relevant Local Guidance:

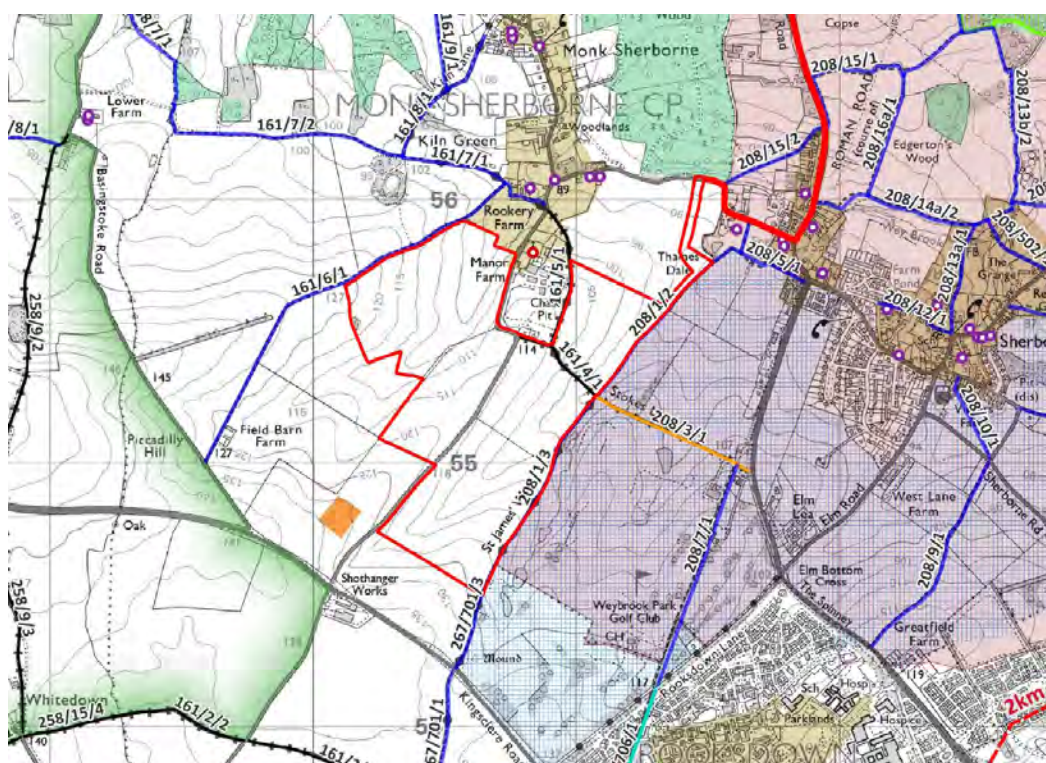
- 3.60 In addition to those documents set out above, other local guidance documents which are relevant to this LVIA are set out below:

- Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment (2021).
- Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Biodiversity and Trees Supplementary Planning Document (2018).
- Basingstoke and Deane Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document - Appendix 14 – Countryside Design Summary (2008).
- North Hampshire Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development Study (2010)
- Green Infrastructure Strategy for Basingstoke and Deane (2018 to 2029).
- North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statement Renewable Energy (2012).
- North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statement Setting (2019).
- North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment (2025).

- Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (2012).
- Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan 2011 to 2029 (as modified 2024).

Designations

- 3.61 The southern edge of the Site is located approximately 300m north east of the edge of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. To the immediate east of the Site is an area identified as a '*Strategic Gap*' under Policy EM2 of the Local Plan. There is a Scheduled Monument identified as "*Keyhole enclosure SE of Field Barn Farm*" approximately 100m west of the Site. The grade I listed Church of All Saints is located approximately 45m away from the northern tip of the Site. There are a further group of grade II listed buildings within Monk Sherborne to the north of the Site (circa 250m away).
- 3.62 A summary of the closest public rights of way to the Site is given below:
- Footpath reference 267/7013 and 208/1/3 which form part of the St James' Way long distance footpath runs to the immediate east of the Site in a north south direction.
 - Footpath reference 267/707/1 runs approximately 700m east of the Site and partially travels through the Weybrook Park Golf Club.
 - Restricted Byway 208/3/1 runs to the east of the Site from Aldermaston Road, joining Byway 161/4/1 which connects to Bridleway 161/5/1 close to All Saints Church, and runs through the Site to the southern edge of the north east field. Byway 161/4/1 and 161/5/1 form part of St James' Way long distance footpath.
 - Byway 161/2/2 runs approximately 580m south of the Site.



4. Baseline Landscape Appraisal

4.1 The baseline landscape appraisal comprises the following four parts:

- review of the relevant landscape character assessments (at national and district level) to understand the landscape character context of the Site;
- assessment as to whether the Site's landscape elements reflect and contribute to the characteristics of the recognised landscape character types or areas within the district level landscape character assessment;
- analysis of the local landscape elements and characteristics of the Site and its immediate context; and
- identification of key landscape receptors against which the impact of the proposals should be assessed.

Landscape Character Context

4.2 The key landscape / townscape character assessments of relevance to the Site and immediate context were identified as:

- **National level:** National Character Area (NCA) Profiles prepared by Natural England;
- **County level:** Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (2012); and
- **Borough level:** Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment (2021) and North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment (2025).

4.3 The boundaries of the relevant landscape character areas (LCAs) within the Study Area are illustrated on **Figures 3 and 4** of **Appendix 2**.

National Level Character Assessment

4.4 At a national level, the NCA Profiles prepared by Natural England, provide a high level overview of landscape character in England. Within this, the southern part of the Site is within NCA 130 – Hampshire Downs and the northern part of the Site¹⁵ is within NCA 129 – Thames Basin Heaths. The summary of NCA 130 describes the area as an *“elevated, open, rolling landscape dominated by large arable fields with low hedgerows on thin chalk soils, scattered woodland blocks (mostly on clay with- flint caps) and shelterbelts.”*

4.5 NCA 129 is described as a diverse landscape stretching from Surrey to Berkshire, combining dense urban development and major transport corridors with extensive woodland, common land and internationally important heathland and wetland habitats.

¹⁵ Including both parts of the northern fields and the underground cable connection

Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (2012)

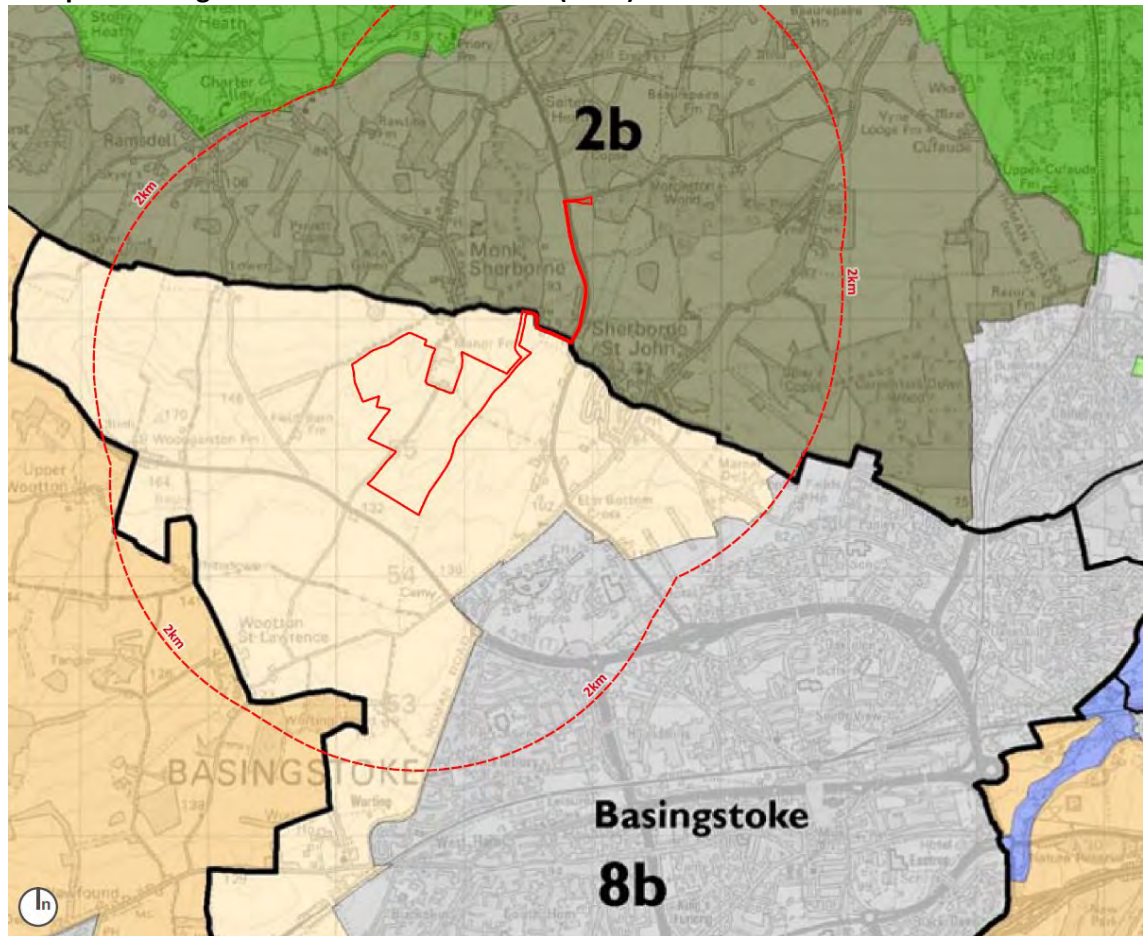


Figure 4.1: Excerpt from Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment showing approximate Site location.

4.6 Within the Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment, the main body of the Site is located fully within the Open Downs Landscape Type and within Landscape Character Area 8B: Basingstoke Open Downs¹⁶. The Key Characteristics of the Landscape Character Area are described within the Assessment as:

- *Rolling chalk landform with broad sweeping undulations, forming a bowl around the head of the River Loddon and north facing slopes which extend down to the lower lying heaths.*
- *Extensive tracts of intensive arable cultivation defined by well trimmed hedgerows or ancient tracks and footpaths.*
- *Visible framework of winding ancient lanes and tracks which formed boundaries to extensive open field systems and lead up to higher ground.*

¹⁶ The part of the Site comprising the underground cable connection is located within the Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale Landscape Type and within the Landscape Character Area 2a North Hampshire Lowland Mosaic

- *Generally low woodland cover with scattered blocks of woodland and stronger hedgerow structure in southern parts of the area.*
- *An archaeologically significant area, with settlement and exploitation going back to prehistoric times.*
- *Extensive areas of mid to late 20th C. urban development of Basingstoke which is visible, mainly from within the character area.*
- *Major transportation routes include a Roman road, Basingstoke Canal, railway and M3.*
- *Remote and quiet landscape outside of built up areas.*
- *Beyond the major settlement of Basingstoke the landscape is lightly populated with low density nucleated villages and occasional farmsteads.*
- *Sense of openness, space and emptiness, especially when climbing up out of the bowl shape landform where Basingstoke sits.*

4.7 Forces of change for the Landscape Character Area 8B include:

1. *Built development, particularly proposed major residential and employment sites in and around Basingstoke.*
2. *Suburbanisation of rural areas surrounding the town, e.g. through increased recreational land use such as golf courses.*
3. *Changes in land management, especially intensification of agriculture.*
4. *Potential development of masts and other tall structures.*
5. *Climate change, particularly its effects on farming practices and resultant changes in the appearance of the landscape.*
6. *Minerals and Waste projects (safeguarded sites for a quarry and aggregate recycling facilities).*
7. *Demand for countryside access and recreation facilities, and improved access between Basingstoke and the surrounding countryside.*

4.8 Opportunities for this Landscape Character Area include “improve the biodiversity of the agricultural landscape, in particular: Management of grass field margins, hedgebanks and uncultivated buffer strips adjacent to sensitive wildlife habitats; Manage and restore hedgerows to improve landscape structure and wildlife habitats; Link areas of remnant unimproved grassland to create wildlife corridors, possibly using road verges or tracks to do so; Improve management of linear woodlands.”

Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment (2021)

4.9 Within the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment, the main body of the Site is located within Landscape Type (LT) C2 Open Arable (chalkland), and within

Landscape Character Area (LCA) 16 Basingstoke Down¹⁷. The open arable landscape types are described as “*extensive, large-scale and open arable landscapes that are characteristic of the most intensively farmed chalkland areas.*” LT C2, is described as having a high frequency of hedgerows which define field boundaries, but these are often fragmented. With few hedgerow trees and low incidence of woodland cover.

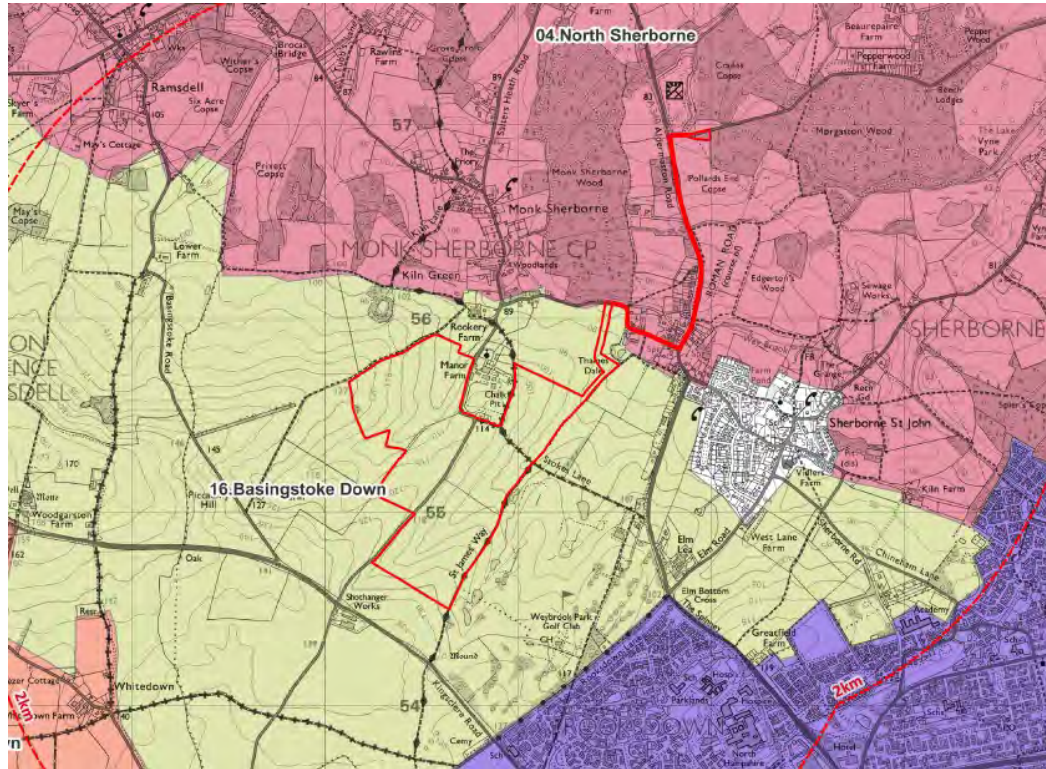


Figure 4.2: Extract from Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment showing approximate Site location.

- 4.10 LCA16 - Basingstoke Down, comprises of three parts which surround the settlement edge of Basingstoke. The Site is located within the northern part of the LCA which is described as having a “characteristic rolling landscape” due to the erosion of chalklands to the north of Basingstoke. The overall landscape character of LCA16 is described as:

“This is an area of relatively consistent landscape character, the urban form of Basingstoke creating a unifying element within a landscape of varying landform, which predominately falls to face Basingstoke. The area is characterised by a large-scale pattern of arable fields with low, well-trimmed hedges that have become weak and broken in places. These elements, together with the infrequent woodland blocks and small-scale woodland blocks, give a feeling of openness to the area. Urban influences, such as golf courses on the edge of Basingstoke, and main roads/motorway development, adversely affect the rural character of parts of the landscape. The major settlement of Basingstoke, and its associated infrastructure, exerts a strong urban influence on the character of the immediate surrounding landscape, affecting its rural

¹⁷ The part of the Site comprising the underground cable connection is located within the Landscape Character Type FW2 Mixed Farmland and Woodland (Lowland Mosaic) and within Landscape Character Area 04 North Sherborne

character. In terms of settlement pattern, however, development outside Basingstoke is limited to a scattering of isolated farmsteads and small villages/hamlets.”

4.11 Key characteristics of LCA16 are described below, those most pertinent to the Site are underlined by the author:

- *Rolling landform to the north, becoming more undulating and northward sloping to the south to face Basingstoke;*
- *Predominantly large-scale farmland, lacking a distinctive sense of place;*
- *Provides landscape setting for the western and southern parts of Basingstoke, whilst the western quarter of the area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. Urban influences affect much of the area, with Weybrook golf course to the north-west of Basingstoke, and Dummer golf course to the south-west of Basingstoke, and significant noise intrusion from the M3 motorway and A-roads;*
- *Open character formed by large-scale, arable fields, the mix of track-bound fields, large wavy-edged fields and parliamentary fields reflecting enclosure from post-medieval to 19th century times;*
- *Low, well-cut hedgerows and very few woodland blocks, although shelter belt planting exists north of Basingstoke, and very occasional remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland exists, especially concentrated in the south of the area;*
- *High intervisibility within the area due to the lack of woodland or strong hedgerow structure, enabling views of Basingstoke from many parts of the Character Area;*
- *The Character Area adjoins a number of settlements, including Basingstoke to the east, the village of Sherborne St John to the north-east, Monk Sherborne to the north-west, and the small village of Dummer to the south. The Character Area provides the setting to these settlements and the village Conservation Areas and helps maintain the separate identities between each settlement. The fields around Battledown Farm within the middle part of the Character Area, also provide part of the separation between Basingstoke and Oakley to the west;*
- *There is limited settlement within the Character Area itself, the main exceptions being the village of Cliddesden, which is also within a Conservation Area, and hamlet of Broadmere to the east, and part of Wootton St Lawrence to the west. Elsewhere, there are scattered isolated farmsteads, linked by relatively small, narrow roads, contrasting with direct but intrusive road network linking Basingstoke with surrounding areas via the M3 and A-roads.*
- *Roman road defines the abrupt, straight, western built edge to Basingstoke, and the M3 corridor marks a similar sharp edge on the southern side;*
- *Public Rights of Way link Basingstoke to the surrounding countryside, and provide walkers with a sense of tranquillity within the AONB, but views of settlement on slopes facing Basingstoke limit the sense of remoteness;*

- *Various Scheduled Ancient Monuments, including Woodgarston ring motte, and a Roman site north-west of Woodgarston Farm, within the northern part of the Character Area, north-east of Upper Wootton.*

4.12 The key issues affecting LCA16 include under-management of some ancient semi-natural woodlands, weakened hedgerow structures across more open landscapes due to past hedgerow removal, and a significant decline in unimproved chalk grassland and sheep pasture caused by scrub encroachment and agricultural improvement, particularly conversion to arable land. Intensive farming practices have led to areas of low biodiversity, while insufficient management of grass field margins, road verges, hedgebanks and uncultivated buffer strips threatens sensitive wildlife habitats. These ecological pressures are compounded by the intrusion of built development, urban land uses and major roads, alongside continued pressure for housing growth, including expansion from Basingstoke and Sherborne St John into the Character Area.

4.13 Landscape aims of LCA16 are described as the ability to “maintain the general openness of the landscape whilst enhancing the integrity of the hedgerow network and condition of existing woodland”. Opportunities for LCA16 include the enhanced management of the hedgerow network and woodland. The Character Assessment also describes how areas which form part of the National Landscape setting should be “considered with regard to the landscape, land management and development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those related to dark skies, siting of new development and intrusion from certain types of development.”

4.14 Landscape Guidelines for LCA16 include:

Land Management

- *Conserve, enhance and restore the woodlands through effective long term management and replanting to retain their ecological value, including in particular areas of ancient semi-natural woodland such as Skyers Wood/Mays Copse to the north, and Rowley Copse, Kempshott/Shortwood Copse and Middle Copse to the south;*
- *Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows across the Character Area, and particularly within extensive open areas, to enhance the hedgerow network;*
- *Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such hedgerows and woodlands, and improve biodiversity through enhanced field margins and chalk grassland;*
- *Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners and conserve historic elements of the landscape;*
- *Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material.*

Built Development

- *Carefully site new development, ensuring it is consistent with the pattern of existing settlement and limits inappropriate urbanisation of the landscape from expansion of built form, particularly on the edge of Basingstoke;*
- *Conserve existing historic settlements, and maintain the character of associated conservation areas, including Cliddesden;*
- *Limit the effect of development on the separate identities of Sherborne St John, Oakley and Basingstoke by retaining existing landscape structure including boundary hedges and trees in the area, to help to retain essential gaps between settlements;*
- *Encourage any new built development to use locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;*
- *Avoid the location of new large or bulky structures where visually intrusive on this Character Area. Subject any development to rigorous landscape and visual impact assessment, site carefully, and design to minimise impact and integrate with the rural context;*
- *Conserve the rural roads lanes, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;*
- *Ensure that road lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline.*

North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment (2025)

4.15 The Site is located wholly outside of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, but within proximity of the protected landscape. The North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment provides a character appraisal for the protected landscape. The Site is located within the proximity of the following landscape character areas as shown on **Figure 4.3** below:

- LCA 2G: Hannington Downs (Part of the LCT 2 Downland with Woodland); and
- LCA 8F: Ewhurst Parklands (Part of the LCT 8 Lowland Mosaic).

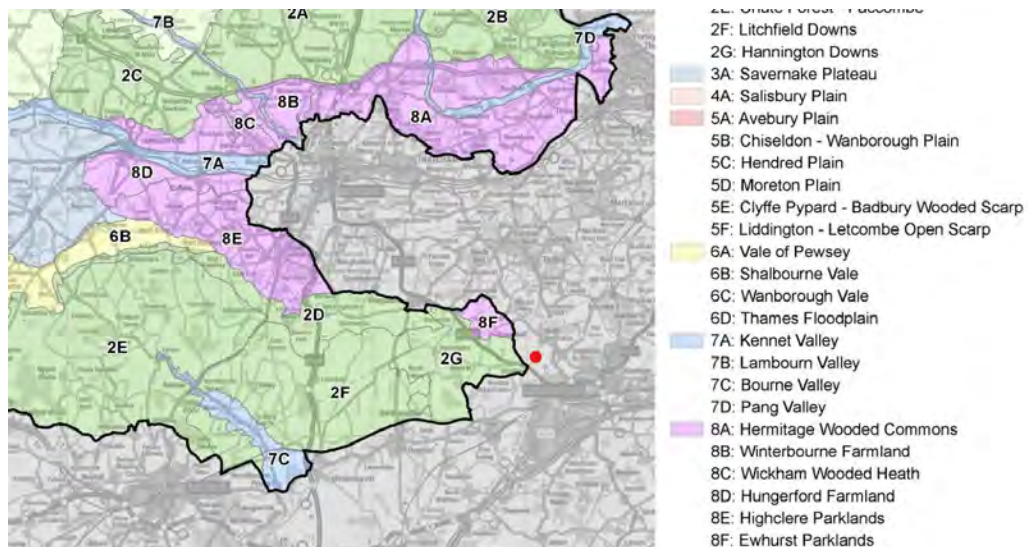


Figure 4.3: Extract from North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment (2025) showing Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). Approximate Site location identified as red dot.

LCA 2G: Hannington Downs

4.16 The key valued qualities identified for LCA 2G are:

- *Distinctive open plateau landscape with visual diversity from dry valleys and hills in the north, including Cottington's Hill.*
- *Scattered extensive woodland blocks, many of ancient origin, which create enclosure on the slopes in the east and provide a wooded landscape mosaic.*
- *Isolate round barrows on ridges and hilltops provide time-depth and are distinctive landmarks on the horizon.*
- *Limited settlement, concentrated in the historic plateau top village of Hannington which has a strong local vernacular.*
- *Narrow, winding lanes create a rural character.*
- *Tranquil, sometimes remote character due to limited access, with a good experience of dark night skies.*

LCA 8F: Ewhurst Parklands

4.17 The key valued qualities identified for LCA 8F are:

- *The role the landscape plays in the transition from the chalk downs to the lowland clay areas.*
- *Extensive woodland copses, much of ancient origin, provides ecological importance.*
- *Ponds, designed lakes and minor streams create a water-filled landscape, and a strong sense of place.*

- *The parkland character creates a continuity of character, and links to the medieval deer parks and Royal Forest of Pamber.*
- *A rural, tranquil landscape with a sense of isolation through the limited access.*

Review of the key valued qualities in relation to the Site

- 4.18 The Site has a stronger relationship with the valued qualities of LCA 2G, reflecting a sense of openness and scale comparable to its *“open plateau landscape”*. However, the Site contains fewer woodland blocks, consistent with the LCA16 character profile in the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment and observations made on site. The surrounding area of the Site retains a rural character, particularly as experienced from local rural roads, although proximity to the edge of Basingstoke and busier routes, including Kingsclere Road to the south, reduces the perception of tranquillity.

Local Landscape Elements

- 4.19 Analysis has been undertaken of the key characteristics and features which influence the Site and contribute to the local landscape character and visual amenity. These are set out below, prior to a summary of the landscape receptors with the potential to be affected by the Development.

Site Features

- 4.20 The Site comprises a group of arable agricultural fields located to the south west of Sherborne St John and to the north west of Basingstoke, within a rural setting characteristic of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape fringe. The land parcel is irregular in shape and divided into several field parcels, defined by a network of hedgerows, tree belts and minor rural lanes.
- 4.21 Land use within the Site is intensive arable farmland. The agricultural character is reinforced by large, open field parcels, particularly in the southern and western extents of the Site. There is a small group of agricultural and residential buildings, north of the Site boundary, outside of the red line boundary including a group of residential cottages.
- 4.22 To the south-east, the Site adjoins the landscaped grounds of Weybrook Park Golf Club, comprising a contrasting land use with managed grassland, scattered mature trees and ornamental planting.
- 4.23 The Site is bounded and crossed by a network of minor rural roads and farm tracks, including Rookery Farm Lane which connects to Kingsclere Road (A339) in the south, and Stoke Lane byway which connects to Aldermaston Road in the east.
- 4.24 The Site sits within a working agricultural landscape with moderate levels of tranquillity, influenced by nearby roads, settlement edges and recreational land uses. While the landscape retains a rural character, it is not remote and has a transitional character between open countryside and the urban fringe.



Figure 4.4: View across southern eastern fields from Rookery Farm Lane (seen from field entrance – other parts of the road, the view is screened by intact hedgerow)

Topography

- 4.25 The Site lies on gently undulating lowland farmland, with subtle variations in elevation across the fields. The land generally slopes gently from south west to north east towards Sherborne St John and the Aldermaston Road corridor. Ground levels within the Site range from approximately +127m AOD in the west to +90m in the north east. There are no pronounced landform features; however, the gentle topography allows for intermittent longer-distance views from elevated sections, particularly where vegetation cover is limited.
- 4.26 To the west of the Site, there is a pronounced area of higher ground along Kingsclere Road associated with the edge of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and extending towards Upper Wootton and Ibworth where levels range up to approximately +175m AOD. Basingstoke in comparison, to the east of the Site is generally low in topography with much less variation in ground heights.



Figure 4.5: Slightly elevated ground to the west of the Site, close to the junction of Kingsclere Road and Basingstoke Road. Site visible towards the far distance

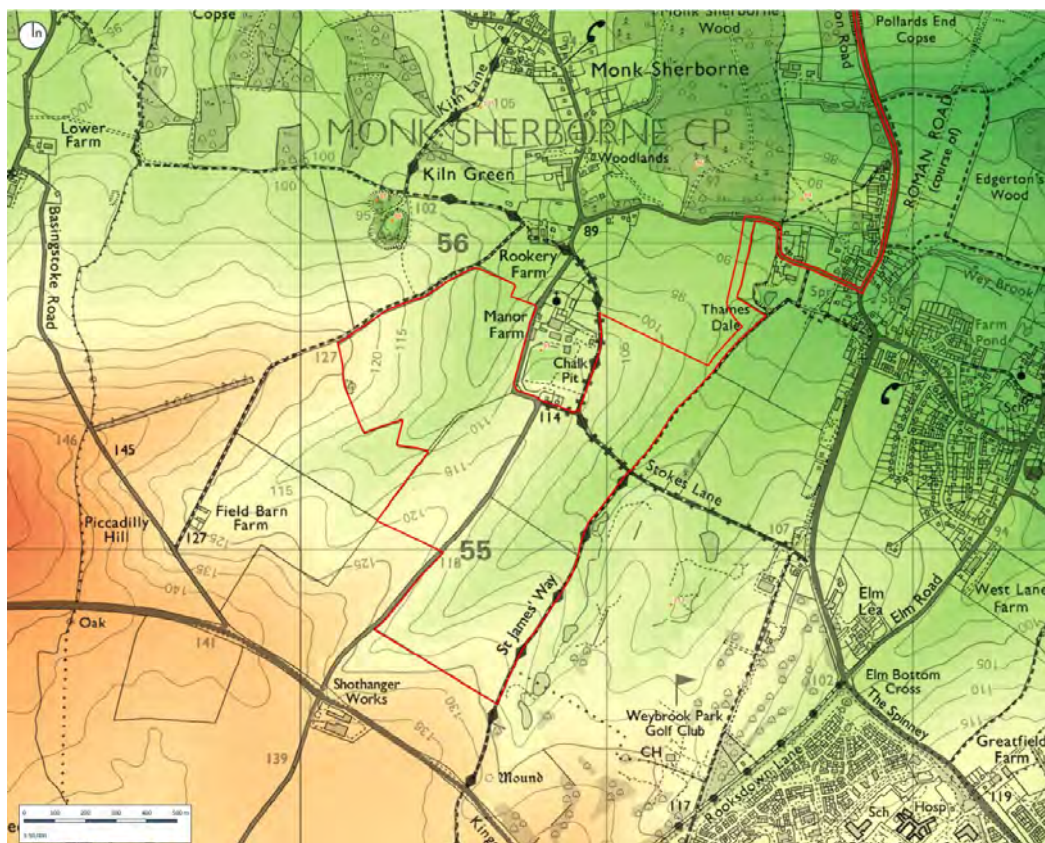


Figure 4.6: Topographical map with approximate Site boundary

Land Use, Settlement Pattern and Built form

- 4.27 The Site is in agricultural use, comprising a series of large to medium-scale arable fields. Land use is consistent across much of the site, with limited internal subdivision created by field boundaries and no built development. Field parcels are irregular in shape and defined by hedgerows and occasional tree belts.

- 4.28 In the immediate context of the Site, built form is limited to a small cluster of farm buildings and yards associated with Manor Farm, All Saints Church, residential buildings at Queens Cottages which are located north of the Site boundary. These structures are generally low-rise and dispersed, and do not form a cohesive settlement pattern. There is no residential development within the site, and a lack of artificial lighting or urbanising elements within the Site itself.
- 4.29 To the north-east, the Site sits close to the village of Sherborne St John, which exhibits a compact, nucleated settlement pattern. Built form here is predominantly low-rise residential development, comprising detached and semi-detached dwellings set within suburban plots. The village has a clearly defined settlement edge, beyond which the landscape transitions abruptly to open farmland. To the north is the smaller village of Monk Sherborne.
- 4.30 To the south-east/east, land use changes to the managed landscape of Weybrook Park Golf Club, characterised by open grassland fairways, water features, scattered mature trees and small ancillary buildings/club house. This recreational land use introduces a parkland-like character and forms a transitional zone between the Site and the edge of Basingstoke which forms a more extensive urban area to the east.



Figure 4.7: View into the western side of the Weybrook Park Golf Club seen from St James' Way PRoW, close to the eastern Site boundary (not in view).

- 4.31 To the south and west, the surrounding landscape remains largely rural and agricultural, with extensive arable fields and a very low density of development. Built form in these areas is typically limited to isolated farmsteads, individual dwellings and agricultural buildings, linked by rural roads such as Basingstoke Road and Kingsclere Road (A339). Settlement is dispersed, reinforcing the open countryside character.
- 4.32 To the north, within the intervening area of land between the edge of Site and Sherborne St John/Monk Sherborne the landscape continues to be dominated by farmland, interspersed with woodland blocks and small rural lanes.

Vegetation and Open Space

- 4.33 The Site comprises of a series of arable fields of irregular size and shapes. Part of St James' Way (comprising byways 161/4/1 and 161/5/1 through the Site) runs through the north eastern edge of the Site. Beyond this PRoW, the remainder of the Site is private agricultural land and provides no public amenity.
- 4.34 Field boundaries are largely formed by hedgerows of variable height and condition, some containing intermittent mature hedgerow trees. These boundaries provide partial enclosure and contribute to local landscape structure, though hedges are often poorly managed and have points where intact and fragmented hedge lines create gaps and openings to fields.
- 4.35 More substantial tree belts and woodland belts occur locally, particularly towards the northern parts of the Site, around the cluster of buildings located near to All Saints Church. Vegetation cover within the interior of fields is limited, resulting in an overall open landscape character.
- 4.36 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment¹⁸ was produced for the 2025 ES, which included identification of trees within the Site and surrounding area with the potential to be affected by development within the Site in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 *'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations'*. The assessment included the main body of the Site.
- 4.37 In summary the Site includes the following trees/categories:
- **Category A:** 2 trees, 2 groups
 - **Category B:** 10 trees, 6 groups
 - **Category C:** 2 trees, 15 groups, 5 hedgerows
 - **Category U:** 4 trees, 4 groups
- 4.38 The highest value trees (Category A) are located along the north west edge of the north western field (G2), the western edge of the north western field (G2 and T1) and towards the northern end of the grid connection (G28).
- 4.39 The species mix includes English Oak, Field Maple, Ash, Elm, Hawthorn, Yew, Hazel, Elder, Crab Apple, Cherry, Sycamore and Blackthorn.

Accessibility and Movement

- 4.40 Rookery Farm Lane runs through the centre of the Site, dividing the eastern and western parcels of land. The lane is a minor rural road that connects the A339 Kingsclere Road to the south with Monk Sherborne Road/Salters Heath Road to the north, close to the southern edge of Monk Sherborne village. A short section of public road known as Queens Cottages also adjoins the northern extent of one of the eastern fields within the Site.

¹⁸ Tree Solutions, Stokes Lane Solar Farm Limited, 25/AIA/BDBC/01 (Rev B)

- 4.41 St James' Way passes along the immediate eastern edge of the Site and travels through the north east corner of the Site. The route is a Long Distance Footpath which historically linked *"Reading Abbey, home in the Middle Ages to the 'Hand of St James', to the major south coast port of Southampton, where pilgrims embarked for France and Spain."* (ldwa.org.uk). The route passes along the edge of the Site and the Weybrook Park Golf Club travelling south towards the area of Worting and north into Monk Sherborne (Footpath reference as it passes the Site: 267/701/3 and 208/1/3).
- 4.42 A restricted Byway (208/3/1) referred to as Stokes Lane on OS Maps connects into and forms part of the St James' Way close to the eastern boundary of the Site, running in an east/west direction between two of the eastern fields as a Byway (161/4/1). This route splits at Queens Cottages passing along Queens Cottages as a Byway (161/4/2) and turning north along the eastern side of the churchyard of All Saints Church where it becomes Byway 161/5/1. A further PRoW passes along the western/north western extent of the Site (161/6/1) which connects Basingstoke Road in the south and other public rights of way to the west of Monk Sherborne in the north. Both byways 161/4/1 and 161/5/1 form part of St James' Way.



Figure 4.8: Generally, well contained view along Byway 161/4/1 as it passes through the Site travelling in a westerly direction. Some localised breaks allow more extensive views into the Site fields.



Figure 4.9: More open view into the north east field of the Site from Byway 161/5/1 (seen to the eastern side of the churchyard)

- 4.43 Footpath 267/707/1 and 208/7/1 travel along the eastern edge of the Weybrook Park Golf Club approximately 700m east of the Site, connecting to Aldermaston Road in the north and Rooksdown Lane in the south.

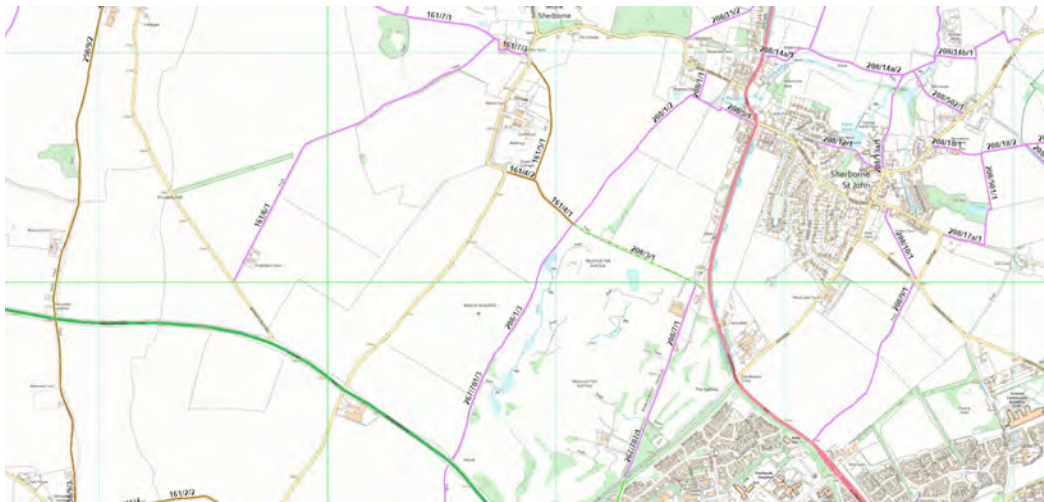


Figure 4.10: Extract from Hampshire County Council's interactive map

Landscape Receptors

- 44.2 The landscape comprises a number of resources or receptors; these are defined within GLVIA3 as the '*constituent elements of the landscape, its specific aesthetic or perceptual qualities and the character of the landscape in different areas*'. These form the elements or '*units*' which need to be considered when assessing the potential landscape effect of a development or other change. The final stage of the baseline landscape appraisal was therefore to identify the key landscape receptors with potential to be affected by redevelopment of the Site. The landscape receptors are summarised in **Table 4.1**.

- 4.45 The landscape character areas identified in the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment (2021) (limited to LCA16) are considered to provide landscape receptors of an appropriate scale and level of detail for the purposes of this assessment. Further assessment has also been undertaken of the character of the Site itself (Landscape Fabric) and the character of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.
- 4.46 For the purpose of this assessment, LCA16 is considered in terms of the effects of the proposed development on the northern parcel of this character area and excludes the two parcels to the south of Basingstoke, where change is likely to be negligible/none.

LCA16 - Basingstoke Down

- 4.47 The Site is washed over by LCA16 - Basingstoke Down. The identified key characteristics of LCA16 are set out in earlier within this section.
- 4.48 The LVIA Study Area is considered to be representative of the majority of the described characteristics of LCA16. However, the character of the Site, and the immediate area around it is more associated with the setting of Basingstoke due to the proximity of this area to the settlement edge, proximity to main roads (A339 Kingsclere Road) which feed into the urban area and landscape features such as the golf course.
- 4.49 The Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Sensitivity to Wind and Solar Energy Development November, identified the parts of LCA16 outside of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape as having not particularly high landscape value. The landscape of LCA16 is generally attractive with features of notable scenic quality comprising of the rolling landscape. The Site as part of LCA 16 forms the setting to Basingstoke and the villages of Sherborne St John and Monk Sherborne. There is a network of public rights of way including the long distance footpath of St James' Way which contribute to the area's usability. It is therefore considered that LCA16 has a **Medium Value**.

Site/Landscape Fabric

- 4.50 As described previously, the Site itself comprises of a series of agricultural fields, contained by rural roads and boundary hedge planting. The area has a transitional character between the North Wessex Downs National Landscape to the west and the fringe of Basingstoke urban area to the east.
- 4.51 In summary, the principal landscape features which contribute to the character of LLCA2 have been identified as:
- Rolling landform;
 - Field hedgerows and hedgerow trees (eroded in places by removal as a result of twentieth century farming practices);
 - Fringes of the urban area of Basingstoke;
 - Generally arable/pastoral farmland.
- 4.52 In accordance with the LVIA methodology, Site/Landscape Fabric is therefore considered to be of **Medium Value**.

North Wessex Downs National Landscape

- 4.53 The North Wessex Downs National Landscape sits approximately 300m south west of the Site and extends in a westerly direction. The North Wessex Downs National Landscape – An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan describes the area as a *“vast dramatic, undeveloped and distinct chalk downlands with nationally significant areas of semi-natural chalk grassland, contrasting with well-wooded plateaux, arable farmland, heathland, chalk streams and intimate and secluded valleys, all rich in wildlife and cultural heritage; a high quality landscape of national and international significance which persists despite increasingly urbanised surroundings”*.
- 4.54 The North Wessex Downs National Landscape has a notable, coherent and distinctive character, and has a high presence of good quality open space with high levels of tranquillity. There is a good network of public rights of way serving the area which contributes to the usability of the landscape. The area is therefore considered to be of **High Value**.

Table 4.1: Summary Landscape Receptors Baseline Situation

Landscape Receptor	Landscape Value
LCA16 - Basingstoke Down	Medium
Site/Landscape Fabric	Medium
North Wessex Downs National Landscape	High

5. Baseline Visual Appraisal

- 5.1 The visibility of the Site from the surrounding area was established through both desktop analysis of the surrounding area and by confirming on Site the localised screening effect of the landform, vegetation and built form. A zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) plan was prepared to demonstrate the potential visibility of the Proposed Development. This was used to inform the location of representative viewpoints and identify visual receptors and are set out at **Figure 6 of Appendix 2**.

Existing Visibility

- 5.2 Due to the undulating topography of the Site and surrounding landscape, the extent of visibility of the existing Site varies.
- 5.3 The most extensive views of the Site are from the adjacent roads. Most notably, travelling along Rookery Farm Lane which passes through the centre of the Site and where there are extensive views across the rolling fields that surround it. In places views are screened by the hedgerow which follows both sides of the road, but in places this hedgerow is fragmented and more extensive views are possible. Access into the various fields from this road also opens out views to the surrounding Site. There are some longer views from the A339 to the south of the Site, where the Site forms part of a much broader landscape forming the edge of Basingstoke. Views from roads to the north and west (Monk Sherborne Road and Aldermaston Road) are more limited due to the relative distance, interposing topography and vegetation. There are some localised areas to the north of Sherborne St John where the topography rises and intervisibility with the northern parts of the Site are possible.
- 5.4 From surrounding footpaths, visibility towards the Site varies. There is a thicket of tree and scrub planting along the eastern boundary of the Site, which runs alongside St James' Way. This area of planting often prohibits or filters views into the Site from the Long Distance Footpath, with views from this footpath being more open to the east and across the golf course which is often open to the footpath. At the point where this route connects to Stokes Lane byway, the vegetation becomes more fragmented, with several larger gaps where views into the fields are possible.
- 5.5 The section of St James' Way (byway) which runs through the Site is well contained in views by the relatively intact hedgerow. There are some limited breaks which allow wide views across the fields particularly in a southerly direction. To the east, and not forming a part of St James' Way, the most open section of this byway is closer to Aldermaston Road, to the north east of the golf course, where a slightly elevated section of the path provides some more distant views towards the Site in a westerly direction.
- 5.6 Views from the North Wessex Downs National Landscape are localised and limited to those areas of the designation closest to the Site. There are some views from Kingsclere Road which, at points, forms the edge of the designation, particularly where the road meets the junction with Rookery Farm Lane (at the eastern most tip of the National Landscape designation). In these views, the Site forms part of a wider rolling open landscape. There are limited numbers of Public Rights of Way within the National

Landscape in close proximity to the Site. The closest being Byway 258/9/2 approximately 1.3km to the west of the Site. From this viewpoint, parts of the Site form a distant and small part of views of the wider open landscape forming the edge of Basingstoke. There are currently no notable features in the Site which distinguish it from the wider landscape in views from this byway.

Local Visual Amenity

- 5.7 The local visual amenity is characterised by a predominantly rural agricultural landscape comprising medium to large arable fields defined by an irregular network of hedgerows and occasional tree lines. This pattern creates a legible and traditional field structure that contributes to a coherent and recognisable countryside character.
- 5.8 Hedgerows, although variable in height and continuity, remain a key visual component, providing enclosure along field boundaries, filtering views, and reinforcing the historic agricultural character of the landscape. Intermittent hedgerow trees and small woodland belts introduce vertical elements that add visual interest and a degree of skyline variation within an otherwise open landscape.
- 5.9 Overall, the local visual amenity is defined by its rural character, openness, and agricultural coherence, with natural and managed landscape features contributing positively to visual quality and a clear distinction between countryside and urban areas.

Local Viewpoints

- 5.10 The Sherborne St. John Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2019 identifies a number of key views around the village. The majority of these are either orientated away from the Site or are located beyond the village away from the Site, where built form in the village would screen views towards the Site. The exception to this is Key View 15 which is located to the west of the village, from the public footpath heading west from Dixon's Corner (**Figure 5.1**).
- 5.11 The "*Valued Characteristics in View*" are described as "*This view demonstrates how open agricultural fields on the western side of the village contribute to a strong rural character and landscape setting for the settlement. It also demonstrates how a ridge of high land and tree belts along the northern side of Basingstoke contribute to a strong sense of separation between Basingstoke and the village.*"

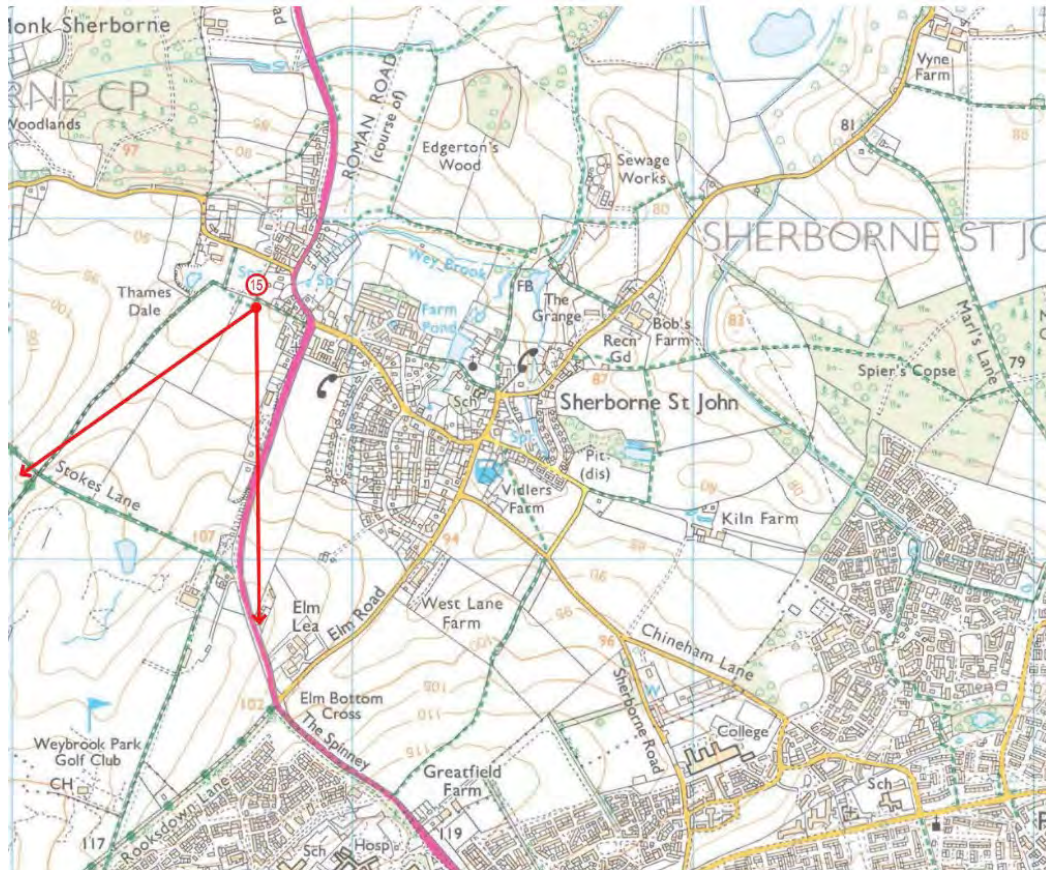


Figure 5.1: Extract from Sherborne St. John Neighbourhood Plan - Description of Key Views showing location, orientation and field of view of Key View 15.



Figure 5.2: Extract from Sherborne St. John Neighbourhood Plan - Description of Key Views showing photograph of Key View 15

Visual Receptors and Representative Views

5.12 The key public visual receptors which have been identified as having existing views of the Site and/or with views with potential to be affected if development were introduced on the Site are:

- 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);

- Public Right of Way users of Byway 208/3/1 connecting Aldermaston Road and St James' Way;
- Public Right of Way users of footpath 161/6/1 to the west of the Site;
- Public Right of Way users of footpaths to the southern edge of Sherborne St. John and Monk Sherborne;
- Public Right of Way users of Byway 258/9/2 within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape to the west of the Site;
- Road users of the A339;
- Road users of Rookery Farm Lane;
- Users of the Church of All Saints including Churchyard.

Private Visual Receptors

- Users of Weybrook Park Golf Club.

5.13 Key Representative Views that provide a snapshot of the visual experience for each of the above visual receptors were identified and are shown on the viewpoint plan provided at **Figure 6** of **Appendix 2**. These were agreed with officers as part of the previous application LVIA.

5.14 The visual receptors and associated representative viewpoints are described below alongside photography and a viewpoint plan provided at **Figure 6** of **Appendix 2**. Full size images of the Representative Viewpoint photographs are provided at **Appendix 3**.

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) – viewpoint 2,3 and 6

5.15 St James' Way runs along the eastern edge of the Site forming the boundary of the Site with the neighbouring Weybrook Park Golf Club. The route is a long distance footpath which follows a north–south alignment as it passes the Site. The route then turns into the Site in a westerly direction where it forms part of byway 161/4/1 and 161/5/1 eventually wrapping around the eastern side of All Saints Church where it travels onwards in a northerly direction towards Monk Sherborne and beyond. As the route passes the Site it is defined by a mature, scrubby field edge which contains views into the Site (**Figure 5.3**), more open views to the Weybrook Park Golf Club (to the east of the Site and PRow) are possible from this route. The footpath has a predominantly rural character despite the proximity of urban development and managed golf course to the east.



Figure 5.3: General condition of Site edge adjacent to golf course (Site edge to left of view). Demonstrating existing thicket/vegetation which screens large parts of view from this section of the PRoW.

- 5.16 The byway section of the path follows a gently curving, hedgerow corridor within an agricultural landscape which passes through the Site between two of the eastern fields. Views from the footpath are predominantly short-range and filtered, with the hedgerow limiting lateral visibility and directing views along the line of the route (**Figure 5.4**). Intermittent and limited breaks in vegetation allow views across rolling arable fields and pasture (as demonstrated by Viewpoint 6). In some limited instances these views are long distance, and wide in character.



Figure 5.4: General view travelling along byway section of the PRoW

- 5.17 Views from the footpath are generally short-range and filtered, with the scrubby field boundary limiting views into the Site and focusing views along the line of the path or into the more open landscape of the golf course. Intermittent gaps allow oblique views across the Site. Longer-distance views from this footpath are often limited by vegetation and local topography.



Figure 5.5: Viewpoint 2 - PRow, North of the A339 and West of Weybrook Park Golf Club



Figure 5.6: Viewpoint 3 – PRow St James’ Way looking south towards the Site with Weybrook golf course seen in the distance.



Figure 5.7: Viewpoint 6 - PRow East Side of All Saints Church, Monk Sherborne CA

Public Right of Way users of Byway 208/3/1 connecting Aldermaston Road and St James' Way (Stokes Lane) – viewpoint 4

- 5.18 The route follows a mature, largely continuous hedgerow with occasional hedgerow trees, which provides some enclosure to views and reinforces the rural character of the path. Longer, slightly elevated views are possible from the eastern, Aldermaston Road end of the route, where wider views include the Site itself.



Figure 5.8: Viewpoint 4 - PRow Stokes Lane

Public Right of Way users of footpath 161/6/1 to the west of the Site – viewpoint 7

- 5.19 Footpath 161/6/1 travels in a loosely north-south direction between Basingstoke Road in the south, passing the north west boundary of the Site connecting to 161/7/1 in the north where it connects to Rookery Farm Lane. The route is generally open and in places elevated, allowing for wider views across open countryside. As it passes the Site at the northern extent of the route, there is a band of tree planting which creates more filtered views into the Site. Wider open views are possible away from the Site in a northern direction. In the distance, taller elements within Basingstoke are visible on the horizon including Park Prewett water tower in Rooksdown and a chimney stack to the north of this structure, which introduce urbanising features to the horizon.



Figure 5.9: Viewpoint 7 - PRoW, East of Basingstoke Road and Field Barn Farm

Public Right of Way users of footpaths to the southern edge of Sherborne St. John and Monk Sherborne – viewpoints 5, 9, 10

- 5.20 A series of footpaths run to the north of the Site around the southern edges between Sherborne St. John and Monk Sherborne. This includes the location of Key View 15 identified within the Sherborne St. John Neighbourhood Plan. From these footpaths, views encompass both the suburban edges of the villages and open countryside to the south. In some instances, these views are wide and open in character, incorporating rolling agricultural fields.



Figure 5.10: Viewpoint 5 – PRoW, Sherborne St John



Figure 5.11: Viewpoint 9 – PRoW West Side of Rookery Farm on West Edge of Monk Sherborne



Figure 5.12: Viewpoint 10 - PRoW North of Sherborne St John

Public Right of Way users of Byway 258/9/2 within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape to the west of the Site – viewpoint 12

- 5.21 A byway which runs at slightly elevated land within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape approximately 1.3km west of the Site. Views from this byway are generally open and panoramic, looking in an easterly direction out of the National Landscape and towards the edge of Basingstoke which can be seen in the distance of views.



Figure 5.13: Viewpoint 12 - Byway 258/9/2

Road users of the A339 – viewpoint 1

- 5.22 The A339 travels in a loosely east west direction approximately 265m south of the Site. The route connects to the urban edge of Basingstoke to the east and travels west into the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. The route is a busy A road with high levels of traffic moving at speed. The route has a gently undulating topography. Vegetation along the edge of the road is varied, with some areas of thick scrub opening to low ditches with remnant hedgerow. The mix of vegetation and undulating topography creates a varied level of containment to views along the road; in some instance the route is well contained, in other parts the route opens out to longer views of rolling countryside. The gently rolling landscape of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape can be seen in the distance in views travelling west.



Figure 5.14: Viewpoint 1 - A339 at the Junction with Minor Road to Monk Sherborne

Road users of Rookery Farm Lane – viewpoint 8

- 5.23 Rookery Farm Lane comprises a narrow rural lane, which connects in the south to the A339/Kingsclere Road and in the north to Monk Sherborne Road/Salters Heath Road close to the Monk Sherborne War Memorial. The route travels through the centre of the Site in a north-south direction turning at the junction with Queens Cottages and passing to the west of All Saints Church. Vegetation around the edge of the road comprises of a narrow verge and high, generally intact hedgerow with occasional trees. Oblique views are often constrained by this hedge line, however, longer views to rolling countryside can be seen, particularly in a southerly direction, often where breaks in the fields allow (such as gated access to the fields).



Figure 5.15: Viewpoint 8 - Minor Road to Monk Sherborne on the West Edge of the CA

Users of the Church of All Saints including Churchyard – viewpoint 11

- 5.24 The grade I listed Church of All Saints is located approximately 45m away from the northern tip of the Site. The grounds of the church are accessed via Rookery Farm Lane to the west via a pedestrian gate. Views out from the church are open in a westerly direction, with greater containment to all other sides created by vegetation.



Figure 5.16: Viewpoint 11 – North west of the church, within the churchyard

Private Visual Receptors

- 5.25 Best practice, as set out in GLVIA3, is to normally exclude users of private land as a receptor group in LVIA's. This is due to the accepted legal principle (established by Aldred's Law in 1610) that there is no private 'right to a view' and the loss or change to private views is not a material planning consideration. However, as potential impacts on views from the adjoining Weybrook Park Golf Club have been raised by third parties, the impact of the Proposed Development on users of Weybrook Park Golf Club have briefly been considered in this assessment.

Users of Weybrook Park Golf Club

- 5.26 Weybrook Park Golf Club is located to the immediate east of the Site, and to the west of the urban edge of Basingstoke. Access to the golf club is from the east, away from the Site via Rooksdown Lane. The golf club comprises of open fairways, water features, paths, areas of woodland planting, the club house, private driveway and associated carpark.

6. Proposed Development

- 6.1 The LVIA has been prepared to inform and accompany the detailed planning application for a new solar farm. The description of development for planning purposes is as follows:

“Proposed solar farm, associated infrastructure including underground cable route, internal access tracks and landscaping.”

- 6.2 The Site Layout plan produced by the Applicant and accompanying Landscape Strategy Plan produced by Turley (**Figure 6.1**), supports the planning application and identifies the locations of the solar arrays and landscape and ecology mitigation.



Figure 6.1: Landscape Strategy produced by Turley

- 3.2 Principles of the design that were identified during the LVIA process and are particularly relevant in terms of mitigation of landscape and visual effects are listed below. Further detail in relation to the landscape proposals is set out in the Landscape Strategy by Turley Design.

- **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 scheme 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 would be retained and enhanced where appropriate, with measures focused on strengthening structure, improving condition, and infilling gaps in a manner consistent with local character and the key valued qualities associated with the adjacent LCA 2G Hannington Downs within the NWD NL.
- **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 would reflect traditional land management practices and consider the established landscape character of the Site including those characteristics identified in aforementioned landscape character appraisals. In particular, excessive hedgerow heights or substantial woodland belts that are uncharacteristic of the chalkland landscape shall be avoided.
- **Targeted Landscape Enhancement** - Where mitigation planting is required, it shall be localised and proportionate, focusing on reinforcing existing features (e.g. hedgerows and tree belts) rather than introducing new large-scale planting blocks.
- **Protection of Key Views and Visual Receptors** - The layout shall seek to minimise effects on sensitive visual receptors, including:
 - Views to and from the church and its setting.
 - Views from the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.
 - Public rights of way, particularly St James' Way.
 - Retention of views towards the North Wessex Downs National Landscape from the section of St James Way that crosses the Site.
- **Setback from Sensitive Boundaries and Routes** - Solar arrays would be offset from visually sensitive edges, including road corridors and footpaths, to maintain a sense of openness and reduce perceived visual dominance.
- **Reduction of Intervisibility** - In areas of weak landscape structure, opportunities would be taken to reduce intervisibility through subtle enhancement of existing vegetation, including hedgerow reinforcement and understorey planting.
- **Integration with the Wider Landscape Context** - The scheme has regard to its role within the setting of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, ensuring that design decisions align with relevant management objectives, including those

relating to landscape character and visual quality, with proposed landscape enhancements derived from the identified pertinent key valued qualities.

7. Landscape and Visual Assessment of Effects

7.1 The effect of the Development is assessed by predicting the magnitude of the change on the previously identified landscape character and key visual receptors. The visual assessment does not attempt to predict the visual effects of seasonal changes throughout the year but describes the 'worst case' position in terms of the greatest potential visibility of the development i.e. in winter when the trees would have lost their leaves. It has been assumed that lighting design would be covered by a planning condition and would be designed to be appropriate to its rural/edge of settlement context to ensure light spill on the surrounding environment is minimised.

7.2 The assessment of effects is based on the following plans and design information:

- Site Layout produced by Solar 2 (ref: 110-016H-260410).
- Various infrastructure elevations produced by the Applicant.
- Landscape and Ecology Strategy Plan produced by Turley Design.
- Accurate Visual Representations produced by Ocean CGI (contained at **Appendix 3**).

Sensitivity of the Landscape Character and Visual Receptors

Landscape Character Receptor's Sensitivity

7.3 Effects on landscape character are both direct i.e. on the LCA that the Site is located within, and indirect i.e. changes to characteristics that occur beyond the boundary of the LCA. **Table 7.1** summarises the identified landscape receptors sensitivity to change.

Table 7.1: Summary of Landscape Receptors Sensitivity

Landscape Receptor	Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility to Change	Sensitivity of Receptor
LCA16 - Basingstoke Down	Medium	Key factors affecting the ability of this landscape to accommodate development of the type and scale proposed are the low levels of settlement in the area but connections with the settlement edge and the contribution parts of the area make to the setting of the National Landscape. The area is therefore considered to have a Medium Susceptibility to Change .	Medium
Site/Landscape Fabric	Medium	Key factors affecting the ability of this landscape to accommodate development of the type and scale proposed are the lack of development within the Site and the contribution parts of the area make	Medium

		to the setting of the National Landscape. The area is therefore considered to have a Medium Susceptibility to Change .	
North Wessex Downs National Landscape	High	Key factors affecting the ability of this area to accommodate development of the type and scale proposed are the area being washed over by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape designation and the lack of development within the area. The area is therefore considered to have a High Susceptibility to Change .	High

Visual Receptor's Sensitivity

- 7.4 The Value of the visual receptor's view relates to whether the views are associated with designated landscapes, protected views or designated heritage assets and the quality of the view in terms of visual amenity. The susceptibility of the visual receptor to change considers the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view; and extent of attention or interest that may therefore be focused on the views; and visual amenity they experience. **Table 7.2** summarises the sensitivity of each of the previously identified visual receptors. This is based on the combined evaluation of susceptibility and value attached to the receptor together with informed professional judgement and guidance provided in GLVIA3.

Table 7.2: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Receptor and representative viewpoint (RV)	Value	Susceptibility to change	Sensitivity
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) – viewpoint 2,3 and 6	Medium-High – views from this footpath are not protected but do contribute to the experience of long distance footpath users.	High - views and visual amenity likely to be of high importance to users of the public right of way.	High
Public Right of Way users of Byway 208/3/1 connecting Aldermaston Road and St James' Way – viewpoint 4	Medium - views from this footpath are not protected, but the rural aesthetic of views contributes positively to the visual amenity of receptors.	High - views and visual amenity likely to be of high importance to users of the public right of way.	Medium-High
Public Right of Way users of footpath 161/6/1 to the west of the Site – viewpoint 7	Medium - views from this footpath are not protected, but the rural aesthetic of views contributes positively to	High - views and visual amenity likely to be of high importance to users of the public right of way.	Medium-High

	the visual amenity of receptors.		
Public Right of Way users of footpaths to the southern edge of Sherborne St. John and Monk Sherborne – viewpoints 5, 9, 10	Medium - views from this footpath are not protected, but the rural aesthetic of views contributes positively to the visual amenity of receptors.	High - views and visual amenity likely to be of high importance to users of the public right of way.	Medium-High
Public Right of Way users of Byway 258/9/2 within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape to the west of the Site – viewpoint 12	High - views from this footpath are not protected but relate to the National Landscape and the rural aesthetic of views contributes positively to the visual amenity of receptors.	High - views and visual amenity likely to be of high importance to users of the public right of way.	High
Road users of the A339 – viewpoint 1	Medium-Low - views from this road are not protected or related to designated, or non-designated assets, but do travel through the National Landscape and due to the rural aesthetic, contributes positively to the visual amenity of receptors.	Medium - views and visual amenity is of moderate importance to road users and pedestrians.	Medium-Low
Road users of Rookery Farm Lane – viewpoint 8	Medium-Low - views from this road are not protected or related to designated, or non-designated assets, but do travel through the National Landscape and due to the rural aesthetic, contributes positively to the visual amenity of receptors.	Medium - views and visual amenity is of moderate importance to road users and pedestrians.	Medium-Low
Users of the Church of All Saints including Churchyard – viewpoint 11	Medium – views not protected but contribute positively to the visual amenity experienced by the receptor.	Medium – Views and visual amenity of users of the churchyard is likely to be of moderate importance	Medium

Effects during the Construction Stage: Short Term

7.5 The key aspects of the construction stage which have potential to affect the previously identified landscape character areas and visual receptors have been identified as:

- Topsoil stripping of field to enable construction.
- The temporary effect of the construction plant and traffic, which will include small site compounds; and protective fencing to the Site's retained vegetation.
- The progressive construction of the built features present within the Proposed Development including:
 - Erection of security fencing and lighting.
 - Construction of solar arrays and associated infrastructure.
 - Landscape works.

7.6 The effect on the landscape character and visual receptors would be similar to those changes experienced during the operational stage, as the progressive construction of the features present within the Proposed Development. The additional noticeable difference would be the presence of construction vehicles using the road network; and the presence of construction plant and vehicles within the Site which would slightly increase the visual envelope of the Proposed Development during the construction stage.

7.7 These effects would be experienced directly on the Site and would result in localised direct changes to the Site/Landscape fabric and both localised direct and indirect impacts to LCA16 - Basingstoke Down with the change of land use from arable farmland to that of a construction site. The main groups of visual receptors affected by the slight increase in vehicular use; the presence of construction plant and hoarding; and, movement of construction vehicles, would be Public Right of Way users of St James' Way long distance footpath; Public Right of Way users of Byway 208/3/1 connecting Aldermaston Road and St James' Way; Public Right of Way users of footpath 161/6/1 to the west of the Site; road users of Rookery Farm Lane; and users of Weybrook Park Golf Club.

Effects during the Operational Stage: Medium/Long Term

7.8 The effects of the Development on its first year of operation (when the development is complete and functioning) would be Long Term Temporary (Operational Stage of 40 years). Within the appraisal of effects, consideration is given to the effects on the Development at year 1 when structures would be implemented but the proposed planting would not yet be matured. Consideration is also given as to whether the effects on landscape character and visual receptors would change by year 15 on account of the establishment of this planting. The effects are set out in **Tables 7.3** and **7.4** and the changes experienced are described in the following paragraphs.

Effects during the Decommissioning Stage: Short Term

- 7.9 During the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development, there would be a degree of localised and temporary disturbance to the rural landscape associated with the dismantling and removal of on-site infrastructure. These activities would be short-term in nature and limited in spatial extent.
- 7.10 Upon completion of decommissioning, the land formerly occupied by the Proposed Development would be reinstated to full agricultural use, thereby facilitating the recovery and reinstatement of the baseline landscape character.
- 7.11 By this stage, retained field hedgerows and newly established mitigation planting would have matured, resulting in a strengthened and more cohesive landscape structure.
- 7.12 Although there may remain some limited potential for views of decommissioning activities from the surrounding landscape, these would occur within the context of an enhanced landscape fabric, with vegetation providing increased screening and containment. As such, the potential for significant adverse effects on the character of the surrounding landscape would be reduced. The effects arising from the decommissioning stage would therefore be no greater than the construction stage and therefore have not been described individually. It is considered that the decommissioning stage is unlikely to give rise to any likely significant effects on the landscape receptors or visual receptors, therefore the decommissioning stage is scoped out of the remaining assessment.

Changes to Landscape Features

Land Use

- 7.13 The Proposed Development would change the Site's land use from agricultural land to an operational solar farm with associated landscape mitigation and infrastructure including new fencing, access tracks and small ancillary buildings. Although the Site is greenfield it is typical of the surrounding landscape.
- 7.14 At the site level, this represents a noticeable change in landscape character, as the agricultural land use would be replaced by rows of solar panels with consistent height, alignment and materiality. However, the extent of change would be moderated by the relatively low profile of the panels and the retention of existing field boundaries where possible. The incorporation of mitigation measures, such as reinforcing hedgerows and introducing additional planting, would help to filter views and integrate the development into the surrounding landscape framework over time. As vegetation establishes, the perception of the Site from nearby viewpoints would become increasingly contained.
- 7.15 Overall, the change in land use from agriculture to solar energy generation would introduce a long term, temporary and perceptible alteration to the landscape. While it would reduce the extent of actively farmed land within the site, the development would remain reversible, with the land to be restored to agricultural use at the end of its operational life. With appropriate design and mitigation, the effects on the wider landscape are likely to be contained, and the development can be accommodated without fundamentally altering the broader character of the surrounding area.

Settlement Pattern and Built Form

- 7.16 The Proposed Development would introduce a change in the extent and type of built form through the conversion of agricultural fields to a solar farm. The baseline landscape of the surrounding area is characterised by a dispersed rural settlement pattern, typically comprising isolated farmsteads and occasional residential properties connected by a network of minor roads, with large tracts of open farmland separating built elements.
- 7.17 The introduction of solar arrays, substation infrastructure and security fencing set within landscape mitigation would introduce a new form of development that, while relatively low in height, would extend across a broad area (approximately 44.55Ha equating to approximately 67% of the Site) and present a more continuous, renewable energy generating presence within the landscape.
- 7.18 In terms of built form, the solar farm would differ from the existing pattern of development by introducing uniform rows of panels and associated infrastructure that are not directly related to traditional agricultural buildings. This would result in a shift from a landscape defined by scattered, built elements to one where built form is experienced as a more extensive and landscape-integrated feature.
- 7.19 Although the vertical scale of the development would remain modest (below approximately 3.1 metres) its horizontal extent would influence the character within and immediately around the Site. The presence of security fencing and access tracks would further reinforce the perception of a contained land use.
- 7.20 The change to settlement pattern would be most pronounced at the site level, where the introduction of a solar farm would locally alter the balance between built and undeveloped land. However, the wider settlement pattern would remain largely intact, as the development would not introduce residential or permanent habitable structures, nor would it significantly alter the distribution of built form across the broader landscape. The retention of existing field boundaries and the implementation of landscape mitigation, such as hedgerow reinforcement and structural planting, would assist in maintaining a sense of separation between the development and surrounding properties, thereby reducing the perceived spread of proposed structures.
- 7.21 The development may be experienced as a departure from the traditional rural character, particularly in views where the solar arrays are seen in contrast with nearby open fields. However, the relatively low profile of the infrastructure and the opportunity for screening would limit its influence on the skyline and reduce its prominence in longer-distance views. Over time, as mitigation planting establishes, the development would become more assimilated into the landscape, and its influence on the perception of settlement pattern and built form would diminish, remaining a contained and reversible intervention within the rural context.

Topography

- 7.22 The Proposed Development would not significantly alter the topography of the Site or surrounding area's topography. Ground levels are expected to be broadly the same as existing with minimal changes to levels or topography beyond the Site. Any proposed change to topography is expected to not have a significant effect on landscape character.

- 7.23 The solar photovoltaic arrays would be set above existing ground levels without the need for extensive excavation or regrading. As such, the underlying landform would be largely preserved, maintaining the Site's existing contours, slopes and drainage patterns. Localised ground disturbance may occur in relation to the installation of substation infrastructure, access tracks and temporary construction compounds; however, these works would be limited in extent and would not materially alter the overall landform.
- 7.24 Any minor earthworks required to facilitate internal access tracks or equipment bases would be designed to follow the natural topography, thereby minimising cut-and-fill operations. Where small-scale levelling is necessary, this would be contained within the Site and would not give rise to perceptible changes in the wider landscape. The retention of existing topographical features, such as subtle undulations would ensure that the development responds to the inherent landform rather than redefining it.

Vegetation and Open Space

- 7.25 The current PRoW within and around the Site would be retained as part of the proposals. The Proposed Development would result in a change to the existing pattern of vegetation and open space through the conversion of agricultural fields to a solar farm. The baseline is characterised by predominantly open arable or pasture fields with intermittent hedgerows and limited tree cover, creating a landscape of relatively large-scale openness and long views. The introduction of solar arrays would alter this pattern at the site level, reducing the perception of open, undeveloped farmland and introducing a more enclosed and managed land use. However, the retention of existing hedgerows, alongside their reinforcement, would help to maintain elements of the prevailing landscape structure.
- 7.26 Mitigation proposals include the establishment of swathes of native woodland planting, particularly around key PRoW and along adjacent roads. This planting would provide visual filtering and screening, reducing the prominence of the solar arrays in close-range views and enhancing the sense of enclosure along movement corridors. In addition, the proposals incorporate the reversion of historic field patterns through the reinstatement and strengthening of hedgerow boundaries. This approach would reintroduce a finer-grained landscape structure, reflect the historic character of the area and contribute to the restoration of landscape integrity over time.
- 7.27 The landscape strategy aligns with the objectives of LCA16: Basingstoke Down, as set out in the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment (2021). Key objectives for this LCA include the conservation and enhancement of hedgerow networks, the strengthening of tree cover to soften views, and the protection of the area's open downland character while accommodating change sensitively. The proposed woodland planting and hedgerow restoration would support these objectives by enhancing landscape structure and biodiversity, while also integrating the development into its surroundings. Careful siting and design would ensure that many open views and the underlying landform remain perceptible, thereby maintaining the balance between openness and enclosure that characterises the LCA.
- 7.28 Furthermore, the Proposed Development would also align with parts of the landscape guidance within the North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment for nearby

LCT 2 – Open Downland, including opportunities to restock hedgerows, and conserve expansive open views from higher ground.

- 7.29 Over time, as mitigation planting matures, the Site is likely to exhibit an increase in vegetation cover compared to the baseline condition, resulting in a more varied and layered landscape. While this would represent a shift from the current open agricultural character, it would also provide opportunities for ecological enhancement and improved landscape connectivity. The overall effect would be a transition to a more enclosed but structurally coherent landscape, where the solar development is increasingly assimilated and the key characteristics and management objectives of the LCA are broadly upheld.

Accessibility and Movement

- 7.30 The existing network of PRoW and roads would remain unchanged as per the baseline. The change in accessibility and movement within the Site, with the introduction of internal vehicular access routes, would have a limited effect on the perception of the wider landscape. The broader network of roads and paths would remain intact, and the experience of moving through the surrounding area would not be substantially altered. With appropriate design and management, including the retention of existing PRoW and road networks and the use of sympathetic boundary treatments, the Proposed Development would not give rise to significant adverse effects on accessibility and movement within the landscape.
- 7.31 The rural qualities of the wider public right of way network (away from the Site) would be preserved through the siting of development on typically lower lying parts of the Site and the addition of supplementary tree planting.

Impacts on Landscape Character

LCA16 - Basingstoke Down

Construction Stage

- 7.32 During the construction stage, the site within LCA 16 Basingstoke Down would experience direct and marked, but temporary alteration to its existing open, agricultural downland character. Topsoil stripping to facilitate construction would create areas of exposed ground and soil storage and introduce a more utilitarian appearance. The presence of construction plant, vehicle movements, and small site compounds would further influence character at the site level, introducing activity, noise, and vertical elements that contrast with the typically tranquil and rural qualities of the area. Temporary protective fencing around retained vegetation would add to the perception of enclosure and change. As built elements are progressively installed the Site would take on an increasingly engineered and transitional character.
- 7.33 At the wider LCA 16 level, effects would be more limited and indirect, reflecting the relatively contained extent of the construction activities within the broader downland landscape. Intervisibility from nearby receptors and elevated ground may allow glimpses of construction activity, plant, and soil disturbance, particularly where field boundaries are open or filtered by vegetation. However, the expansive nature of Basingstoke Down and the influence of existing landscape structure, such as hedgerows and landform, would generally restrict the extent of these effects. While the introduction of movement

and temporary features may locally diminish the rural character, these effects would be short-term and reversible.

- 7.34 LCA16 is assessed as having medium sensitivity. Given the localised nature of the Proposed Development, and the limited intervisibility with the wider extent of LCA16 (due to landform, and intervening vegetation), the construction stage would result in an overall **Small - Medium** magnitude of change to the character of LCA16 which would give rise to a **Minor to Moderate Adverse** effect.
- 7.35 The effect would not be significant.

Operational Stage

- 7.36 The Proposed Development would give rise to direct and indirect effects on a localised part of LCA16 (Basingstoke Down) through the introduction of solar PV arrays and associated infrastructure within an area of existing arable farmland. This would represent a change in land use and introduce a renewable energy generating/managed component into the rural landscape, with some perceived urbanising influence (for example, the presence of panels, fencing, access tracks and associated operational infrastructure).
- 7.37 The Site is situated within the southeastern part of the LCA, within the context of the neighbouring golf club as associated with the fringes of Basingstoke. The scale and extent of the effects arising from the Proposed Development would be moderated by the Site's location towards the edge of an urban area, the retention of existing landscape structure, including hedgerows and established vegetation, and the relatively low profile of the proposed infrastructure. Over time, the Landscape Strategy (including reinforcement of hedgerows and additional planting where proposed) would further integrate the development and reduce intervisibility, thereby reducing the prominence of the Proposed Development in views and its influence on the character of the wider LCA.
- 7.38 LCA16 is assessed as having medium sensitivity. Given the localised nature of the Proposed Development, and the limited intervisibility with the wider extent of LCA16 (due to landform, and intervening vegetation), the operational stage would result in an overall **Small - Medium** magnitude of change to the character of LCA16 at **Year 1** (initial operation) this would reduce to **Small** by **Year 15** (once mitigation planting has established). Overall, this would give rise to a **Minor to Moderate Adverse** effect at Year 1 and **Minor Adverse Effect** at Year 15.
- 7.39 The effect would not be significant.

Site/Landscape Fabric

Construction Stage

- 7.40 During the construction stage, the landscape character of the Site would experience a noticeable but temporary change in its currently open, rural and gently undulating downland character. Topsoil stripping across sections of the field would introduce areas of bare ground and create a more exposed and utilitarian appearance. This would contrast with the prevailing agricultural landscape. The introduction of construction plant, vehicles, and temporary site compounds would further urbanise the localised

area, adding movement, noise, and vertical elements that are uncharacteristic of the otherwise tranquil and sparsely developed landscape. Protective fencing around retained vegetation would add to this perception of enclosure and change, although it would help safeguard existing landscape features.

- 7.41 As construction progresses, the gradual installation of built elements would incrementally alter the site's character from simple agricultural fields to a more engineered landscape.
- 7.42 The Site/landscape fabric is assessed as having medium sensitivity. The construction stage would result in a **Medium - Large** magnitude of change to the character of the Site which would give rise to a **Moderate to Major Adverse** effect.
- 7.43 The effect would be significant¹⁹.

Operational Stage

- 7.44 The Proposed Development would result in direct effects on the Site/Landscape Fabric through the change in land use from arable farmland to an operational solar farm and the introduction of solar PV arrays and associated infrastructure (including fencing, access tracks and small ancillary equipment). This would introduce a renewable generating energy/managed influence into a landscape that is currently characterised by open agricultural fields and a hedgerow-defined field pattern. The extent of effect would be moderated by the relatively low height of the PV arrays, and the retention of existing field boundaries and vegetation. In the early operational period, the development may be perceived as increasing urbanising influences locally; however, as the Landscape Strategy establishes and matures, reinforcement planting would strengthen landscape structure, reduce intervisibility and assist in integrating the solar farm within the receiving landscape, reducing its prominence and influence on local character over time.
- 7.45 The retention of the existing field pattern, and introduction of historical field boundaries is considered a positive change to the Site's landscape fabric. Whilst the character of the fields within the site would change as they would now accommodate solar arrays, the underlying character of the fields would still be there and would fully return with decommissioning of the solar farm. New hedgerows would be introduced, and meadows created with arable land converted to pasture. All of these elements would remain after decommissioning as a positive legacy of the scheme and bring about enhancement to the landscape character in the long term.
- 7.46 The Site/landscape fabric is assessed as having medium sensitivity. The Proposed Development would have a noticeable change to a large area of the Site during a long-term temporary period, albeit the Proposed Development is considered to be reversible. The operational stage would result in a **Medium - Large** magnitude of change to the character of the Site at both **Year 1** (initial operation) and **Year 15** (once mitigation planting has established). Overall, this would give rise to a **Moderate to Major Adverse** effect at Year 1 and Year 15.

¹⁹ The effect is limited to within the Site boundaries

- 7.47 The effect would be significant²⁰.

North Wessex Downs National Landscape

Construction Stage

- 7.48 There would be no direct change to the characteristics of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape arising from the construction stage. Although the site lies outside but in proximity to the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, it forms part of its wider setting and contributes to its perceptual qualities, including expansive views, dark skies, and a coherent pattern of fields and hedgerows.
- 7.49 During the construction stage, the proposed development would give rise to temporary but perceptible changes to the landscape character experienced at the eastern edge of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape arising from the disturbed appearance of the Site, presence of construction vehicles and Site hoardings and the incremental appearance of the solar farm structures. Where visible, changes would be relatively distant in views.
- 7.50 Effects on the wider North Wessex Downs National Landscape would be limited by the Site's location outside but near to its boundary, and by the intervening landform and vegetation that restrict intervisibility.
- 7.51 The North Wessex Downs National Landscape is assessed as having high sensitivity. The overall effect at construction stage would be **Small - Negligible** (due to a combination of visibility and no visibility). Overall, this would give rise to a **Minor Adverse** effect.
- 7.52 The effects would not be significant.

Operational Stage

- 7.53 There would be no direct change to the characteristics of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape arising from the operational stage. The introduction of solar arrays, associated infrastructure, and security fencing would result in a localised but perceptible industrialising influence, particularly where development occupies more elevated or visually exposed slopes, interrupting the continuity of pastoral land use and altering the simple, undeveloped skyline in certain views.
- 7.54 From within the National Landscape, the degree of visual impact would vary depending on topography, vegetation cover, and distance. In more elevated locations and along roads/public rights of way to the east of the National Landscape with open east facing aspects, there is potential for intermittent visibility of the development, especially in winter months when vegetation screening is reduced. However, the existing hedgerow boundaries, and landscape mitigation could help to filter and soften views over time. As such, while the development would not directly affect the designated landscape, it could lead to small adverse effects in some views to the east of the National Landscape. Viewpoint 12 demonstrates a very small extent of visibility of the Proposed Development from Byway 258/9/2. In this context, the development would be seen as a distant element, and within the foreground of the edge of Basingstoke.

²⁰ The effect is limited to within the Site boundaries

- 7.55 Furthermore, the Proposed Development would align with parts of the Landscape Guidance as set out within the North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment for LCT 2 Open Downlands, whereby the Proposed Development would “*Conserve the expansive open views from higher ground*” and “*Carry out consistent management and restocking of hedgerows and nurture new hedgerow trees to maintain stock and enhance the historic hedgerow network.*”
- 7.56 The North Wessex Downs National Landscape is assessed as having high sensitivity. The Proposed Development would have a barely discernible/no effect on large parts of the National Landscape (beyond the eastern edge closest to the Site). Changes to views from the localised eastern area of the National Landscape are likely to be localised, and where visible, the Proposed Development is likely to introduce a very small, distant change to views seen within the foreground of the urban edge of Basingstoke. The overall effect at operational stage would therefore be **Small - Negligible** at both **Year 1** (initial operation) and **Year 15** (once mitigation planting has established). Overall, this would give rise to a **Minor Adverse** effect at Year 1 and Year 15.
- 7.57 The effects would not be significant.

Table 7.3: Summary of effects on landscape character receptors at Construction Stage

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change / Type of effect	Level of Effect	Significant
LCA16 - Basingstoke Down	Medium	Small -Medium Adverse	Minor to Moderate	No
Site/Landscape Fabric	Medium	Medium – Large Adverse	Moderate to Major	Yes
North Wessex Downs National Landscape	High	Small - Negligible Adverse	Minor	No

Table 7.4: Summary of effects on landscape character receptors at Operational Stage

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change / Type of effect	Level of Effect	Significant
LCA16 - Basingstoke Down	Medium	Year 1: Small - Medium Adverse Year 15: Small Adverse	Year 1: Minor to Moderate Year 15: Minor	Year 1: No Year 15: No

Site/Landscape Fabric	Medium	Year 1: Medium - Large Adverse Year 15: Medium – Large Adverse	Year 1: Moderate to Major Year 15: Moderate to Major	Year 1: Yes Year 15: Yes
North Wessex Downs National Landscape	High	Year 1: Small - Negligible Adverse Year 15: Small - Negligible Adverse	Year 1: Minor Year 15: Minor	Year 1: No Year 15: No

Impacts on Visual receptors and Representative Views

- 7.58 The visibility of the Site would increase following the implementation of the Proposed Development. This is due to the presence of solar panels, security fencing, substations and internal access roads. The potential extent of visibility is demonstrated by the computer generated ZTV provided in **Figure 6 of Appendix 2²¹**. For the purpose of the ZTV a maximum structure height was set at 3.1m from ground level to represent the maximum heights of the proposed solar panels and associated infrastructure buildings. The blue wash indicates where in the surrounding landscape/townscape the Proposed Development is likely to be visible. It should be noted that this visibility is based on available lidar data (surveyed between 2020 and 2021). The ZTV does not take into account for the reduction in visibility as the distances away from the Site increase. The visibility has therefore been refined through the field study.
- 7.59 The colour wash of the ZTV (**Figure 6 of Appendix 2**) demonstrates the extent of the Proposed Development visible from those locations. Red to orange colours demonstrate more than approximately 50% of the Proposed Development would be visible. Yellow into blue colours demonstrates less than approximately 50% of the Proposed Development would be visible. No wash identifies areas where there is likely to be no visibility of the Proposed Development.
- 7.60 The ZTV demonstrates that the Proposed Development would be visible from localised parts of the landscape surrounding the Site, with the biggest changes being from those roads and Public Rights of Way which surround the Site. In particular, Rookery Farm Lane which runs through the centre of the Site would experience the greatest visibility of the Proposed Development due to the presence of solar arrays on both sides of the road.
- 7.61 It is noted that there would be a lack of visibility from villages to the north of the Site including Monk Sherborne and Sherborne St John, where only small areas of the southern periphery of these villages would have potential low visibility of the Proposed Development. Similarly, there is a lack of visibility from within the settlement edge of Basingstoke with visibility largely limited to the Weybrook Park Golf Club.
- 7.62 Within Weybrook Park Golf Club, the ZTV shows visibility at the lower end of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility spectrum, meaning that from large parts of the golf club there

²¹ The ZTV was produced in February 2026 to inform the site visit and was based on an earlier iteration of the proposed layout. The layout was subsequently refined in Spring 2026. As these revisions were limited to plan changes, with no change to the maximum height parameters used in the ZTV, any change to the ZTV outputs is expected to be negligible; therefore, the ZTV was not re-run for the submission layout.

would be less than 50% of the overall infrastructure visible, and in some areas, there would be no visibility due to intervening landform and vegetation. There is a localised area towards the north west corner of the golf course where visibility is likely to be higher, but it was observed on Site that large parts of this area comprise of an embankment to the east of St James' Way, and is not an area in use by users of the golf course.

- 7.63 The ZTV also demonstrates a general lack of visibility from the North Wessex Downs National Landscape with low levels of visibility limited to the periphery of the designation including intermittent visibility from Kingsclere Road and Byway 258/9/2.
- 7.64 It is noted that there is a lack of viewpoints where the Proposed Development would be seen as a whole, and that changes arising from the proposals would be seen incrementally travelling through local routes around the Site. This would reduce the sense of the scheme dominating in views.
- 7.65 The likely key effects of the Development on the visual receptors identified during the baseline study are discussed below and summarised in **Table 7.5**. Reference is made to the changes experienced to the associated representative views within this analysis. Where changes are anticipated by year 15 on account of the establishment of areas identified for green infrastructure, these are also identified. An overall level of effect for each visual receptor is also set out in **Table 7.5**.

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)

Construction Stage

- 7.66 When passing the Site, users of this long distance footpath would experience close range views of construction works when seen through localised gaps in vegetation. The majority of views would be screened from this footpath by the established mature vegetation that runs along the western edge of the path as it passes the Site, and either side of the path running through the Site where the route becomes a byway. From the majority of the long distance footpath, beyond the immediate surroundings of the Site there would be no change to views from this PRoW, as evidenced by the visibility shown on the ZTV.

Construction Stage Overall Level of Effect - Public Right of Way users of St James' Way long distance footpath

- 7.67 The receptor was identified as having high sensitivity. The overall magnitude of change to short distance views from this receptor at construction stage would be **Medium** (due to a combination of negligible changes and large changes where localised breaks in the mature vegetation allow). From the wider long distance footpath, there would be no change to views, as demonstrated by the visibility shown in the ZTV.
- 7.68 Whilst the Proposed Development would introduce discernible change into views from sections of the route, the affected extent of the PRoW is relatively limited in the context of the overall length of the footpath within the study area. Furthermore, views of the Proposed Development are generally restricted to short sections of the route and, where available, are often partial in nature, with only components of the Proposed Development visible.

- 7.69 As users would experience these views as a transient receptor, moving along the route rather than remaining in a fixed location, the duration of exposure would be limited. Taking these factors into account, the **magnitude of change** is assessed as **medium**. Although the receptor sensitivity is high, the combination of the limited spatial extent of the affected route, the partial nature of available views, and the transient visual experience reduces the overall level of effect. Therefore, applying professional judgement, the Proposed Development is considered to result in a **moderate adverse** visual effect on users of St James' Way.
- 7.70 The effects would be significant at construction stage.

Operational Stage

- 7.71 St James' Way runs immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Site, along the western edge of Weybrook Park Golf Club and through the north eastern part of the Site. Along the section that sits adjacent to the golf course the route sits within a shallow depression, with land rising toward both the Site and the golf course. A generally continuous belt of mature vegetation along the Site boundary substantially limits views into the Site, whereas views to the golf course are typically more open. The managed, recreational character of the golf course (including manicured fairways and associated features) introduces a more urban-fringe influence and reduces the sense of tranquillity and rural remoteness that may be experienced on other routes within the surrounding countryside.
- 7.72 Beyond the golf course, where the route passes through the Site, it becomes more enclosed by established vegetation on both sides, which limits outward views for much of its length. Visibility of the Site and Proposed Development would therefore be largely confined to field entrances and occasional breaks in the hedgerow/vegetation. Where such openings occur (as demonstrated by Representative Viewpoint 3), views across the adjacent fields would allow clearer, localised views of the solar panels and associated infrastructure. The layout has been designed to respond to landform by locating panels on lower parts of the fields where practicable; nonetheless, where visible, the engineered form and regular pattern of the arrays would contrast with the existing green, largely undeveloped rural view and would reduce perceived rurality at these locations.
- 7.73 St James' Way passes around Queens Cottages and alongside the eastern side of the Church of All Saints, at which point field boundaries are more fragmented and vegetation cover is less continuous. As a result, there is potential for more open, short-range views into the north-eastern field. The layout has been designed to limit the prominence of the Proposed Development from this section of the route by setting the solar PV arrays on the lower part of the field and increasing the offset from the Byway. This would help to retain a foreground of agricultural land in view and reduce the extent to which the solar arrays are perceived in direct association with the route (as demonstrated by viewpoint 6).
- 7.74 For large parts of the footpath, there would be a lack of visibility into the Site. As demonstrated by Representative Viewpoint 2, there are points where breaks in this treed edge, allow for views into the Site. At these localised points, there would be short-distance views of the Site where the fencing, panels and associated infrastructure would

be visible. These elements would detract from the existing character of views which is generally green and undeveloped.



Figure 7.1: Representative Viewpoint 2 - Proposed Year 1



Figure 7.2: Representative Viewpoint 2 - Proposed Year 15

Representative Viewpoint 2

- 7.75 The introduction of the Proposed Development would result in a noticeable but contained change to the view, affecting the small gap in vegetation that forms the edge of the Site. This change would replace a glimpsed view of an agricultural field with more uniform, engineered structures in a regular, geometric pattern that contrasts with the surrounding character. A short section of the proposed fencing would be visible in the foreground of the view. As a result, there would be a localised reduction in rural character.
- 7.76 However, the overall effect would be moderated by the strong enclosure provided by existing vegetation, with the tree belt effectively screening much of the Proposed Development from view. This limits the extent of visibility and ensures the solar arrays do not become a dominant feature in the wider scene. Furthermore, by year 15 the proposed mitigation along this edge would largely screen from view the arrays, allowing the Proposed Development to integrate with the character of this view.



Figure 7.3: Representative Viewpoint 3 - Proposed Year 1



Figure 7.4: Representative Viewpoint 3 - Proposed Year 15

Representative Viewpoint 3

- 7.77 The introduction of the Proposed Development would create a noticeable change to the rural landscape seen towards the middle distance of this view comprising of visibility of arrays in the eastern fields. The panels would introduce geometric, darker-toned and reflective surfaces that contrast with the surrounding agricultural land. The uniform rows of panels would contrast with the gently rolling, agricultural character of the view. The low profile of the arrays would remain recessive allowing the broader landform to be appreciated in the view and would sit lower than the skyline. Due to the location of this viewpoint at an access point into the Site where there is a gap in mitigation proposals, there are limited changes between the year 1 and year 15 views.



Figure 7.5: Representative Viewpoint 6 - Proposed Year 1 (Proposed Development shown as light blue wireline for clarity – where occluded by foreground elements the light blue line is dashed)



Figure 7.6: Representative Viewpoint 6 - Proposed Year 15

Representative Viewpoint 6

- 7.78 The Proposed Development would be screened from view from this location by interposing landform and the rolling topography of the foreground section of the field.

There would be no discernible change to the character of this view arising from the Proposed Development.

Operational Stage Overall Level of Effect - Public Right of Way users of St James' Way long distance footpath

- 7.79 The receptor was identified as having high sensitivity. At year 1 the overall magnitude of change to views from this receptor would be **Medium** (due to a combination of negligible changes and large changes where localised breaks in the mature vegetation allow).
- 7.80 Whilst the Proposed Development would introduce discernible change into views from sections of the route, the affected extent of the PRow is relatively limited in the context of the overall length of the footpath within the study area. Furthermore, views of the Proposed Development are generally restricted to short sections of the route and, where available, are often partial in nature, with only components of the Proposed Development visible.
- 7.81 As users would experience these views as a transient receptor, moving along the route rather than remaining in a fixed location, the duration of exposure would be limited. Taking these factors into account, the **magnitude of change** is assessed as **medium**. Following the establishment of the landscape mitigation, the overall magnitude of change on views would reduce to **Small**.
- 7.82 Although the receptor sensitivity is high, the combination of the limited spatial extent of the affected route, the partial nature of available views, and the transient visual experience reduces the overall level of effect. Therefore, applying professional judgement, the Proposed Development is considered to result in a **moderate adverse** effect at year 1, reducing to **Minor to Moderate Adverse** by year 15.
- 7.83 The effects would be significant at year 1 and not significant by year 15.

Public Right of Way users of Byway 208/3/1 connecting Aldermaston Road and St James' Way (Stokes Lane)

Construction Stage

- 7.84 The established vegetation along large parts of the byway would screen views of the Site at construction stage. Where visible through gaps in vegetation or from longer distance views closer to Aldermaston Road, changes to views would include the introduction of a construction site, with associated hoarding, construction vehicles, topsoil stripping and the incremental appearance of the solar farm and associated infrastructure. This change would conflict with the generally agricultural, rolling landscape which the Site affords presently.

Construction Stage - Overall Level of Effect - Public Right of Way users of Byway 208/3/1 connecting Aldermaston Road and St James' Way (Stokes Lane)

- 7.85 The receptor was identified as having medium-high sensitivity. The overall magnitude of change to views from this receptor would be **Medium** (due to a combination of negligible changes and large changes where localised breaks in the mature vegetation allow). The overall effect during the construction stage would therefore be **Minor to Moderate Adverse**.

7.86 The effects would not be significant.

Operational Stage

7.87 The experience of users of this byway would vary along the route, reflecting changes in topography, vegetation cover and proximity to the Site. Approaching from Aldermaston Road and along the northern edge of Weybrook Park Golf Club, the routes are relatively open and there is potential for views towards parts of the Site. From these locations (as illustrated by Representative Viewpoint 4), the Proposed Development would be seen in the middle to far ground but would be intermittently filtered by intervening trees. Owing to the limited height of the PV arrays and perimeter fencing, the Proposed Development would not break the skyline and would be seen against the broader, gently rolling agricultural setting. Closer to the Site edge, where levels drop towards St James' Way the byway becomes more contained by vegetation, and there would be less perception in views of the Proposed Development.



Figure 7.7: Representative Viewpoint 4 - Proposed Year 1



Figure 7.8: Representative Viewpoint 4 - Proposed Year 15

Representative Viewpoint 4

- 7.88 The Proposed Development would be visible towards the middle to distance of this view. With the visible elements largely limited to those parts of the Site adjacent to Rookery Farm Lane. Large parts of the proposals within the eastern fields would be filtered by foreground trees, in particular those solar panels within the north eastern field. The panels within the south eastern fields would be partially obscured by foreground undulating landform of the Weybook Golf Club. Where visible the solar panels and associated infrastructure would sit lower than the skyline maintaining a largely undeveloped horizon and allowing the undulating landform to remain recognisable. Following the establishment of the landscape mitigation measures, the extent of visibility of the Proposed Development is likely to reduce where the hedgerow along Rookery Farm Lane would limit views to the more western fields and arrays within them.

Operational Stage - Overall Level of Effect - Public Right of Way users of Byway 208/3/1 connecting Aldermaston Road and St James' Way (Stokes Lane)

- 7.89 The receptor was identified as having medium-high sensitivity. At year 1 the overall magnitude of change to views from this receptor would be **Medium** (due to a combination of negligible changes and large changes where localised breaks in the mature vegetation allow). Following the establishment of the landscape mitigation, the overall magnitude of change on views would reduce to **Small**. The overall effect at year 1 would therefore be **Minor to Moderate Adverse**, reducing to **Minor Adverse** by year 15.
- 7.90 The effects would not be significant.

Public Right of Way users of footpath 161/6/1 to the west of the Site

Construction Stage

- 7.91 Changes to views of users arising from the construction stage would vary along the length of Footpath 161/6/1 due to the varied topography and tree cover. For large parts of the footpath, changes would be imperceptible or distant. Where the footpath runs closest to the Site, and where breaks in established tree cover allow, the appearance of the Site would have a marked change during the construction stage arising from the introduction of a construction site, with associated hoarding, construction vehicles, topsoil stripping and the incremental appearance of the solar farm and associated infrastructure. This would contrast with the character of views of open downland.

Construction Stage Overall Level of Effect - Public Right of Way users of footpath 161/6/1 to the west of the Site

- 7.92 The receptor was identified as having medium-high sensitivity. At construction stage the overall magnitude to change of views from this receptor would be **Small - Medium** (due to a combination of negligible changes and moderate changes where the Proposed Development is visible towards the background of views/filtered views). The overall effect at construction stage would therefore be **Minor to Moderate Adverse**.
- 7.93 The effects would not be significant.

Operational Stage

- 7.94 The visual experience of users of Footpath 161/6/1 would vary along its length, reflecting changes in topography, vegetation cover and proximity to the Site. The ZTV indicates that there would be sections of the route with little or no visibility towards the Site, with the greatest potential visibility occurring from the central section of the footpath (shown as a light blue wash on the ZTV). From this location (Representative Viewpoint 7), the main change would relate to solar PV arrays within the southern part of the Site, around Rookery Farm Lane, which would be seen in the middle distance. As this section of the footpath is slightly elevated relative to fields within the Site, the visible parts of the Proposed Development would sit below the viewer, which would reduce perceived prominence and help the arrays and associated infrastructure to appear more recessive in views. Visibility of the north-western field would be largely screened by interposing topography and vegetation. Where the footpath passes closer to this field, there may be occasional, filtered views into the Site through gaps in vegetation, allowing limited glimpses of the Proposed Development.



Figure 7.9: Representative Viewpoint 7 - Proposed Year 1



Figure 7.10: Representative Viewpoint 7 - Proposed Year 15

Representative Viewpoint 7

- 7.95 From this viewpoint, development within the north western field would be screened from view by the interposing topography. Proposals within the southern fields would be visible towards the right of the view, adjacent to Rookery Farm Lane. These elements would sit within the middle to distance of the view, and at a lower elevation than the viewpoint. The appearance of engineered structures, in a regimented layout, which have a darker and reflective appearance would contrast with the relatively undeveloped part

of the view. The Proposed Development would sit substantially lower than the skyline, which would preserve the broader horizon towards the edge of Basingstoke.

Operational Stage Overall Level of Effect - Public Right of Way users of footpath 161/6/1 to the west of the Site

- 7.96 The receptor was identified as having medium-high sensitivity. At year 1 the overall magnitude to change of views from this receptor would be **Small - Medium** (due to a combination of negligible changes and moderate changes where the Proposed Development is visible towards the background of views/filtered views). At Year 15 the magnitude of change to this receptor would remain **Small - Medium**. The overall effect at year 1 and 15 would therefore be **Minor to Moderate Adverse**.
- 7.97 The effects would not be significant.

Public Right of Way users of footpaths to the southern edge of Sherborne St. John and Monk Sherborne

Construction Stage

- 7.98 Changes arising from the construction stage on views from this receptor are likely to be small and distant, seen towards the south of the two villages. This may include the introduction of site hoarding, construction vehicles, topsoil stripping and the incremental appearance of the solar farm. It is likely that changes to views would be small and the overall character of views would be maintained due to the intervening landscape remaining unchanged.

Construction Stage Overall Level of Effect - Public Right of Way users of footpaths to the southern edge of Sherborne St. John and Monk Sherborne

- 7.99 The receptor was identified as having medium-high sensitivity. At construction stage the overall magnitude of change on views from this receptor would be **Small - Negligible**. The overall effect would therefore be **Negligible to Minor Adverse** at construction stage.
- 7.100 The effects would not be significant.

Operational Stage

- 7.101 The ZTV indicates that, along much of this receptor group, there would be no theoretical visibility of the Site, particularly on sections of footpath to the south of Monk Sherborne. In some locations, including the southern and slightly elevated parts of Sherborne St John, the ZTV indicates low levels of visibility (generally less than 50% of the overall infrastructure). In practice, views towards the Site from these routes would frequently be screened and/or filtered by intervening vegetation, localised topography and the built form of the villages. Where the Proposed Development is visible, it would be experienced as a very small, distant element within the wider landscape. The low height of the solar arrays and associated infrastructure means that they would generally sit below the skyline, reducing their prominence in longer-distance views. The foreground and the key characteristics of these views would remain unchanged, retaining the open, rolling agricultural character experienced from these footpaths.



Figure 7.11: Representative Viewpoint 5 - Proposed Year 1



Figure 7.12: Representative Viewpoint 5 - Proposed Year 15

Representative Viewpoint 5

- 7.102 The Proposed Development would be glimpsed as a distant element in the background of the view. The foreground and the key characteristics of the view would remain unchanged following implementation of the Proposed Development. Where discernible,

the regular, engineered form of the solar PV arrays would contrast with the generally undeveloped, rural character of the wider landscape; however, the low profile of the arrays and their distance from the viewpoint means that they would sit below the skyline and would not interrupt the wider horizon. As the proposed mitigation planting establishes, the development would be further filtered and its presence in the view would reduce over time until the arrays are indiscernible in the view.



Figure 7.13: Representative Viewpoint 9 - Proposed Year 1 (Proposed Development shown as light blue wireline for clarity – where occluded by foreground elements the light blue line is dashed)



Figure 7.14: Representative Viewpoint 9 - Proposed Year 15

Representative Viewpoint 9

- 7.103 The Proposed Development would be screened from view from this location. There would be no discernible change to the character of this view arising from the Proposed Development.



Figure 7.15: Representative Viewpoint 10 - Proposed Year 1 (Proposed Development shown as light blue wireline for clarity – where occluded by foreground elements the light blue line is dashed)



Figure 7.16: Representative Viewpoint 10 - Proposed Year 15

Representative Viewpoint 10

- 7.104 From this localised high area, the Proposed Development would be seen towards the background of the view and would be heavily filtered by the established foreground trees. The proposals would be seen within the context of the foreground suburban

character of the edge of Sherborne St. John which detracts from the rural character of the view.

Operational Stage Overall Level of Effect - Public Right of Way users of footpaths to the southern edge of Sherborne St. John and Monk Sherborne

- 7.105 The receptor was identified as having medium-high sensitivity. At year 1 the overall magnitude of change on views from this receptor would be **Small - Negligible**. Following the establishment of landscape mitigation, which would further screen any potential views the magnitude of change at year 15 would reduce to **Negligible**. The overall effect would therefore be **Negligible to Minor Adverse** at year 1, reducing to **Negligible** by year 15.
- 7.106 The effects would not be significant.

Public Right of Way users of Byway 258/9/2 within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape to the west of the Site

Construction Stage

- 7.107 Changes to views during the construction stage would be small-scale and distant for this receptor. Where visible, construction activities (including vehicle movements, areas of topsoil stripping, temporary hoarding and the incremental introduction of solar farm infrastructure) would result in a slight change within the far distance of views from this byway.

Construction Stage Overall Level of Effect - Public Right of Way users of Byway 258/9/2 within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape to the west of the Site

- 7.108 The receptor was identified as high sensitivity. At construction stage the overall magnitude of change on views from this receptor would be **Small - Negligible**. The overall effect would therefore be **Minor Adverse**.
- 7.109 The effects would not be significant.

Operational Stage

- 7.110 The ZTV indicates limited theoretical visibility from this byway, with slightly greater visibility in adjacent fields to the east. The Site lies approximately 1.3km from the route at its closest point. Parts of the byway are enclosed by field hedgerows and vegetation that restrict outward views; elsewhere, more open, elevated panoramic views are possible, looking east and away from the main body of the National Landscape towards the edge of Basingstoke. Where the Proposed Development is visible, it would introduce a very small change in the far distance. Intervening landform and vegetation would screen large parts of the Site, and the Proposed Development would not be seen in its entirety.
- 7.111 Following the establishment of the proposed landscape mitigation, the visibility of the Proposed Development would reduce, with the changes to previously described localised views likely to be negligible.



Figure 7.17: Representative Viewpoint 12 - Proposed Year 1 (Proposed Development shown as light blue wireline for clarity)



Figure 7.18: Representative Viewpoint 12 - Proposed Year 15

Representative Viewpoint 12

- 7.112 The Proposed Development would introduce a very small element towards the distance of this view and would be seen within the context of other urbanising elements of the view including the suburban edge of Basingstoke and the A339. The Proposed Development would sit much lower than the skyline and would not interfere with views

towards any landmarks. The general composition and character of the view would remain unchanged following implementation of the Proposed Development.

Operational Stage Overall Level of Effect - Public Right of Way users of Byway 258/9/2 within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape to the west of the Site

- 7.113 The receptor was identified as high sensitivity. At year 1 the overall magnitude of change on views from this receptor would be **Small - Negligible**. Following the establishment of landscape mitigation, which would further screen any potential views the magnitude of change at year 15 would reduce to **Negligible**. The overall effect would therefore be **Minor Adverse** at year 1, reducing to **Negligible** by year 15.
- 7.114 The effects would not be significant.

Road users of the A339

Construction Stage

- 7.115 During the construction stage, road users travelling along the A339 would experience a noticeable but transient change within the middle distance of views. Construction activity, including an increase in construction traffic, temporary hoarding, soil stripping and the incremental appearance of solar panels, would contrast with the generally open downland landscape. These changes would affect only a small part of views from this road and would be experienced as largely kinetic and fleeting due to vehicle movement along the route.

Construction Stage Overall Level of Effect Road users of the A339

- 7.116 The receptor was identified as having medium-low sensitivity. During the construction stage the overall magnitude of change on views from this receptor would be **Small - Medium**. The overall effect during the construction stage therefore would be **Minor to Moderate Adverse**.
- 7.117 The effects would not be significant.

Operational Stage

- 7.118 The Proposed Development would introduce a discernible change to panoramic views looking north from this road which are characterised by open, gently rolling arable farmland with a strong sense of continuity and limited built form including a largely undeveloped horizon (in views to the north). The introduction of solar arrays would alter this pattern by introducing a series of regular, geometric forms that contrast with the organic field structure. The panels' uniformity and darker tonal qualities as well as reflective elements would be perceptible within the midground of views, particularly where they occupy more outward-facing slopes.
- 7.119 From this receptor, the Proposed Development would be seen across a broad section of views, albeit at some distance. The solar arrays would appear as a series of blocks within the landscape, reducing the generally undeveloped character of the landscape. While existing hedgerows and field boundaries provide some degree of visual filtering, particularly at lower elevations, the scale of the Proposed Development would still be visible in views from the road, especially in winter months. The introduction of associated infrastructure, such as substations, access roads and fencing, would add to

this perception, though these elements would be secondary to the panels themselves in distant views.



Figure 7.19: Representative Viewpoint 1 - Proposed Year 1



Figure 7.20: Representative Viewpoint 1 - Proposed Year 15

Representative Viewpoint 1

- 7.120 The Proposed Development would sit in the middle ground of this view. The proposed arrays would be seen across a broad section of the view. The most prominent views

would be of the arrays within the eastern fields. The arrays would be partly filtered by the presence of established foreground hedgerows and trees. It is noted that, although there is a change to the character of this middle ground of the view, the Proposed Development sits well below the skyline seen from this location and maintains a largely undeveloped horizon which is characteristic of views from this receptor looking north.

Operational Stage Overall Level of Effect - Road users of the A339

- 7.121 Over time, mitigation planting would help to integrate the development more effectively into the landscape, softening its edges and breaking up its visual mass. The receptor was identified as having medium-low sensitivity. At year 1 the overall magnitude of change on views from this receptor would be **Small - Medium**. Due to the slightly elevated location of the road compared to the Site and the extent of change seen in the view, the magnitude of change at year 15 would remain **Small - Medium**. The overall effect at year 1 and year 15 would therefore be **Minor to Moderate Adverse**.
- 7.122 The effects would not be significant.

Road users of Rookery Farm Lane

Construction Stage

- 7.123 The construction stage would result in a noticeable change to a large extent of views from the road, arising from the increase in construction traffic accessing the Site, and short distance views of Site hoarding, enabling works and the incremental appearance of the solar farm. This would be a marked change to views by the introduction of urbanising elements which contrast with the open downland character of views.

Construction Stage Overall Level of Effect – Road users of Rookery Farm Lane

- 7.124 The visual receptor was identified as being of medium-low sensitivity. Overall, the magnitude of change on visual amenity for users of Rookery Farm Lane is assessed as **Medium Adverse** at the construction stage. The overall level of effect would therefore be **Minor to Moderate Adverse**.
- 7.125 The effects would not be significant.

Operational Stage

- 7.126 Rookery Farm Lane is a lightly trafficked rural route characterised by views of open agricultural land and intermittent hedgerows. The proposed solar arrays would lie immediately adjacent to sections of the lane, introducing a new engineered element within the near-field views. From certain short stretches, particularly where the lane passes between the solar parcels, the Proposed Development would be perceptible within oblique and forward-facing views. The arrays would be seen as low-height, horizontal features which would contrast with the baseline rolling landscape of neighbouring fields.
- 7.127 Views of the arrays and associated infrastructure would be in close proximity to road users. Existing roadside hedgerows, boundary vegetation and subtle changes in landform would partially filter views along much of the route, confining clearer views to localised gaps or field access points. Perception of the solar arrays would also be transient, with views unfolding sequentially as users travel along the lane rather than being experienced as a single, continuous panorama.



Figure 7.21: Representative Viewpoint 8 - Proposed Year 1



Figure 7.22: Representative Viewpoint 8 - Proposed Year 15

Representative Viewpoint 8

- 7.128 Representative Viewpoint 8 is located at a break in the roadside vegetation where access is provided to the north-western field close to Manor Farm. From this short-range viewpoint, parts of the Proposed Development within the north-western field would be visible, seen across the field and partially contained by vegetation along the lane. The solar PV arrays would appear as a low-height, regular element within the view which

would contrast with the rural character of the view; however, they would sit below the skyline, allowing the underlying landform and the wider pattern of rolling fields to remain legible. The field seen within the foreground would remain as agricultural land, helping to retain the green and open character of the view. A new hedge line would separate the two sections of the field providing some low-level screening of some of the nearer arrays. Wider parts of the Site and Proposed Development would not be visible from this location. As mitigation planting establishes, comprising the hedgerow within the foreground of the arrays, visibility of the Proposed Development from this location would be further screened and the prominence of the Proposed Development would reduce over time.

Operational Stage Overall Level of Effect - Road users of Rookery Farm Lane

- 7.129 The visual receptor was identified as being of medium-low sensitivity. Overall, the magnitude of change on visual amenity for users of Rookery Farm Lane is assessed as **Medium Adverse** at year 1. While the introduction of the solar development would alter the rural character experienced along parts of the lane, the development would remain visually contained. Over time, proposed landscape mitigation and the maturation of existing vegetation would further assist in integrating the solar arrays into the local landscape, reducing the perceived contrast. Due to the scale of the Proposed Development and proximity to this receptor, the magnitude of change would remain **Medium Adverse** at year 15. The overall level of effect would therefore be **Minor to Moderate Adverse** at year 1 and year 15.

- 7.130 The effects would not be significant.

Users of the Church of All Saints including Churchyard

Construction Stage

- 7.131 During the construction stage, users of the churchyard would experience a localised change at the periphery of views, arising from construction activity within the north-western field of the Site, which is set back from the churchyard. Where visible, effects could include construction vehicle movements, temporary hoarding and enabling works, together with the gradual introduction of solar arrays and associated infrastructure. These elements would contrast with the existing open agricultural character of views.

Construction Stage Overall Level of Effect - Users of the Church of All Saints including Churchyard

- 7.132 The receptor was identified as having medium sensitivity. At construction stage the overall magnitude of change to views from this receptor would be **Small**. The overall effect at construction stage would therefore be **Minor Adverse**.
- 7.133 The effects would not be significant.

Operational Stage

- 7.134 The churchyard faces onto Rookery Farm Lane, close to the north west field of the Site. Looking out from the western parts of the churchyard in a westerly direction (away from the church but forming the principal approach to the church) views of the Proposed Development would sit within the periphery of views and would be partially filtered from views by the mature planting which makes up the southern edge of the churchyard and field boundary to the west of Rookery Farm Lane. The Proposed Development would be

a small element within wider views from the church (with the nearest arrays located approximately 150m south west of the church), which would introduce urbanising elements to views, but would not change the overall character of views. It is noted that from other parts of the churchyard, such as to the north and east of the church, there would be no visibility towards the Proposed Development and therefore the changes would be very localised.

7.135 The effects would not be significant.



Figure 7.23: Representative Viewpoint 11 - Proposed Year 1



Figure 7.24: Representative Viewpoint 11 - Proposed Year 15

Representative Viewpoint 11

- 7.136 The proposed arrays within the north western field would be visible towards the periphery of this view and would be partially filtered and screened by foreground vegetation. The general character of the view of open farmland would be maintained following the implementation of the Proposed Development.

Operational Stage Overall Level of Effect - Users of the Church of All Saints including Churchyard

- 7.137 The receptor was identified as having medium sensitivity. At year 1 the overall magnitude of change to views from this receptor would be **Small**. Following the establishment of the landscape mitigation, the overall magnitude of change on views would reduce to **Small - Negligible**. The overall effect at year 1 would therefore be **Minor Adverse**, reducing to **Negligible to Minor Adverse** by year 15.
- 7.138 The effects would not be significant.

Impacts on Private Visual Receptors

- 7.139 As noted in **Section 5** above, private visual receptors are not normally included in visual impact assessments as there is no private 'right to a view'. However, as potential impacts on views from adjoining Weybrook Park Golf Club have been raised by third parties in the past, the impacts of the proposals on this group have both briefly been considered below.

Users of Weybrook Park Golf Club

Construction Stage

- 7.140 Users of Weybrook Park Golf Club would experience short-distance views across the adjacent fields to the west, particularly towards the south-eastern fields of the Site,

closest to the golf course. During the construction stage, this outlook would change from open agricultural downland to an active construction site, with construction plant and vehicle movements, temporary hoarding, enabling works and the incremental installation of solar arrays and associated infrastructure.

Operational Stage

- 7.141 The ZTV demonstrates how the extent of visibility of the Proposed Development from the golf course would vary depending on proximity to the Site and intervening vegetation and topography. From the eastern parts of the golf course including the access road from Rooksdown Lane and areas closest to Aldermaston Road, there would be no likely visibility. Similarly, there are areas within the centre of the Site where visibility is likely to be limited. From other parts of the golf course the ZTV shows lower visibility of proposals (illustrated by a blue wash – approximately less than 50% of the overall infrastructure is visible). There are some limited areas to the north west of the course where the Proposed Development is likely to be more visible from (orange/yellow tones of wash - above 50% of the overall infrastructure is visible), however it was observed on Site that parts of this area form a steep bank adjacent to St James' Way, and are not areas in active use/play, further reducing the impact on the users of the Golf Club.
- 7.142 Where visible, it is likely that those solar panels within the eastern fields would be most visible due to the proximity to the golf course. The Proposed Development would contrast with the baseline characteristics of views beyond the golf course of open agricultural fields, by introducing structured and geometric lines of arrays into the views. It is considered that the effects would be localised to small parts of the course, and the course itself is a manicured, landscape akin to the suburban edge which contrasts with the surrounding landscape. The mature vegetation along the edge of St James' Way would help to mitigate some views of the lower parts of the Proposed Development closest to the golf course.
- 7.143 Over time, mitigation planting would help to integrate the development more effectively into the landscape, softening its edges and breaking up its visual mass.

Table 7.5: Summary of effects on Visual Receptors

Receptor and representative viewpoint (RV)	Sensitivity	Construction Stage Magnitude of change / type of effect	Operational Stage Year 1 Magnitude of change / type of effect	Operational Stage Year 15 Magnitude of change / type of effect	Overall level of Effect	Significant
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) – viewpoint 2,3 and 6	High	Medium Adverse	Medium Adverse	Small Adverse	Construction - Moderate Adverse Year 1 – Moderate Adverse Year 15 - Minor to Moderate Adverse	Construction - Yes Year 1 – Yes Year 15 - No
Public Right of Way users of Byway 208/3/1 connecting Aldermaston Road and St James' Way – viewpoint 4	Medium-High	Medium Adverse	Medium Adverse	Small Adverse	Construction - Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 1 – Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 15 - Minor Adverse	No
Public Right of Way users of footpath 161/6/1 to the west of the Site – viewpoint 7	Medium-High	Small - Medium Adverse	Small - Medium Adverse	Small - Medium Adverse	Construction - Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 1 – Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 15 - Minor to Moderate Adverse	No
Public Right of Way users of footpaths to the southern edge of Sherborne St. John and Monk Sherborne – viewpoints 5, 9, 10	Medium-High	Small - Negligible Adverse	Small - Negligible Adverse	Negligible	Construction - Negligible to Minor Adverse Year 1 – Negligible to Minor Adverse Year 15 - Negligible	No
Public Right of Way users of Byway 258/9/2 within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape to the west of the Site – viewpoint 12	High	Small - Negligible Adverse	Small - Negligible Adverse	Negligible	Construction - Minor Year 1 – Minor Year 15 - Negligible	No
Road users of the A339 – viewpoint 1	Medium-Low	Small - Medium Adverse	Small - Medium Adverse	Small - Medium Adverse	Construction - Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 1 – Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 15 – Minor to Moderate Adverse	No
Road users of Rookery Farm Lane – viewpoint 8	Medium-Low	Medium Adverse	Medium Adverse	Medium Adverse	Construction- Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 1 – Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 15 – Minor to Moderate Adverse	No
Users of the Church of All Saints including Churchyard – viewpoint 11	Medium	Small Adverse	Small Adverse	Small - Negligible Adverse	Construction - Minor Adverse Year 1 – Minor Adverse Year 15 - Negligible to Minor Adverse	No

Assessment against Statutory Duties and Planning Policy

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

- 7.144 The Site is located within the setting of this National Landscape, therefore the Development's compliance with the Protected Landscape Duty is considered as part of this assessment.
- 7.145 The Proposed Development is located outside of the National Landscape. Locating the proposed solar arrays on lower, less prominent ground, is considered the most sensitive approach to reducing potential effects on the National Landscape. The visual assessment including ZTV and visualisation of Representative Viewpoint 12 demonstrates that there would be limited intervisibility between the Site and the National Landscape, and in localised areas where there was potential visibility from the NL, the Proposed Development would form a distant feature seen within the context of the edge of Basingstoke. It is therefore considered that there would be no discernible harm to defined Special Qualities of the National Landscape.

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

- 7.146 The sensitive approach to the design of the Proposed Development as set out within **Section 6** of this report demonstrates how the scheme has been designed to avoid and minimise any adverse impacts on the National Landscape, in accordance with Paragraph N4.4.

National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure

- 7.147 The Proposed Development accords with the objectives of the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), particularly Section 2.5, by demonstrating a design approach that has been carefully developed to respond to landscape and visual considerations.
- 7.148 The layout, scale and disposition of the solar arrays have been directly informed by the findings of the LVIA, ensuring that areas of greater visual sensitivity are avoided or minimised. The scheme incorporates the retention and reinforcement of existing hedgerows and vegetation, alongside additional planting, to provide effective screening and to integrate the development into the surrounding landscape pattern.

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 7.149 The proposed layout plan demonstrates how the layout of the Development is proposed to include substantial areas of green infrastructure, to mitigate changes of views from the edge of the development. This demonstrates how the Development is compliant with NPPG, Paragraph 006 (Reference ID: 8-006-20190721) and would contribute to the wider character of the area by maintaining a green edge to Basingstoke.
- 7.150 The Development has been informed by an understanding of the landscape character of the Site and wider area, which has formed the baseline of this LVIA, therefore demonstrating compliance with Paragraph 037 (ID: 8-037-20190721).
- 7.151 As previously described, the sensitive location of the Site within the setting of the National Landscape has heavily influenced the layout of the Development, to create a sensitive approach which seeks to limit potential adverse impacts on the National Landscape in accordance with paragraph 042 (Reference ID: 8-042-20190721).

Local Planning Context

Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan

- 7.152 The proposed solar farm has been designed in full accordance with Policy EM1 and related policies through a robust, iterative LVIA process that has directly informed the site layout, extent and mitigation strategy. The scheme responds to the borough's landscape character by avoiding the most visually sensitive areas, including higher and more exposed land, and by retaining the underlying field pattern, hedgerows and mature trees that define local character. The site lies outside but within the setting of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, and the LVIA has ensured that potential effects on this nationally important designation are minimised. Furthermore, the scheme does not encroach into the nearby Basingstoke–Sherborne St John Strategic Gap and maintains the clear separation and identity of settlements, in line with Policy EM2.
- 7.153 In relation to Policies EM4, EM5 and EM11, the proposals incorporate a comprehensive landscape and ecological strategy that avoids and mitigates potential harm while delivering enhancements. Existing habitats are retained and buffered, and new habitats are proposed to deliver biodiversity net gain and reinforce green infrastructure links, ensuring no fragmentation of ecological corridors. The LVIA, alongside ecological and heritage assessments, has informed the careful siting of infrastructure to avoid adverse effects on designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings, conserving local historic character. The overall approach ensures that landscape, visual, ecological and heritage considerations are embedded within the design, with mitigation proportionate to the scale of development and a comprehensive landscaping scheme securing successful integration into the surrounding countryside.
- 7.154 The proposed solar farm accords with the objectives of Draft Policy ENV1 through the preparation of a comprehensive LVIA, which has been central to the evolution of the scheme and has directly informed the layout, extent and mitigation strategy. The design responds closely to the borough's landscape character by avoiding visually sensitive areas, retaining the existing field pattern, and safeguarding key features such as hedgerows, trees and watercourses that contribute to both landscape structure and ecological connectivity. Particular regard has been given to visual amenity, scenic quality and the experience of receptors, including users of nearby public rights of way, ensuring that the sense of place, tranquillity and openness are respected. The scheme also incorporates a robust landscaping strategy, proportionate to its scale, to reinforce landscape character and provide visual containment over time. The site lies within the setting of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, and the LVIA has ensured that potential effects on its character and setting are minimised. Furthermore, the proposals maintain the open and undeveloped nature of the adjacent Basingstoke–Sherborne St John Strategic Gap, thereby aligning with Draft Policy ENV2.

Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan Update 2021 to 2040 Draft for Regulation 18 Consultation January 2024

- 7.155 In accordance with Draft Policies ENV6 and ENV7, the scheme has been designed to avoid harm to biodiversity and green infrastructure, with ecological considerations embedded alongside the LVIA in shaping the layout.

- 7.156 The development also aligns with Draft Policy ENV13 by contributing to renewable energy generation and carbon reduction targets, while ensuring that environmental effects are appropriately avoided, minimised and mitigated through a design-led approach. This is consistent with Draft Policy DES1, with the LVIA (and heritage assessment) forming a key component of understanding site context and guiding design decisions. In addition, heritage considerations have informed the scheme in line with Draft Policy DES6, ensuring that the setting and significance of heritage assets are conserved. Overall, the proposal demonstrates a balanced and policy-compliant approach, integrating renewable energy delivery with careful landscape, environmental and design considerations.

***North Wessex Downs National Landscape – An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Management Plan 2025-2030***

- 7.157 As previously described, it is considered that due to the relatively limited and localised visibility of the Site from the National Landscape, it is unlikely that there would be no discernible harm to the National Landscape.

8. Cumulative Effects

- 8.1 A number of cumulative developments were identified and assessed as part of the 2025 ES. This list has since been updated for use within the 2026 ES to include recently submitted planning applications within a 5km radius of the Site.
- 8.2 Cumulative effects comprise the combined effects of reasonably foreseeable human-induced changes within a specific geographical area and over a certain period of time and can be both direct and indirect. The assessment of the significance of cumulative effects needs to be undertaken in the context of the characteristics of the existing environment.
- 8.3 This section reports the assessment of cumulative effects of the cumulative schemes on the identified landscape and visual receptors during the operational stage. The list of cumulative schemes and cumulative effects are provided in **Table 8.1**.
- 8.4 The cumulative effect on the landscape character and visual receptors for the construction stage would be similar to those changes experienced during the operational stage. The effects experienced during the construction stage would be short term and temporary therefore have not been separately reported.

Table 8.1: Cumulative Scheme Assessment

Cumulative Project Number	Planning Reference	Project Name	Shared Landscape Receptors	In combination text: Landscape	Visible/relates to RVs	Shared Visual Receptors	In combination text: Visual	In combination significant
1	23/02622/OUT	Weybrook Park Golf Club Rooksdown Lane Basingstoke Hampshire	LCA16 - Basingstoke Down	There would be a direct change to the character of a localised part of LCA16 as a result of the cumulative scheme. The cumulative scheme is approximately 660m east of the Site. The two sites occupy close landscape parcels within the same broad landscape setting. Consequently, there is potential for the developments to be experienced within the same landscape context, particularly from elevated locations and public rights of way within the surrounding countryside. The residential development would increase the perception of built form within the landscape, whilst the Proposed Development would introduce a distinct but non-urban land use. Although both developments would result in the loss or alteration of areas of open land, they would be perceived as fundamentally different forms of development. The residential scheme would read as an extension of the existing settlement pattern, whereas the Proposed Development would remain characteristic of a rural land use associated with renewable energy generation rather than urban expansion. As a result, the developments would not combine to create a continuous urbanised landscape or significantly increase the apparent extent of the settlement edge. The cumulative influence on landscape character would therefore be limited by the relatively modest scale of Cumulative Scheme 1 in comparison with the wider landscape context, the retention of intervening vegetation and landscape structure, and the differing characteristics of the two developments. Existing hedgerows and topographical variations would continue to provide separation between the sites and help maintain the distinction between the residential edge of Basingstoke and the wider agricultural landscape. The key characteristics of the surrounding landscape, including its rural field pattern and relationship with the adjacent settlements, would remain evident despite the introduction of both developments. Therefore, the magnitude of change on the wider character area of this development in combination at year 1 and year 15 is considered to be Small-Medium	VP6	Public Right of Way users of St James' Way long distance footpath; Public Right of Way users of Byway 208/3/1 connecting Aldermaston Road and St James' Way; Public Right of Way users of footpaths to the southern edge of Sherborne St. John and Monk Sherborne	The cumulative effect of the Proposed Development and Cumulative Project 1 would be simultaneous from these footpaths and golf course, with both developments capable of being perceived from sections of the footpaths/byways/golf course at the same time. Sequential cumulative effects would occur as walkers progress along the routes/move through the golf course. The combined presence of renewable energy infrastructure and urban expansion would increase the perception of development within the landscape and reduce the extent to which users experience an undeveloped rural setting. However, the developments would remain visually distinct in character and location, with the residential scheme appearing as an extension to the existing settlement and the solar farm retaining its agricultural/rural context. In views from the southern edge of Sherborne St. John and Monk Sherborne, the changes would be distant and limited. Changes to views would be greatest from St James' Way due to the proximity of the proposals to the routes. Following the establishment of the proposed planting mitigation, the likely effects of the Proposed Development and Cumulative Project 1 in combination would reduce. PRoW users St James' Way – Magnitude of Change - Yr 1 = Medium Adverse; Yr 15 = Small Adverse. Overall Level of Effect - Yr 1 = Moderate Adverse; Yr 15 = Minor to Moderate Adverse. PRoW users connecting Aldermaston Road and All Saints Church – Magnitude of Change -	Yes – limited to PRoW users St James' Way at Year 1 .

Cumulative Project Number	Planning Reference	Project Name	Shared Landscape Receptors	In combination text: Landscape	Visible/relates to RVs	Shared Visual Receptors	In combination text: Visual	In combination significant
				magnitude of change to the character of LCA16 which would give rise to a Minor to Moderate Adverse effect.			Yr 1 = Medium Adverse; Yr 15 = Small Adverse. Overall Level of Effect - Yr 1= Minor to Moderate Adverse; Yr 15=Minor Adverse. PRoW users to the south of Sherborne St. John and Monk Sherborne Magnitude of Change - Yr 1 = Small - Negligible Adverse; Yr 15 = Negligible. Overall Level of Effect - Yr 1= Negligible to Minor Adverse; Yr 15= Negligible.	
2	17/00818/OUT	Many down Lane, Basingstoke	LCA16 - Basingstoke Down (in part)	There would be a direct change to the character of a localised part of LCA16 as a result of the cumulative scheme. The cumulative scheme is approximately 720m south of the Site, therefore there are limited locations where landscape effects would be perceived in combination. When considered cumulatively, the developments would contribute to a greater overall reduction in the extent of undeveloped agricultural land north and west of Basingstoke. The residential development would increase the perception of urban influence within the wider landscape, while the solar farm would introduce a different form of land use associated with renewable energy generation. However, due to the physical separation between the schemes, the differing land-use characteristics of each development, the retention of intervening countryside between the sites, the presence of established vegetation, and the fact that the solar farm would not extend the urban form of Basingstoke, the developments would generally be perceived as separate components within the wider landscape rather than a single continuous area of development. Consequently, the cumulative effect would not fundamentally redefine the character of the wider landscape north and west of Basingstoke. The principal	VP12	Public Right of Way users of St James' Way long distance footpath; Public Right of Way users of Byway 258/9/2 within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape to the west of the Site; Road users of the A339	In combination changes to views experienced by PRoW users of St James' Way relating to the Proposed Development and Cumulative Project Number 2 would be simultaneous with both developments capable of being perceived from sections of the footpath at the same time. Sequential cumulative effects would occur as walkers progress along the routes. Due to the separation distance between the two developments, it is unlikely that these would be seen together but would effect overall views from the path. There is potential for the Proposed Development and Cumulative Project Number 2 to be experienced together from Byway 258/9/2 within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Although both developments would appear distant, the slightly elevated position of the byway means they may be visible in the same view. In this context, the proposals would form only a small part of the background and could make the edge of Basingstoke feel marginally closer to the receptor; however, given the distance involved, they are unlikely to materially alter the overall character of the view.	Yes – limited to PRoW users St James' Way at Year 1

Cumulative Project Number	Planning Reference	Project Name	Shared Landscape Receptors	In combination text: Landscape	Visible/relates to RVs	Shared Visual Receptors	In combination text: Visual	In combination significant
				landscape characteristics, including the rolling landform, rural settlement pattern and agricultural field structure, would remain evident notwithstanding localised change associated with each scheme. Therefore, the magnitude of change on the wider character area of these developments in combination at year 1 and year 15 is considered to be Medium magnitude of change to the character of LCA16 which would give rise to a Moderate Adverse effect.			Following the establishment of the proposed planting mitigation, the likely effects of the Proposed Development and Cumulative Project 2 in combination would reduce. PRoW users St James' Way – Magnitude of Change - Yr 1 = Medium Adverse; Yr 15 = Small Adverse. Overall Level of Effect - Yr 1 = Moderate Adverse; Yr 15 = Minor to Moderate Adverse. PRoW users of North Wessex Downs Byway - Magnitude of Change - Yr 1 = Small - Negligible Adverse; Yr 15 = Negligible. Overall Level of Effect - Yr 1 = Negligible to Minor Adverse; Yr 15 = Negligible.	
3	23/00205/OUT	Land At Kiln Farm Kiln Road Sherborne St John Basingstoke Hampshire	LCA16 - Basingstoke Down	There would be a direct change to the character of a localised part of LCA16 as a result of the cumulative scheme. The cumulative scheme is approximately 1.3km east of the Site with the village of Sherborne St John sitting between the cumulative scheme and the Proposed Development, therefore there are limited locations where landscape effects would be perceived in combination. In combination, the two schemes would locally impact on the rural edge of Basingstoke by reducing greenfield land, moving and redefining the developed edge of the town outwards into open landscape, therefore the magnitude of change on the wider character area of these development in combination at year 1 and year 15 is considered to be Small - Medium magnitude of change to the character of	None	None	None	No

Cumulative Project Number	Planning Reference	Project Name	Shared Landscape Receptors	In combination text: Landscape	Visible/relates to RVs	Shared Visual Receptors	In combination text: Visual	In combination significant
				LCA16 which would give rise to a Minor to Moderate Adverse effect.				
4	20/00854/FUL	Phase 2C Merton Rise Chineham Lane Basingstoke Hampshire	None	None	None	None	None	No
5	23/03012/FUL	Land Adjacent to Hook Lane	None	None	None			
6	25/02934/OUT	Land West Of Upper Cufaude Farm Cufaude Lane Bramley Hampshire	None	None	None	None	None	No
7	19/00018/OUT	Land At Upper Cufaude Farm Cufaude Lane	None	None	None	None	None	No

9. Summary and Conclusions

- 9.1 The LVIA has been founded on a thorough study of the Site and its landscape setting. Through understanding these features and resources, a robust impact appraisal of the Proposed Development has been undertaken in line with good practice principles and planning policy. The LVIA accompanies a detailed planning application for a residential development which consists of:

“Proposed solar farm, associated infrastructure including underground cable route, internal access tracks and landscaping.”

- 9.2 The LVIA identifies the baseline situation of the Site and its surroundings in terms of ‘landscape elements’, ‘landscape character’ and ‘visual amenity’. This takes into account the baseline position of the Site at the time of the latest field study undertaken by a chartered landscape architect from Turley Landscape and VIA on the 14th of January 2026.
- 9.3 The baseline appraisal identified that the Site is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 16 Basingstoke Down within the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment (2021). The LCA 16 character area is described as being a ‘*characteristic rolling landscape*’ made up of “*large-scale pattern of arable fields with low, well-trimmed hedges*” and with a “*relatively consistent landscape character*”. The Site is relatively representative of the characteristics of this LCA.
- 9.4 The Site is located within countryside to the west of Basingstoke. The Site is outside of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape which sits approximately 300m south west of the Site at its closest point. The Site and surrounding landscape context contain some positive attributes, particularly relating to the Site’s relationship with the edge of the National Landscape, and the rolling topography of the area. One Byway runs through the Site, which provide scenic views over open countryside. There are also attributes of lower value. The structure of the landscape has been impacted by agricultural practices, and its tranquillity is influenced by the adjacent settlement edge and nearby roads.
- 9.5 Visibility of the Site varies due to the undulating landform and surrounding vegetation. The most extensive views are from Rookery Farm Lane, which runs through the Site and provides open views across the surrounding rolling farmland, although hedgerows partially screen some sections. More distant views are available from the A339, where the Site forms part of the wider landscape on the edge of Basingstoke. Visibility from surrounding roads, footpaths and byways is generally limited or filtered by hedgerows, occasional tree belts and topography, with only localised opportunities for wider views. Views from the nearby North Wessex Downs National Landscape are restricted to locations closest to the Site, where it appears as a small and unremarkable component of the broader rural landscape.
- 9.6 The local visual amenity is characterised by a traditional rural agricultural landscape of medium-to-large arable fields enclosed by irregular hedgerows, tree lines and small woodland belts. These features create a coherent countryside character, providing enclosure, filtering views and reinforcing the historic agricultural pattern while maintaining a clear distinction between rural and urban areas. The Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan identifies several key views, most of which do not face the Site. The

notable exception is Key View 15, which highlights the contribution of open agricultural land west of the village to its rural setting and the role of higher ground and tree belts in maintaining visual separation between Sherborne St John and Basingstoke.

- 9.7 The baseline LVIA (including the work associated with the 2025 ES) has informed the development of design proposals and a landscape strategy for the site. In order to minimise impacts on landscape and visual receptors, this has included considering local and key views from the neighbouring landscape to locate the Proposed Development within parts of the Site where visibility from surrounding landscape is more limited. Where visible, landscape mitigation has been proposed which considers lines of visibility, and the mitigation is informed by the existing landscape characteristics of the area including those set out within Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment and the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment.
- 9.8 Following the introduction of the Proposed Development, there would be some adverse landscape effects at a local level (as there would be for any development in areas of undeveloped landscape). This is due to the reduction in open landscape and the introduction of the proposed solar farm. Due to the positioning of built development within parts of the Site that are more visually contained, adverse effects on the wider landscape, away from the Site itself, would be limited.
- 9.9 The LVIA-led design principles have emphasised maintenance of the open, expansive character of the chalk downland landscape by ensuring development is guided by existing landform and avoids prominent skylines or visually sensitive areas. Mitigation is to be achieved primarily through careful siting of solar arrays in lower-lying, less visible locations, making use of natural topography and existing vegetation rather than relying on extensive new planting. The approach prioritises retaining and enhancing established landscape features such as hedgerows and woodland, while avoiding suburbanising elements or incongruous interventions that would conflict with local landscape character.
- 9.10 Where mitigation is required, it is targeted, proportionate, and consistent with traditional land management practices, focusing on reinforcing existing features and, where appropriate, reinstating historic field patterns. The landscape mitigation for the Site has been designed to align with the objectives of LCA16: Basingstoke Down and relevant guidance for Open Downland, focusing on conserving and enhancing hedgerow networks, strengthening tree cover, and maintaining the area's open downland character while accommodating change sensitively. This would be achieved through proposed woodland planting and hedgerow restoration, which would enhance landscape structure, soften views of the development, and deliver biodiversity benefits while integrating the scheme into its surroundings. Careful siting and design would ensure that key open views and the underlying landform remain perceptible, maintaining the characteristic balance between openness and enclosure. In addition, the approach supports wider landscape guidance within the North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment by providing opportunities to restock hedgerows and conserve expansive views from higher ground, ensuring the development responds sensitively to both local and wider landscape character.
- 9.11 The following effects were identified on landscape receptors:

Table 9.1: Summary of effects on landscape character receptors at Operational Stage

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change / Type of effect	Level of Effect	Significant
LCA16 - Basingstoke Down	Medium	Year 1: Small - Medium Adverse Year 15: Small Adverse	Year 1: Minor to Moderate Year 15: Minor	Year 1: No Year 15: No
Site/Landscape Fabric	Medium	Year 1: Medium – Large Adverse Year 15: Medium – Large Adverse	Year 1: Moderate to Major Year 15: Moderate to Major	Year 1: Yes Year 15: Yes
North Wessex Downs National Landscape	High	Year 1: Small - Negligible Adverse Year 15: Small - Negligible Adverse	Year 1: Minor Year 15: Minor	Year 1: No Year 15: No

9.12 There would be adverse effects on visual receptors in the immediate context to the Site, with all significant effects being limited to the localised area surrounding the Site. The extent of adverse effects would again be substantially limited in the wider landscape. The ZTV and AVRs demonstrate the containment of the Proposed Development in many views from the wider area. In particular, limited visibility from the National Landscape and areas to the north of the Site around the southern edges of Monk Sherborne and Sherborne St John.

9.13 The only open views of the development would be experienced from the PRoW crossing the Site and from localised points where PRoW and local roads pass adjacent to the edge of the Site. In views from St James' Way long distance footpath which extends along the eastern edge and through the north eastern part of the Site, the change is likely to be the most substantial, due to the route running through the Site itself, which would result in some urbanising elements appearing in views (albeit noting the PRoW is well contained by existing vegetation).

9.14 The following effects were identified on visual receptors:

Table 9.2: Summary of effects on Visual Receptors

Receptor and representative viewpoint (RV)	Sensitivity	Overall level of Effect	Significant
Public Right of Way users of St James' Way long distance footpath (Ref: 267/7013; 208/1/3; 161/4/1)	High	Construction - Moderate Adverse Year 1 – Moderate Adverse	Construction - Yes Year 1 – Yes Year 15 - No

and 161/5/1) – viewpoint 2,3 and 6		Year 15 - Minor to Moderate Adverse	
Public Right of Way users of Byway 208/3/1 connecting Aldermaston Road and St James' Way – viewpoint 4	Medium-High	Construction - Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 1 – Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 15 - Minor Adverse	No
Public Right of Way users of footpath 161/6/1 to the west of the Site – viewpoint 7	Medium-High	Construction - Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 1 – Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 15 - Minor to Moderate Adverse	No
Public Right of Way users of footpaths to the southern edge of Sherborne St. John and Monk Sherborne – viewpoints 5, 9, 10	Medium-High	Construction - Negligible to Minor Adverse Year 1 – Negligible to Minor Adverse Year 15 - Negligible	No
Public Right of Way users of Byway 258/9/2 within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape to the west of the Site – viewpoint 12	High	Construction - Minor Year 1 – Minor Year 15 - Negligible	No
Road users of the A339 – viewpoint 1	Medium-Low	Construction - Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 1 – Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 15 – Minor to Moderate Adverse	No
Road users of Rookery Farm Lane – viewpoint 8	Medium-Low	Construction- Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 1 – Minor to Moderate Adverse Year 15 – Minor to Moderate Adverse	No
Users of the Church of All Saints including Churchyard – viewpoint 11	Medium	Construction - Minor Adverse Year 1 – Minor Adverse Year 15 - Negligible to Minor Adverse	No

Appendix 1: Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal Methodology

Assessment Methodology

Overview

The methodology for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is based on current best practice as set out in:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA 3) (Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013) and related documents
- Landscape Character Assessment, 2016 (Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 08/2015)²²;
- Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations, 2021 (Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21)²³; and
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals (Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 06/2019).²⁴

GLVIA 3 states that this type of assessment provides a tool for identifying and assessing “*the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity*” (Para. 1.1). The guidance emphasises the importance of carrying two interlinked elements in assessments; landscape (or townscape) as a resource; and, visual amenity, including views. The effects of both must be addressed in the assessment.

For EIA purposes a definition of the environmental effects to be considered in the LVIA is provided in GLVIA3 as below:

- **Landscape effects** relate to the predicted effects of change and development on the landscape as a resource. Landscape effects can be generated by a development’s effect upon the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character (GLVIA3 p70). These include physical effects on landscape features such as loss of trees or removal of structures. This also includes how the addition of new elements or features will influence the character and distinctiveness of the landscape.
- **Visual effects** relate to the predicted change to the view and the related impacts on the general visual amenity experienced by people – the visual receptors, (normally restricted to views from publicly accessible locations). A view is defined in GLVIA3 as a single sight or prospect that can be seen from a particular place or location. The visual amenity is defined as the overall pleasantness of what people can see in their surroundings (GLVIA3 p158). Therefore, a view may have elements within it that change significantly, but the overall pleasantness could remain the same. Visual

²² Landscape Institute (2015) Technical Information Note 08/15 on Landscape Character Assessment

²³ Landscape Institute (2021) Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations

²⁴ Landscape Institute (2019) Technical Guidance Note 06/19 on the Visual Representation of Development

receptors typically include pedestrians, users of public rights of way/ recreational facilities and drivers and passengers of vehicles/ rail passengers.

Establishing the Baseline

Desk Based Studies

A preliminary desk study of Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, historic mapping sources and imagery, landscape characterisation studies, aerial photography, and online street views is undertaken to establish how an area has developed over time and the physical components of the Site and its surroundings (including land use, topography, built form, accessibility and vegetation). This understanding of place is used to identify potential landscape and visual receptors.

A review of the development context is also carried out (where relevant) to establish whether there are other developments of similar scale under construction that should be included in the baseline.

Study Area

The study area for the landscape and visual assessment comprises the area within which there is potential for the Proposed Development to result in significant landscape or visual effects. The extent of the study area is established as part of the baseline appraisal. It is likely that the Proposed Development would be visible from some points beyond the study area but the effects of this would be so minor that detailed assessment is not warranted (as they would not be significant effects for the purposes of an EIA). This approach is supported by GLVIA3, which states that the scale of assessment should be appropriate and proportional to the nature of the development proposed.

The study area for the assessment includes both the Site and the surrounding wider landscape context within 2km (landscape character study area) and 5km (visual amenity study area) radius of the Site. The landscape character assessment considers the Site at a local level, through the determination of local landscape character areas within a defined study area, and the identification of landscape features. The visual assessment considers the existing and potential views experienced within this defined study area, but it may also include other identified views that may be from locations beyond the study area, such as from vantage points from elevated landscapes.

Testing the Extent of Visibility

The extent of the study area is informed by identifying the potential extent of visibility of a Proposed Development in the surrounding landscape. A field study is undertaken by the professional team which considers the existing enclosure of the Site by surrounding development, topography and mature vegetation. A series of tools are also used to establish the potential visibility with development in place. This includes Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping assuming maximum building heights across the development area.

Surveys

An observational field survey is undertaken by chartered landscape architects at Turley. The field survey records the Site and surrounding context's landscape features and confirms the visual receptors identified in the desk study. The field survey involves travelling throughout the study area and producing a working photographic record of the area.

The field survey establishes the key characteristics of the local context and landscape character, including the associated elements, features and aesthetic and perceptual factors. The approximate visibility of the Site is established by the walkover survey, which considers the area within the study area from which the Site is currently visible and the key visual receptors within this area (i.e. groups of people within this area who experience (or may experience) views of the Proposed Development). A series of Representative Views experienced by these visual receptors is also identified.

Baseline Photography

Baseline photographic surveys are undertaken, by the professional team during the field survey to record views from readily accessible public viewpoints and capture images that typify the local character or important landscape or townscape features. Photographs included in the baseline assessment are presented with the intention of aiding the understanding of the descriptive text and to illustrate context.

Identifying Landscape Receptors and Sensitivity to Change

The sensitivity of landscape receptors relates to the value attached to that receptor and the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change or Proposed Development.

The key landscape receptors (landscape character areas, landscape features or landscape characteristics) with potential to be affected by the Proposed Development are identified and a judgement is made on the value of each of these receptors. This judgement is made based on the approach set out in GLVIA3 and Technical Guidance Note 02/21 (Assessing landscape value outside national designations) and as described below.

The value of each of the identified landscape receptors is assessed with reference to the following criteria and the definitions of level of value set out in **Table 1**:

- Any designations or policies (both national and local), which may be present; and,
- The presence or absence of other attributes, which contribute to landscape value, such as natural heritage, cultural heritage, landscape condition, associations (with notable people, events and the arts), distinctiveness, recreation value, perceptual aspects (scenic, wildness and tranquillity) and functional aspects including links with designated landscapes.

Table 1: Value of Landscape Receptors

Value	Typical Level of Designation/ Rarity	Potential Attributes
High	International, National, Regional	Landscape of notable character with unique or place-defining features and elements. Could include National Parks, National Landscapes, World Heritage Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens and/or a high level of highly graded heritage assets. Clearly coherent landscape character with distinctive features and strong aesthetic qualities, high levels of tranquillity and relative wildness. Minimal detracting elements and landscape features typically in good condition. High presence of good quality open space or multi-functional green infrastructure or public rights of way that contribute positively to the experience and usability of the landscape. No or limited potential for substitution.
Medium	Regional, Local	Landscape of some character, which is attractive, but with limited unique or place-defining features and elements. Could include local landscape designations, valued landscapes, some heritage assets and or other undesignated areas or features of notable scenic quality or recreational value with value perhaps expressed through non-official publications or demonstrable use. Some detracting elements and variety in the condition of landscape features. Some presence of open space or public rights of way that make a moderate contribution to the experience and usability of the landscape. Some potential for substitution.
Low	Local	Landscape of little scenic value or importance. Could include ordinary / commonplace or unremarkable areas of landscape. Unremarkable landscape features or areas of landscape that are commonplace and not locally distinctive. Presence of dominant detracting elements and landscape features in poor or declining condition. Areas that are vehicle focussed or dominated by industrial or commercial uses. Considerable potential for substitution.

A range in value may be given to a landscape receptor depending on the combination of attributes (present or absent), and/or the level of designations present. For example, if an area is subject to a national landscape designation but has a high presence of detracting elements or a mixed landscape quality and condition then a high to medium value may be given.

GLVIA3 defines susceptibility as “the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual

element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the Proposed Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies” (Ref: 7.9 Para. 5.40).

Judgements on the susceptibility to change of each of the identified landscape receptors are made based on the scale set out in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Susceptibility to Change of Landscape Receptors

Susceptibility to change	Description
High	Landscape receptor ²⁵ would be unlikely to accommodate the type of development proposed without unacceptable negative consequences for the maintenance of the baseline landscape character and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies. Landscape receptor has little or no relationship to the type of development proposed and/or would be difficult to replace or substitute if lost e.g. veteran trees, historic or unique buildings and parkland. Characteristics of the landscape, which contribute to the landscape character are highly sensitive and would be fundamentally altered by the type of development proposed.
Medium	Landscape receptor would be compromised by the type of development proposed and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies would be compromised. Landscape receptor has some relationship to the type of development proposed and/or could be partially replaced or substituted if lost. Landscape receptor is moderately sensitive and characteristics of the receptor would be altered by the type of development proposed. The general landscape character would remain but would be weakened by the type of development proposed.
Low	Landscape receptor would be likely to accommodate the type of development proposed without unacceptable negative consequences for the maintenance of the baseline landscape character and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies. Landscape receptor has a close relationship to the type of development proposed and could be easily replaced or substituted if lost. Landscape receptor is of low sensitivity and characteristics of the landscape would not be significantly altered by the type of development proposed. The general landscape character is resilient to change.

A judgement on the overall sensitivity of each landscape receptor (ranging from High to Low) is made. This is based on the combined evaluation of susceptibility and value attached to the receptor, together with informed professional judgement and guidance provided in GLVIA3. For example, a landscape receptor that has a High Sensitivity is likely to have a High Value and a High Susceptibility to change, a landscape receptor that has a Low Sensitivity is likely to have a Low Value and a Low Susceptibility to change.

Identifying Visual Receptors and Sensitivity to Change

The sensitivity of the visual receptor comprises a judgement on the value attached to the views and an assessment of the susceptibility of each receptor to the type of change proposed.

²⁵ Includes landscape character areas, landscape features or components and particular aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape.

The baseline visual appraisal establishes the area in which the Site, and Proposed Development, may be visible; the different groups of people who may experience the views of the development (defined as visual receptors); and the nature of these views. These factors interrelate, but for the purpose of the assessment are dealt with in that order.

In most visual assessments, unless specifically requested by the LPA, visual receptors are restricted to groups of people in publicly accessible places, and their experience of views/viewing experience.

Representative views are identified to reflect typical views experienced by the visual receptor in order to inform the visual assessment.

A judgement on the value attached to the views is made with reference to the following criteria and the definitions of value set out in **Table 3**.

- Planning designations e.g. Designated Views or Protected Vistas identified in local or regional planning policy;
- Other designations relating to landscape features, landscape designations or heritage assets e.g. key views identified in conservation area appraisals or National Landscape Management Plans; and,
- Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors e.g. views identified in guidebooks or on tourist maps, official viewpoints (often with sign boards and interpretive material) or views referenced in literature or art.

Table 3: Value attached to views

Value	Typical level of designation / Rarity	Attributes
High	International, National, Regional,	View or views experienced by the receptor identified or protected at international, national or regional level recognised through designation or planning documents. View or views experienced by the receptors having a designed relationship with wider landscape features of high importance, and/or having a high aesthetic/scenic quality.
Medium	Regional, Local	View or views experienced by the receptor that are identified or protected at local level e.g. identified in local planning policy or guidance. May also include views experienced by the receptors which are undesignated, but value perhaps expressed through non-official publications or its contribution to enjoyment of the significance of a heritage asset or public open space or have some aesthetic quality that that contribute positively to the visual amenity experienced by the receptor.
Low	Local	The view or views experienced by the receptors is/are not related to designated, or non-designated, heritage assets, or a planning designation;

Value	Typical level of designation / Rarity	Attributes
		and/or mentioned in guidebooks or on tourist maps; and/or referenced in art and literature.
		Typical or unremarkable view or views or little visual amenity importance or views that do not contribute positively to the visual amenity experienced by the receptor.

A range in value may be given for the views depending on the combination of attributes (present or absent), and/or the level of designations present. For example, if identified views are experienced in a national landscape designation but has a high presence of visual detractors then a high to medium value may be given.

The assessment of susceptibility of visual receptors is based on the approach set out in para 6.32 of GLVIA3, which states:

‘the susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:

- The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations: and,*
- The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations’.*

Judgements on the susceptibility of a visual receptor to change are broadly based on the descriptions of susceptibility set out in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Susceptibility to Change of Visual Receptors

Susceptibility	Description
High	Receptors for whom the view and visual amenity is of high importance to the experience or activity, including: people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views e.g. waymarked walks through the landscape; and visitors to heritage assets or other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience.
Medium	Receptors for whom the view and visual amenity is of moderate importance to the experience or activity, including: travellers on most road or rail routes.
Low	Receptors for whom the view and visual amenity is of low importance to the experience or activity, including: people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape; and, people at their place of work whose attention may be focussed on their work, not on their surroundings, and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life.

A judgement on the overall sensitivity of each visual receptor (ranging from High to Low) is made. This is based on the combined evaluation of susceptibility and value attached to the

receptor, together with informed professional judgement and guidance provided in GLVIA3. For example, a visual receptor that has a High Sensitivity is likely to have a High Value and a High Susceptibility to change, a visual receptor that has a Low Sensitivity is likely to have a Low Value and a Low Susceptibility to change.

Assessing Significance of Effect

Assessment of Landscape Effects

The assessment of landscape effects considers the sensitivity of the landscape receptor and the magnitude of change. The level of effect is then concluded as major, moderate, minor or negligible, and professional judgement is used to determine whether the effect is Significant.

Magnitude of Change on Landscape Receptors

The magnitude of change considers the size or scale, the geographical extent and the duration and reversibility of the change. Judgements on the magnitude of landscape effect are broadly based on the descriptions of magnitude set out in **Table 5**.

Consideration is also given to the type of effect in terms of whether it is Adverse, Beneficial or Neutral. GLVIA3 states that an informed professional judgement should be made about whether the landscape/townscape effects should be categorised as positive or negative (or in some cases neutral), with the criteria used in reaching this judgement clearly stated. Therefore, a judgement is made on the nature of the overall effect which is based on the following terms:

- **Adverse:** overall harm to landscape character/feature.
- **Beneficial:** overall improvement to landscape character/feature.
- **Neutral:** no overall harm or improvement to landscape character/feature (likely to be the result of a combination of both adverse and beneficial effects or very small changes).

Table 5: Defining Magnitude of Change – Landscape Receptors

Magnitude of Change	Definition
Large	Substantial change to all or most of the key characteristics of a landscape receptor and/or addition of major new elements and landscape features. Changes would substantially alter the character of a large area.
Medium	Partial change to some of the key characteristics of a landscape receptor and/or addition of new elements, which would be notable features. Changes would result in a large change to the character of a small area or a noticeable change to a larger area.
Small	Limited or localised change to common characteristics of a landscape receptor and/or addition of new elements or features in keeping with the existing character. Changes would result in a small change to the character of a large area or a noticeable change to a small area. Also includes temporary and/or reversible changes of larger scale or extent.
Negligible	No, or barely discernible, change to landscape receptor

Assessment of Visual Effects

The assessment of visual effects considers the sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of change. The level of effect is then concluded as major, moderate, minor or negligible and professional judgement is used to determine whether the effect is Significant.

Magnitude of Change on Visual Receptors

The magnitude of change considers the size or scale, the geographical extent and the duration and reversibility of the change. Judgements on the magnitude of visual effect are broadly based on the descriptions of magnitude set out in **Table 6**.

The assessment of the magnitude of change on visual receptors takes into account the following factors:

- type and relative numbers of people, and their occupation or activity.
- nature and characteristics of the location within the landscape and proximity to the Site.
- nature, composition and characteristics of the views (including directions).
- elements which may interrupt, filter or otherwise influence the views.
- seasonal changes in the view.

As per the landscape assessment, consideration is then given to the Type of Effect in terms of whether it is Adverse, Beneficial or Neutral as follows.

- **Adverse:** overall harm to the character and appearance of the view, and the viewing experience.

- **Beneficial:** overall improvement to the character and appearance of the view, and the viewing experience.
- **Neutral:** no overall harm or improvement to the character and appearance of the view, and the viewing experience (likely to be the result of a combination of both adverse and beneficial effects or very small changes).

Table 6: Defining Magnitude of Change – Visual Receptors

Magnitude of Change	Definition
Large	Substantial change to the key characteristics of the views / visual experience and/or addition of major new elements, which would be prominent features. Changes would substantially alter the character and appearance of views experienced by the receptor.
Medium	Partial change to some of the key characteristics of the views / visual experience and/or addition of new elements, which would be notable features. Changes would result in a large change to the character and appearance of a small extent of views or a noticeable change to a larger extent of views experienced by the receptor.
Small	Limited or localised changes to views / visual experience and/or addition of new elements, which would be noticeable features but largely in keeping with the existing character and appearance of views experienced by the receptor. Changes would result in a small change to the character and appearance of a large extent of views or a noticeable change to a small extent of views. Also includes temporary and/or reversible changes of larger scale or extent within the views experienced by the receptor.
Negligible	No, or barely discernible, change to the views experienced by the receptor.

A range for the magnitude of change experienced by the visual receptor along different parts of a route is considered and the full range of effects is described in the assessment. An overall effect on visual amenity is then provided which considered the overall change to visual amenity experienced by a visual receptor travelling on the identified route.

Determining the Level of Effect

The level of effect is determined by combining the magnitude of change due to the Proposed Development and the evaluation of the sensitivity of the affected receptor. The level of effect is determined using professional judgement and **Table 7** is used as a tool to assist with this process. For each effect, a judgement is made on whether the effect is '*beneficial*' or '*adverse*' or '*neutral*'.

Table 7: Matrix to Support Determining the Level of Effect

		Sensitivity			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of change	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

The following terms have been used to define the level of the effects identified and these can be 'beneficial' or 'adverse' or 'neutral':

- **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;
- **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;
- **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 where the Proposed Scheme is likely to cause a considerable change from the baseline conditions at a receptor, which can adapt, is tolerant of the change, or/and can recover from the change; 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 sensitive to a change.

The duration of the effect has been assessed as either 'short-term', 'medium-term' or 'long-term'. Short-term is, up to 1 year, medium-term is, between 1 and 10 years and long-term is, greater than 10 years. These timescales have been selected to reflect the anticipated rate of landscape establishment and visual change associated with the Proposed Development, including the expected growth and maturation of new planting and the timeframe over which construction-related changes are likely to diminish.

Determining Significance

For each effect, a statement has been made as to whether the level of effect is '**Significant**' or '**Not Significant**' for the purposes of this EIA. This determination has been based on professional judgement, as informed by relevant guidance/legislation where applicable. Typically, effects that are moderate or above have the potential to be considered significant.

Appendix 2: Supporting Figures



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-  Site Boundary
-  Study Area

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CLIENT:

Recurrent Energy

PROJECT:

Stokes Lane Solar Farm, Basingstoke

DRAWING:

Figure 2.1 Site Location Plan

PROJECT NUMBER:

04571

DRAWING NUMBER:

GIS_100

CHECKED BY:

KD

REVISION:

1.0

STATUS:

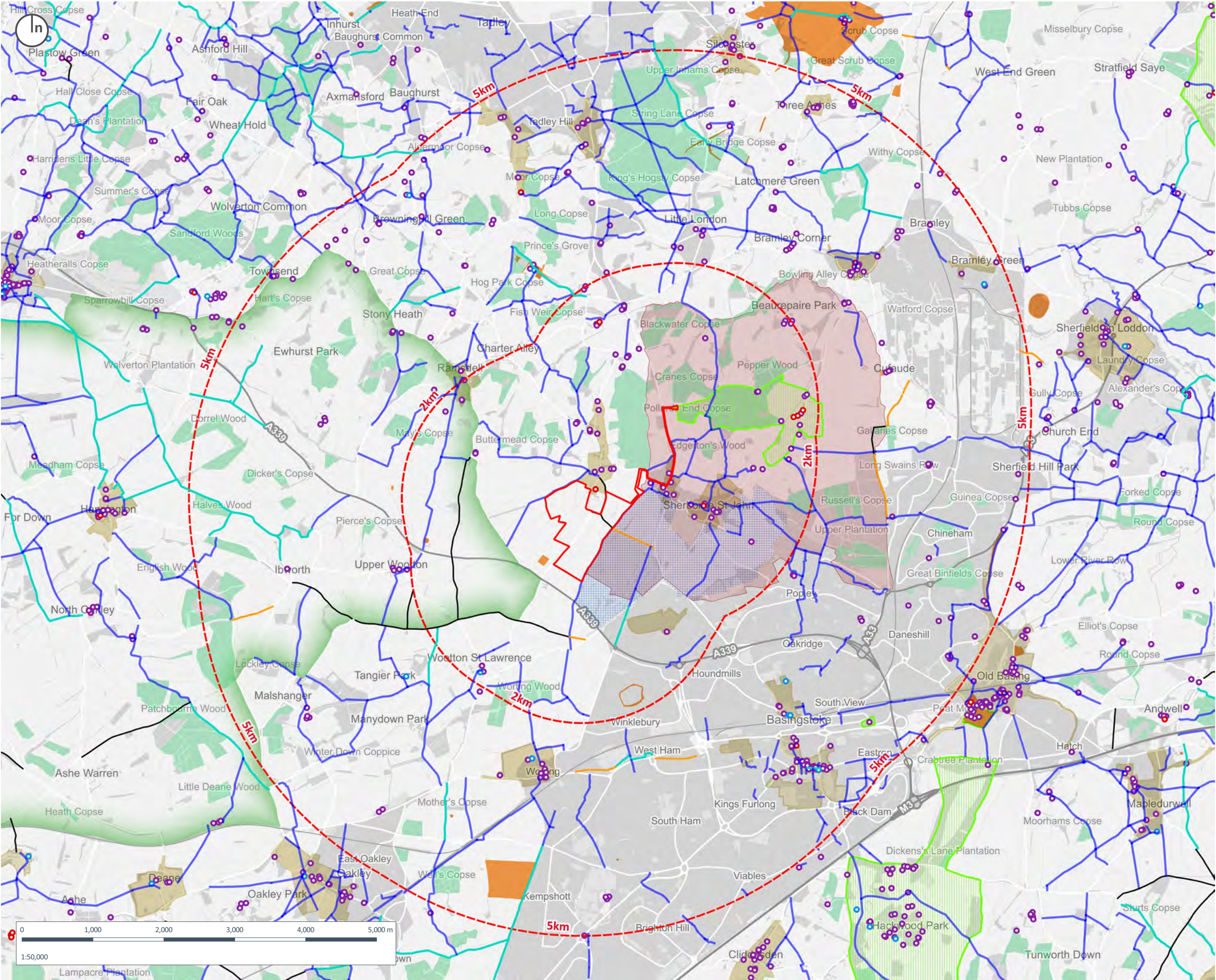
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May 2026

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- Site Boundary**
- Study Area**
- PRoW**
- Byway Open to all Traffic
 - Bridleway
 - Footpath
 - Restricted Byway
- Land Designations**
- National Landscape
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Registered Parks and Gardens
 - Strategic Gap
 - Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan
 - Conservation Area
 - Scheduled Monument
- Listed Buildings**
- I
 - II*
 - II

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Figure 2.2 Designations Plan

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04571

DRAWING NUMBER: GIS_100

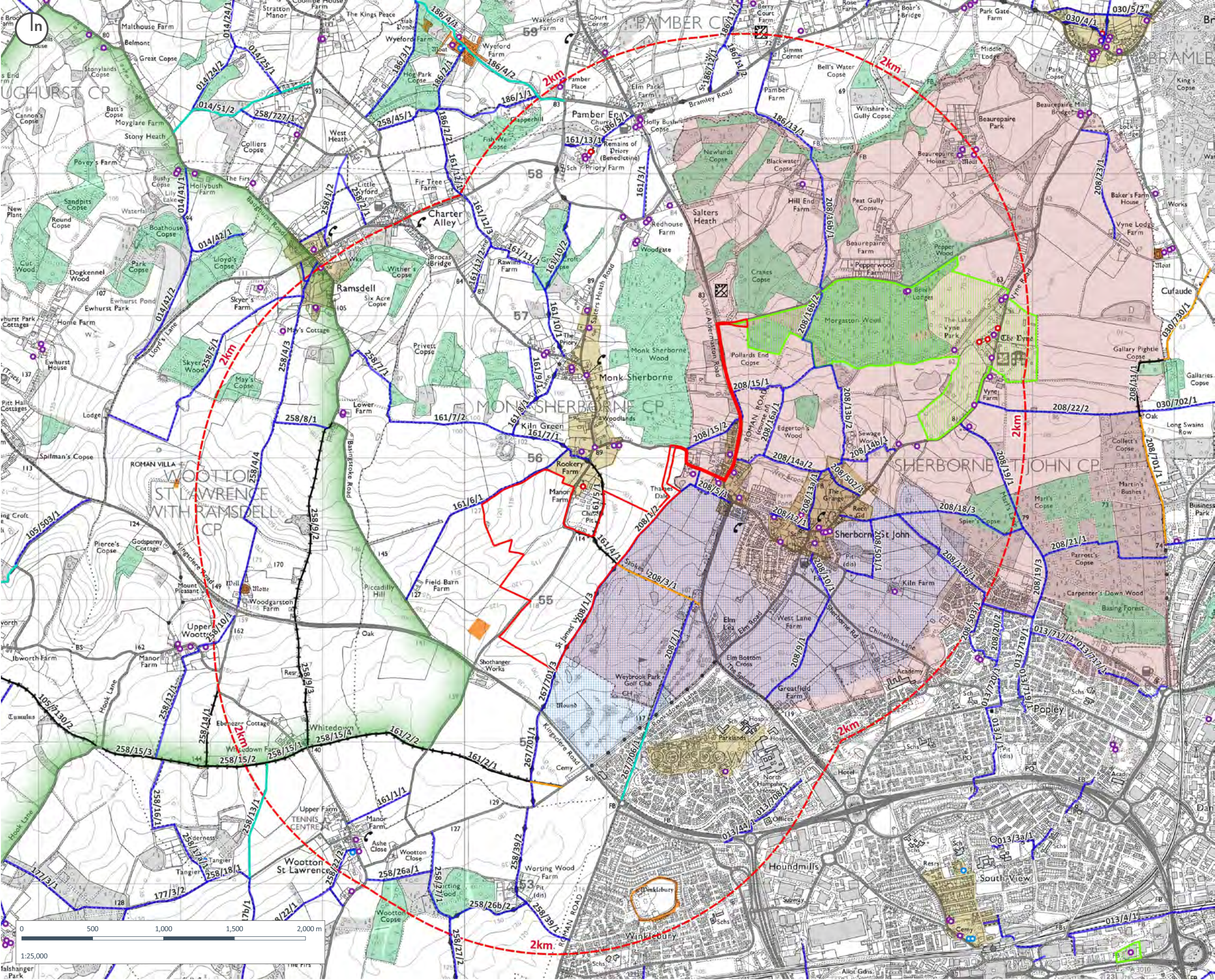
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- Site Boundary
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- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Listed Buildings
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 - II*
 - II

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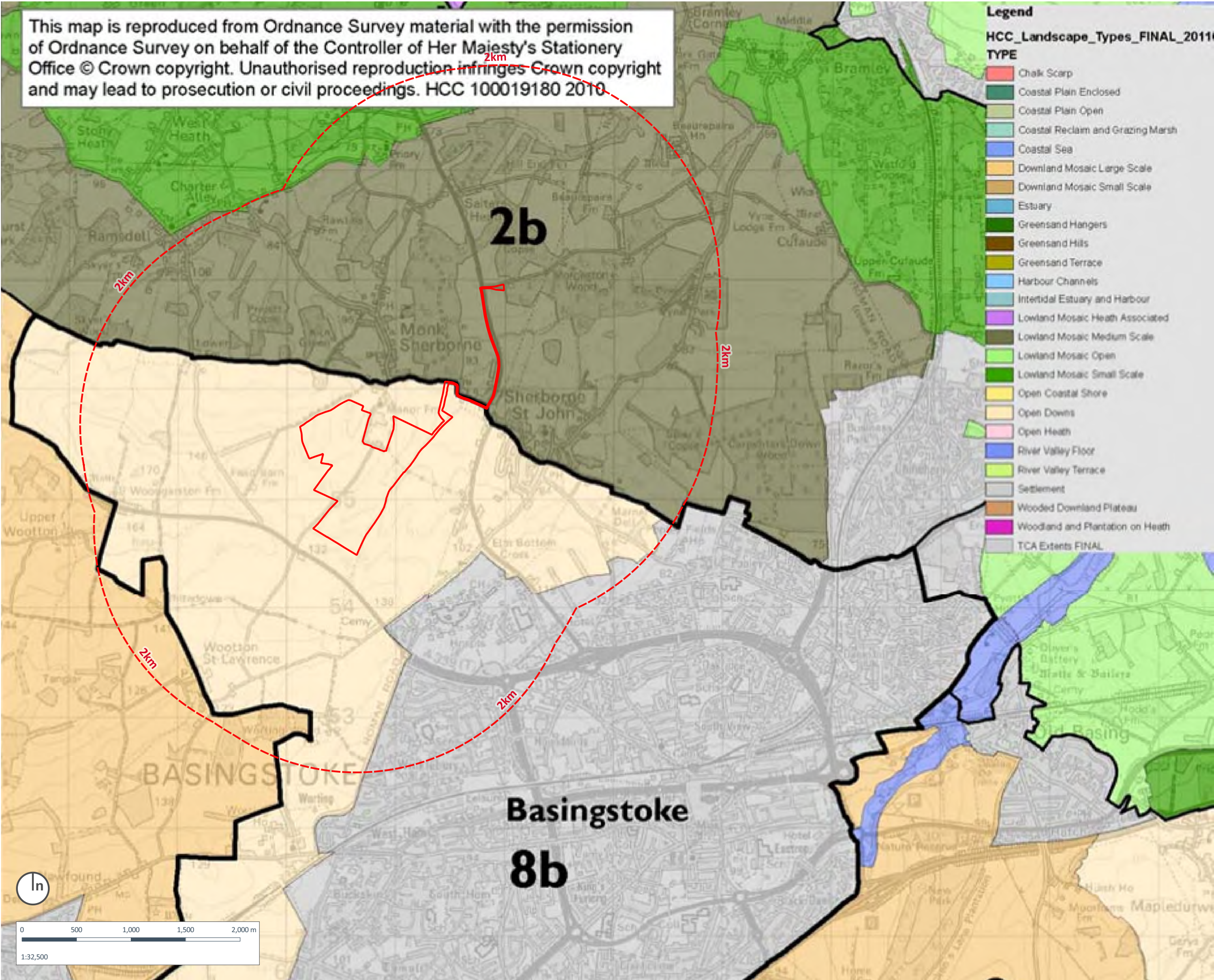
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Figure 2.2 Designations Plan

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- Site Boundary
- Study Area
- Landscape Character Areas

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Stokes Lane Solar Farm, Basingstoke

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Figure 2.3 County level: Hampshire
Integrated Character Assessment (2012)

PROJECT NUMBER:
04571

DRAWING NUMBER: GIS_100

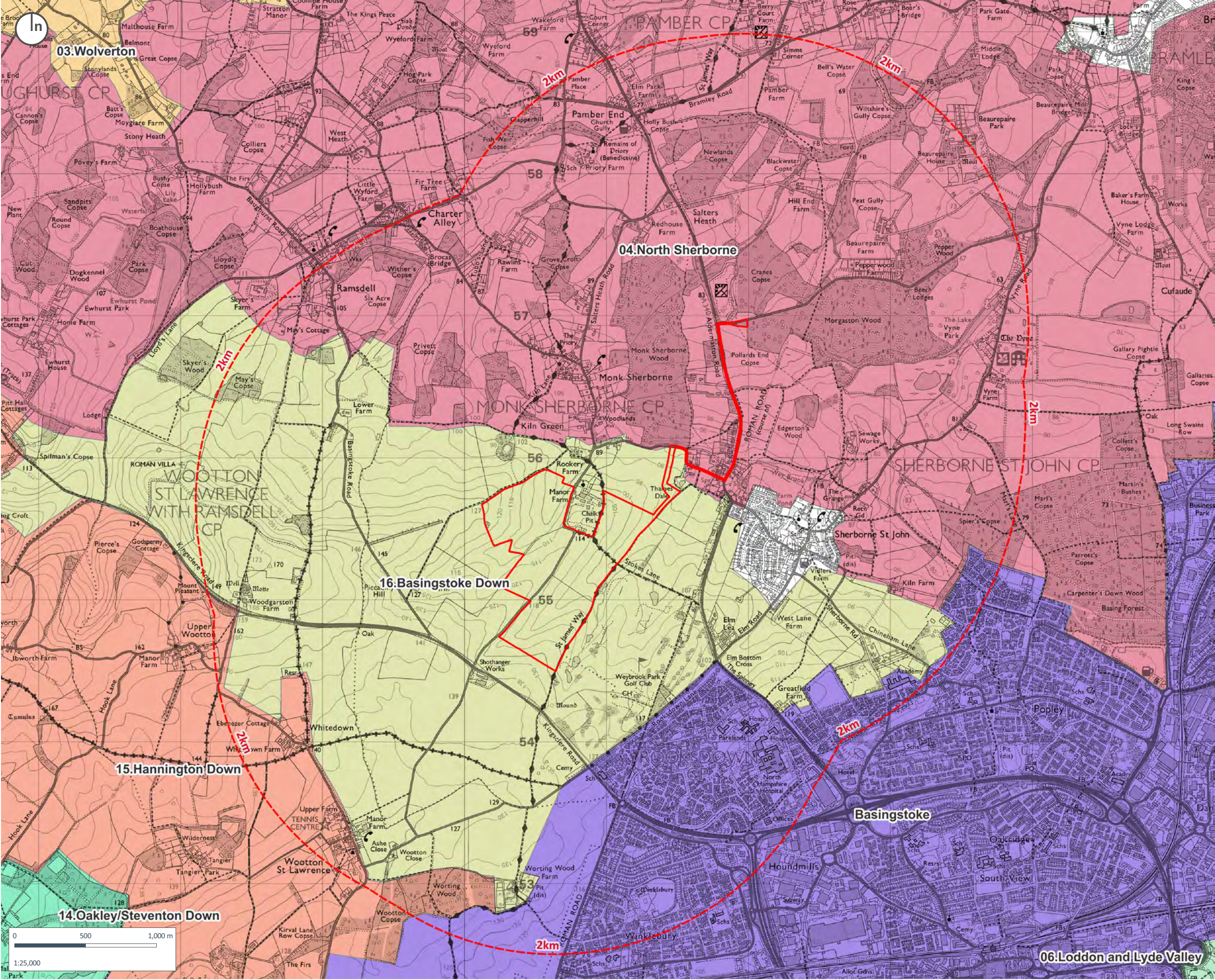
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- Site Boundary
- Study Area
- Landscape Character Areas
- 03.Wolverton
 - 04.North Sherborne
 - 06.Loddon and Lyde Valley
 - 14.Oakley/Steventon Down
 - 15.Hannington Down
 - 16.Basingstoke Down
 - Basingstoke

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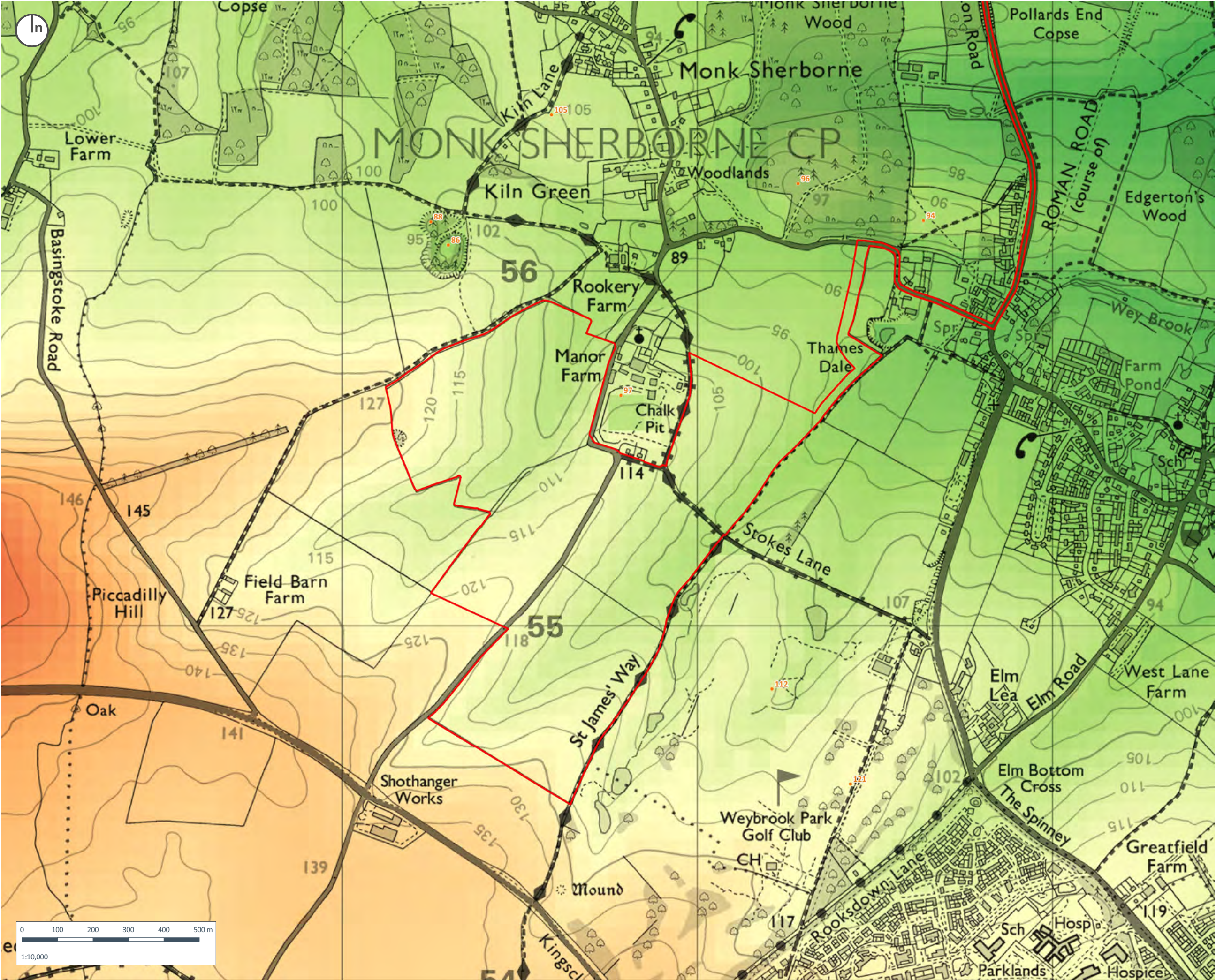
PROJECT:

Stokes Lane Solar Farm, Basingstoke

DRAWING:

Figure 2.4 Borough level: Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment (2021)

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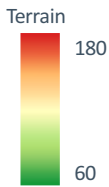


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- Site Boundary
- Study Area
- Spot height



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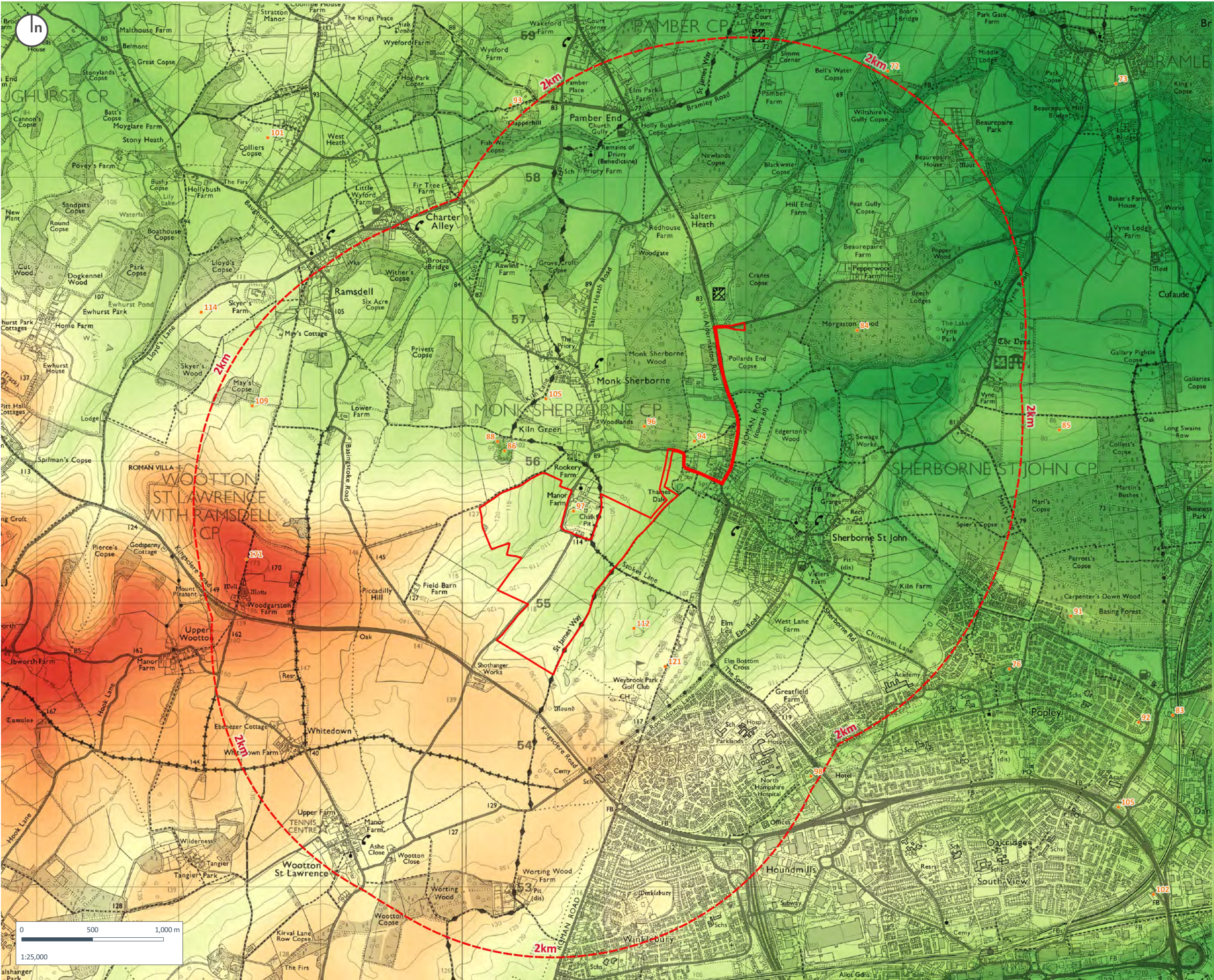
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Figure 2.5 Topography Plan

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04571

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STATUS: Draft

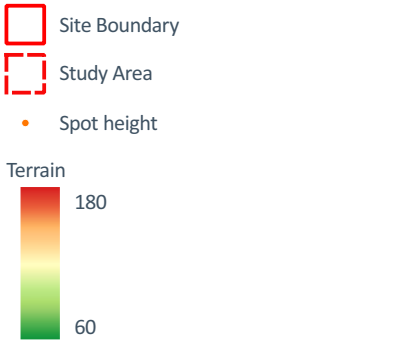
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Figure 2.5 Topography Plan

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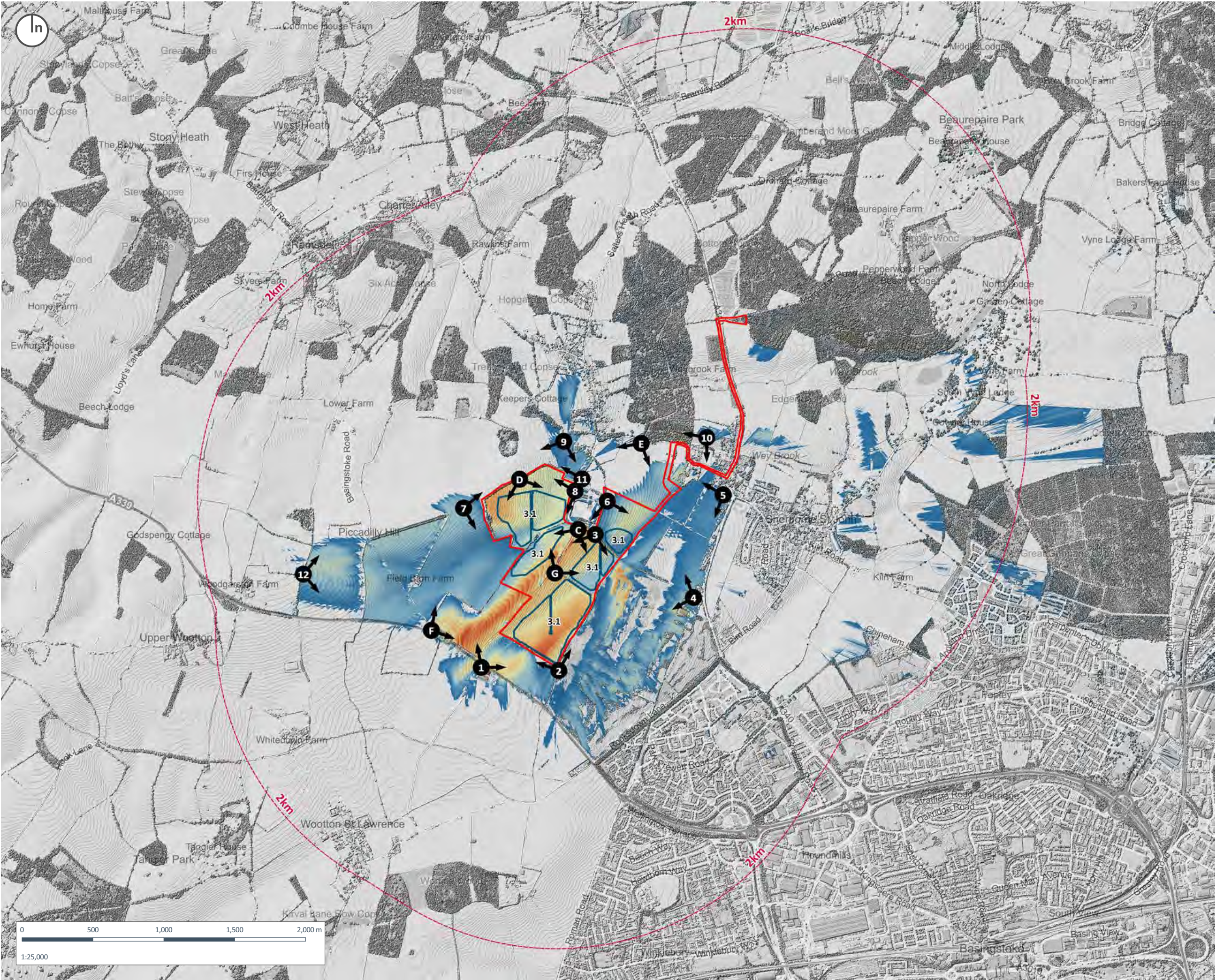
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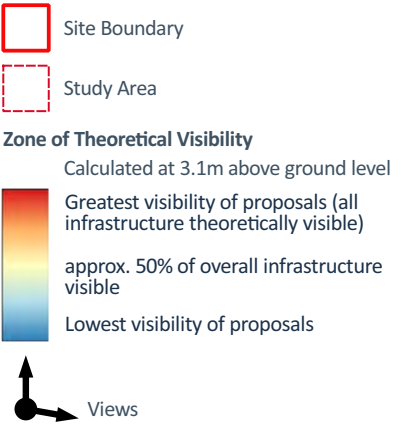
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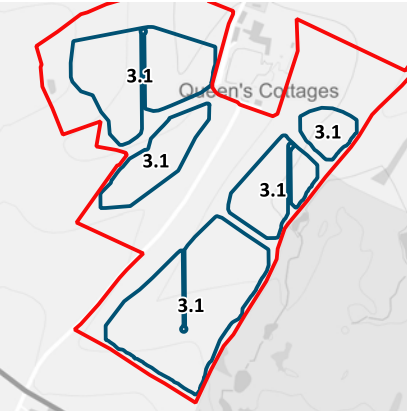
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Notes:-

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CLIENT:

Recurrent Energy

PROJECT:

Stokes Lane Solar Farm, Basingstoke

DRAWING:

Figure 2.6 DSM (Digital Surface Model) Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Proposed Viewpoints

PROJECT NUMBER:

04571

DRAWING NUMBER:

GIS_000

CHECKED BY:

KD

REVISION:

1.0

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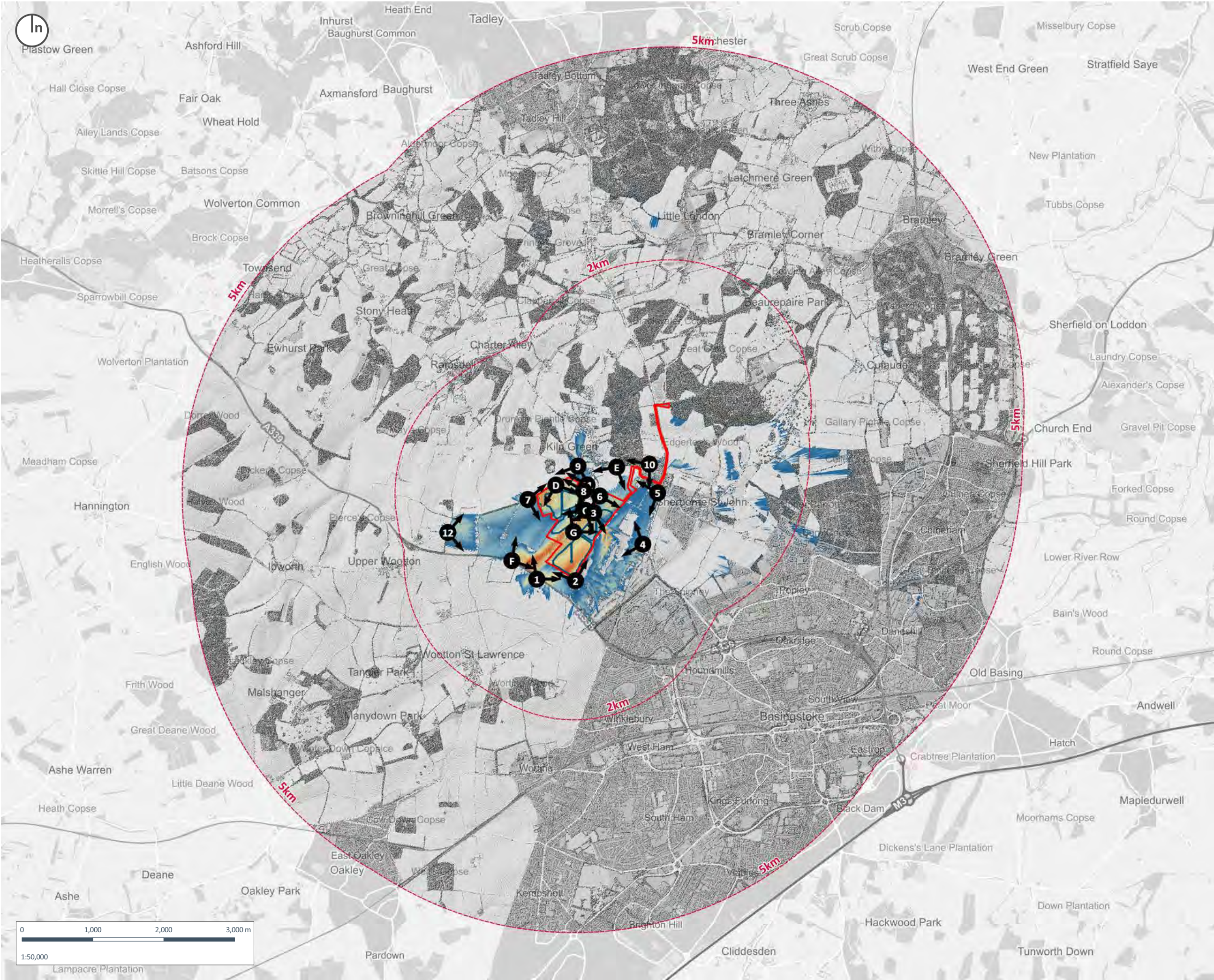
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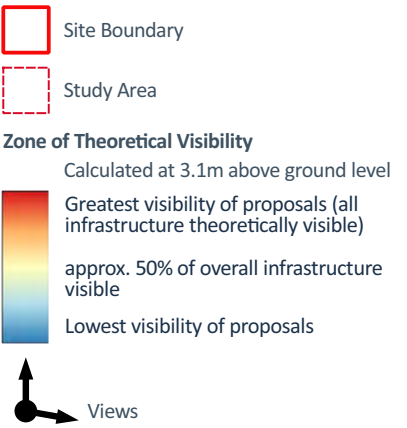
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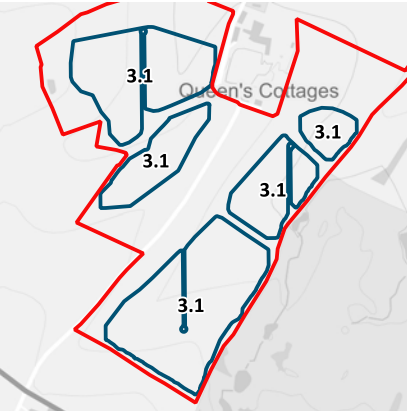
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CLIENT:
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PROJECT:
Stokes Lane Solar Farm, Basingstoke

DRAWING:
Figure 2.6 DSM (Digital Surface Model) Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Proposed Viewpoints

PROJECT NUMBER:
04571

DRAWING NUMBER: GIS_000
CHECKED BY: KD

REVISION: 1.0
STATUS: Draft

DATE: February 2026
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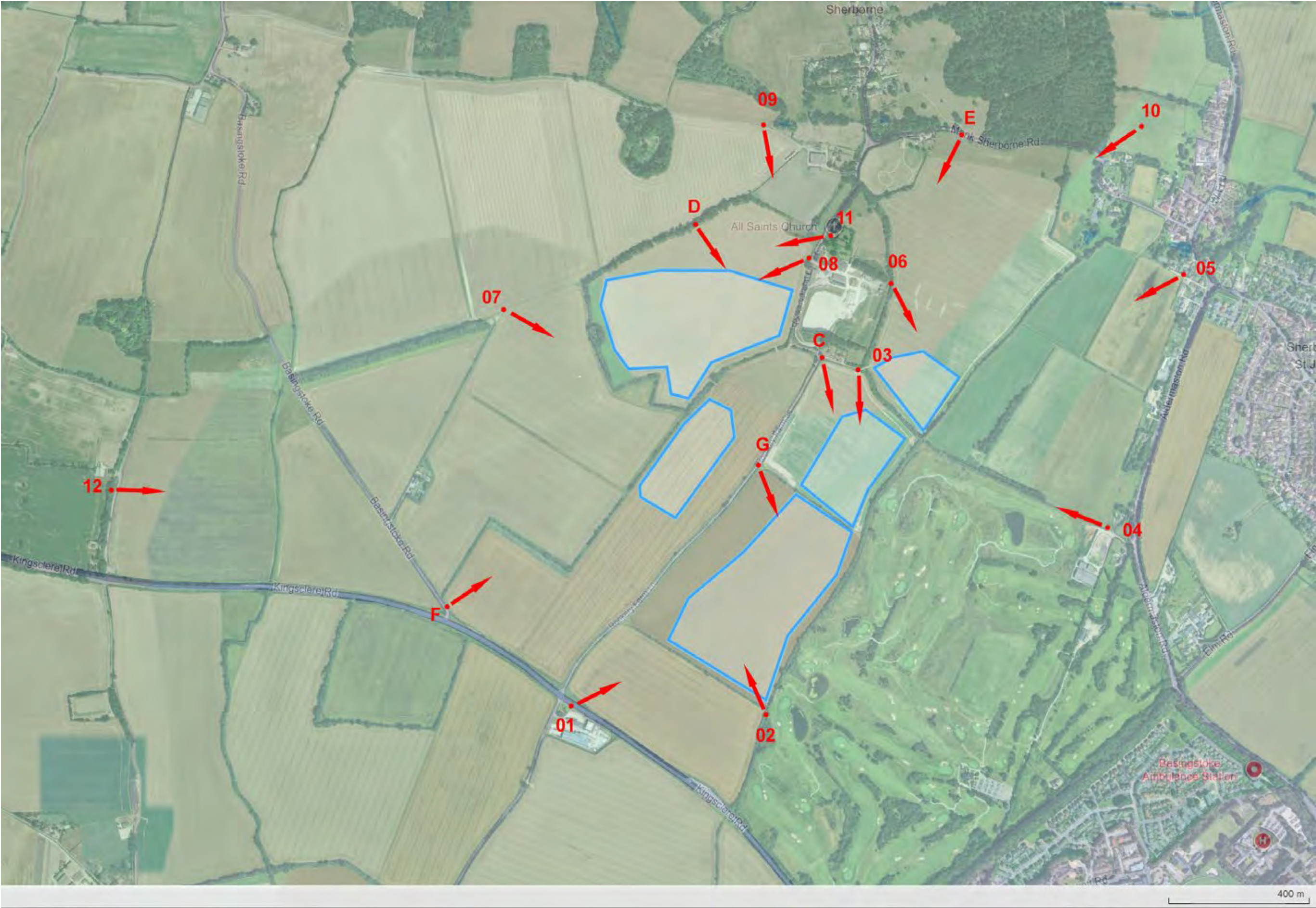
Appendix 3: Accurate Visual Representations provided by Ocean CGI

Accurate Visual Representation / Verified Views

Stokes Lane Solar Farm

June 2026

Site Layout Drawing Ref: 110-016L-260410
Landscape Strategy Ref: 04571 / 1001 / Rev:C

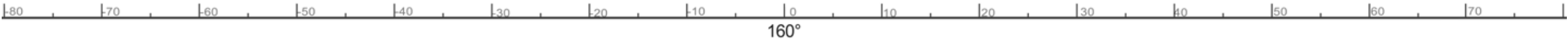


Stokes Lane Solar Farm

VIEW 1: A339, Kingsclere Road near Rookery Lane



Photo ref:	1038
Location:	51.286468, -1.139521
Heading:	NE / 63°
AOD (Ref:OS/Defra):	134.2 m
~Distance to site:	300 m
Time:	13:02:00
Date:	24/02/2026
Focal length:	50mm
AVR Type 4/Level:	3



VIEWPOINT PANORAMA









VIEW 2: Footpath off Kingsclere Road at Weybrook Park Gold Club



Photo ref: 1099
Location: 51.2862385, -1.131811
Heading: N / 339°
AOD (Ref:OS/Defra): 123.9 m
~Distance to site: 30 m
Time: 13:58:00
Date: 24/02/2026
Focal length: 50mm
AVR Type 4/Level: 3



160°

VIEWPOINT PANORAMA



Existing Viewpoint 02	Focal Length: 50mm	Lens: Canon EF 50mm 1.4	HFoV: 40 °	Camera: Canon R5	Camera position: 1.6m above ground	Tripod: Falcam F38 Treeroot	8
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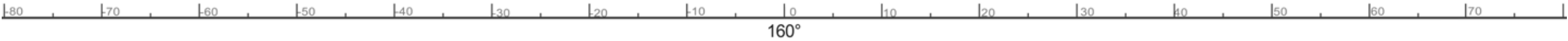




VIEW 3: Footpath near Manor Farm



Photo ref: 1259
Location: 51.294819, -1.127986
Heading: S / 168°
AOD (Ref:OS/Defra): 111.11 m
~Distance to site: 0 m
Time: 16:01:00
Date: 24/02/2026
Focal length: 50mm
AVR Type 4/Level: 3



VIEWPOINT PANORAMA



Existing Viewpoint 03

Focal Length:
50mm

Lens:
Canon EF 50mm 1.4

HFoV:
40 °

Camera:
Canon R5

Camera position:
1.6m above ground

Tripod:
Falcam F38 Treeroot







VIEW 4: Byway off Aldermaston Road, A340



Photo ref:	1219
Location:	51.290638, -1.117757
Heading:	NW / 311°
AOD (Ref:OS/Defra):	109.97 m
~Distance to site:	575 m
Time:	15:38:00
Date:	24/02/2026
Focal length:	50mm
AVR Type 4/Level:	1



160°

VIEWPOINT PANORAMA



Existing Viewpoint 04

Focal Length:
50mm

Lens:
Canon EF 50mm 1.4

HFoV:
40 °

Camera:
Canon R5

Camera position:
1.6m above ground

Tripod:
Falcam F38 Treeroot



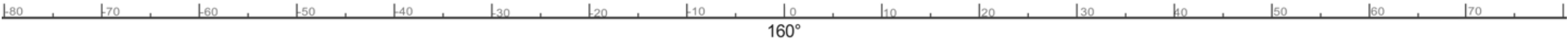




VIEW 5: Footpath off Aldermaston Road near Cranes Road



Photo ref: 1199
Location: 51.297217, -1.114873
Heading: SW / 234°
AOD (Ref:OS/Defra): 82.6 m
~Distance to site: 685 m
Time: 15:23:00
Date: 24/02/2026
Focal length: 50mm
AVR Type 4/Level: 1



VIEWPOINT PANORAMA



Existing Viewpoint 05	Focal Length: 50mm	Lens: Canon EF 50mm 1.4	HFoV: 40 °	Camera: Canon R5	Camera position: 1.6m above ground	Tripod: Falcam F38 Treeroot	23
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