

Stokes Lane Solar Farm, Basingstoke
Environmental Statement Volume 4:
Non-Technical Summary

October 2026

Turley

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Document Version	Lead Author	Reviewed By	Approved By
V1 (Draft)	EC	AB	AP
V1 (Final)	AB	AB	AP

Client
Stokes Lane Solar Farm Limited

1. Introduction

What is Environmental Impact Assessment?

- 1.1 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process, required by law¹, that involves the identification, assessment and reporting of the likely significant environmental effects of a project so that they can be considered by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). This is Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) who will use the outputs of the EIA when deciding whether or not to grant planning permission for a proposed development. Ways that significant effects can be avoided, reduced, managed or offset are also identified.
- 1.2 This Environmental Statement (ES) comprising **Volumes 1 – 3**², reports the EIA process and contains the full results including methodologies of assessment, existing information, and the conclusions of the technical assessments.

What is a Non-Technical Summary?

- 1.3 This document is a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the ES submitted in support of a planning application for the construction and operation of a solar electricity generating station known as Stokes Lane Solar Farm (referred to as the 'Proposed Development') on approximately 87.5 hectares (ha) of

land north and south of Rookery Farm Lane, south of the village of Monk Sherborne, north of Basingstoke ('the Site'). The planning application has been submitted on behalf of Stokes Lane Solar Farm Limited (the 'Applicant').

- 1.4 As defined in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)³, the NTS has been written in 'plain English' to ensure that the findings reported in the ES, can be easily understood by non-experts (i.e. the general public).

What does the NTS include?

- 1.5 The NTS covers the following key aspects:
 - An outline of the EIA process and the approach taken for the Proposed Development (**Section 2**);
 - An overview of the Proposed Development and what it includes (**Section 3**);
 - The existing relevant baseline conditions of the Site and surrounding area (**Section 4**), as EIA is focused on the likely 'changes' caused by the Proposed Development;

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (SI 2017/571). (the 'EIA Regulations')

² Volume 1: Primary Report and Supporting Graphics, Volume 2: Technical Appendices to the Primary Report, Volume 3: Non-Technical Summary.

³ PPG, Paragraph 035, Reference ID: 4-035-20170728.

- A summary of the technical assessments undertaken to determine the ‘effects’ of the Proposed Development and identifying those that are ‘significant’ (**Section 5**); and
- Summary of the ‘cumulative effects’ of the Proposed Development with other projects (**Section 6**).

What Happens Next?

- 1.6 The ES has been submitted to BDBC in support of a full planning application. The determination process is outlined within **Extract 1**. BDBC can request an extension to this period if agreed in writing with the Applicant.
- 1.7 The ES has been submitted in digital format and is available on the BDBC planning portal website for viewing and downloading. During the determination period, members of the public may comment on the planning application, either in writing or through the BDBC planning portal website (**Box 1**).

Box 1: Contact Details

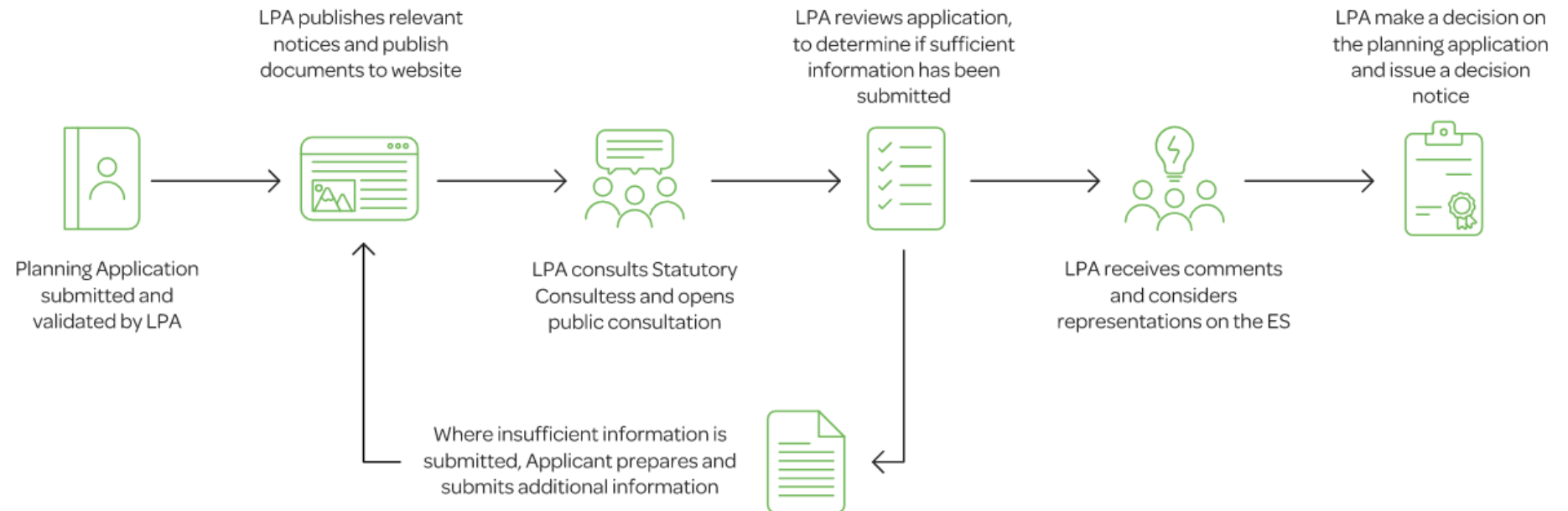
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Address: Civic Offices, London Road, Basingstoke, RG21 4AH

Tel: 01256 844844

Planning Portal Website:

<https://publicaccess.basingstoke.gov.uk/online-applications/>



Extract 1. General Overview of the Determination Process

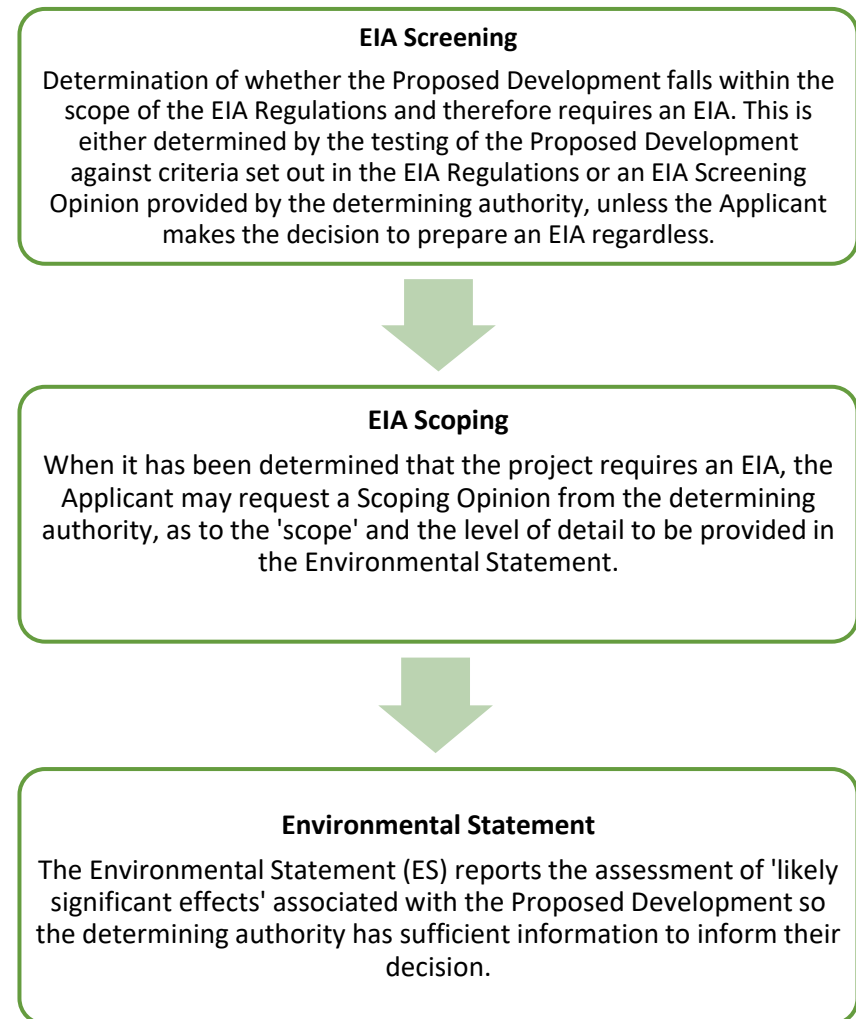
2. The EIA Process and Approach

The EIA process

- 2.1 The aim of EIA is to protect the environment by ensuring that a determining authority (in this case, BDBC) when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development and takes them into account in the decision-making process. As such, EIA is a tool to identify, assess and report likely significant environmental effects.
- 2.2 The EIA process comprises a series of steps, which are summarised in **Extract 2**. It should be noted that the first step (EIA Screening) is not mandatory, and the second stage (EIA Scoping) is also voluntary.

Approach to EIA

- 2.3 Regulation 4(2) of the EIA Regulations specify that an “...EIA must identify, describe and assess...the direct and indirect significant effects...” of the Proposed Development on a number of ‘factors’. These factors, generally broken down into specific sensitive receptors, have been considered / assessed within several environmental topics and appraised at each stage of the EIA process.



Extract 2: Steps in the EIA process

EIA Screening

- 2.4 As indicated in **Extract 2**, the purpose of the EIA Screening process is to establish if the Proposed Development is considered 'EIA Development' due to the potential for likely significant effects.
- 2.5 The Proposed Development was screened as 'EIA Development' by BDBC in January 2021 (Reference: 21/03566/ENSC), meaning that an ES must accompany the planning application.

EIA Scoping

- 2.6 A request for an EIA Scoping Opinion⁴ supported by an EIA Scoping Report prepared by Atmos Consulting was submitted to BDBC in February 2023. An EIA Scoping Opinion was adopted by BDBC in June 2023.
- 2.7 BDBC confirmed that the following topics should be assessed within the EIA:
- Landscape and Visual Effects; and
 - Cultural Heritage.

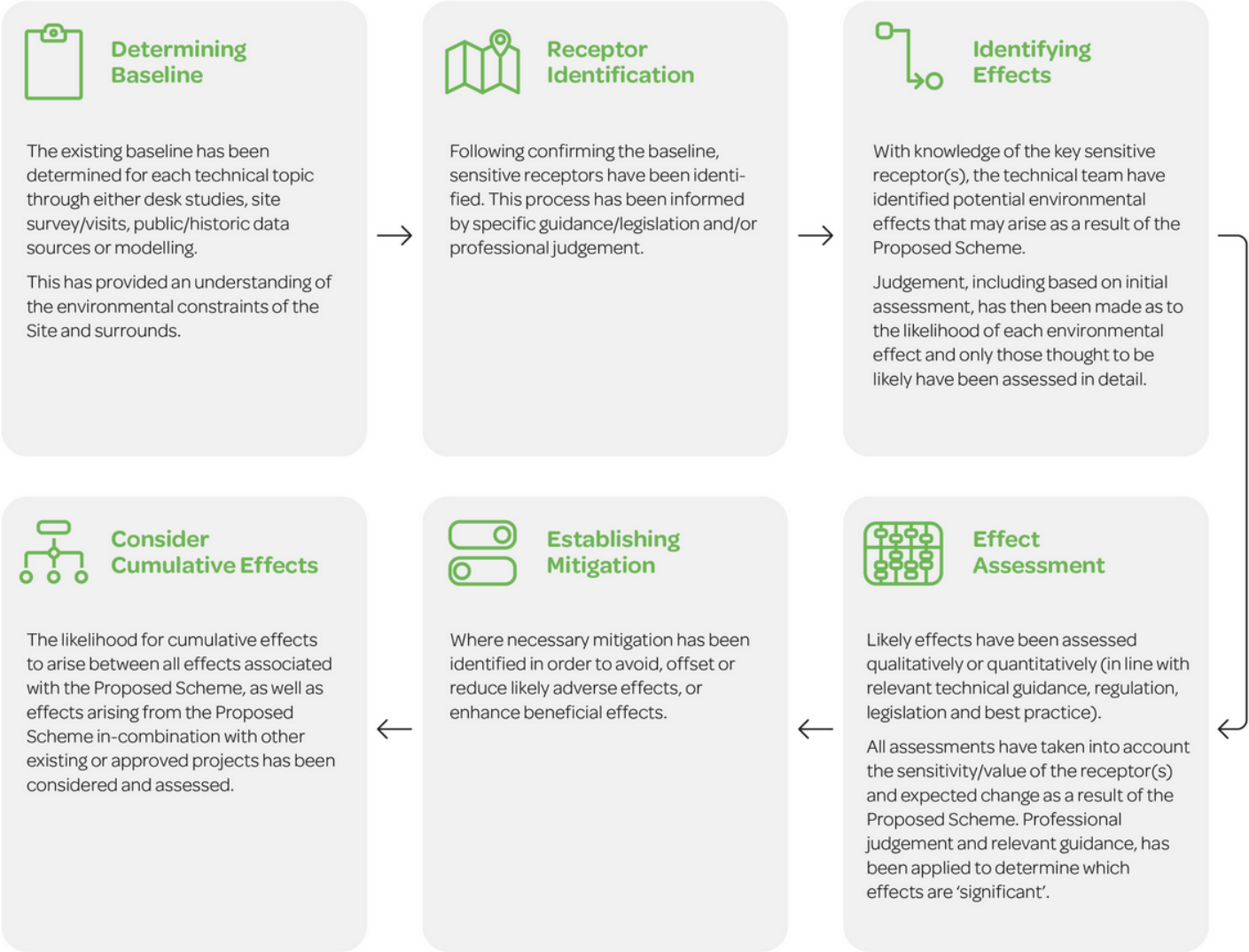
⁴ A scoping opinion is a report from the planning authority which sets out which environmental issues should be assessed and included in the EIA.

Environmental Statement

- 2.8 As set out within **Section 1**, the purpose of EIA and the ES is to assess and report the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment. Therefore, the summary of the technical assessments within this NTS (**Section 5**) concludes whether an effect was considered 'significant' or 'not significant'.
- 2.9 The approach to the assessments reflects relevant industry and technical guidance, standards and legislation. The methodologies adopted are outlined for each environmental topic within **Technical Chapters 2 and 3 of Volume 1**. The overarching approach required by the EIA Regulations that covers all technical topics is set out in **Extract 3**.

Planning History

- 2.10 The planning application for the Proposed Development was originally submitted in June 2025 (Reference: 25/01612/FUL), supported by an ES prepared by Atmos Consulting. Following consultation responses from BDBC and requests for additional information, amendments were made to the design of the Proposed Development. As a result, the environmental assessments have been reviewed and updated, and the ES and this associated NTS has been prepared to reflect the revised scheme.



Extract 3: Overview of the Assessment Approach

3. The Proposed Development

What is the Proposed Development?

- 3.1 The Applicant is seeking a full planning permission for the installation and operation of a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm, known as Stokes Lane Solar Farm and associated infrastructure with an export capacity of up to approximately 28MW.

Where is the Proposed Development?

- 3.2 The area of the Proposed Development, shown on **Extract 4** is 87.5ha and comprises five large arable fields divided by hedgerows, trees, woodland belts and rural lanes. The landscape is predominantly rural agricultural land between the villages of Sherborne St John and Monk Sherborne, and the urban edge of Basingstoke.
- 3.3 The land sits on gently sloping terrain falling generally from south to north and north-east, at elevations of approximately 95m to 125m above ordnance datum (AOD).

- 3.4 The Site is currently in agricultural use and is made up predominantly of good to very good-quality agricultural land (Grades 3a and 2)⁵. A small area of lower-quality agricultural land (Grade 3b) and existing woodland is present within the north-western parcel of the Site.

- 3.5 The Site is bound by:

- Open arable farmland and the A339 corridor to the south;
- Lower-lying, wooded and settled landscape character and Manor Farm to the north;
- Weybrook Park Golf Course, woodland, settlement expansion and the urban edge of Basingstoke to the east; and
- Open agricultural land and rural lanes to the west.

- 3.6 The Site lies immediately adjacent to the Monk Sherborne Conservation Area, and in close proximity to the Sherborne St John Conservation Area.

⁵ ALC is a national system used to grade farmland based on soil quality, climate and physical characteristics. Land is graded from Grade 1 (highest quality) to Grade 5 (lowest quality) according to its suitability for agricultural use, with Grades 1, 2 and 3a classified as Best and Most

Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. BMV agricultural land is the most flexible, productive and high yielding land.

- 3.7 The wider surrounding area comprises open farmland. To the south are major road corridors and agricultural land, to the north the landscape becomes more wooded and settled.

Site Layout

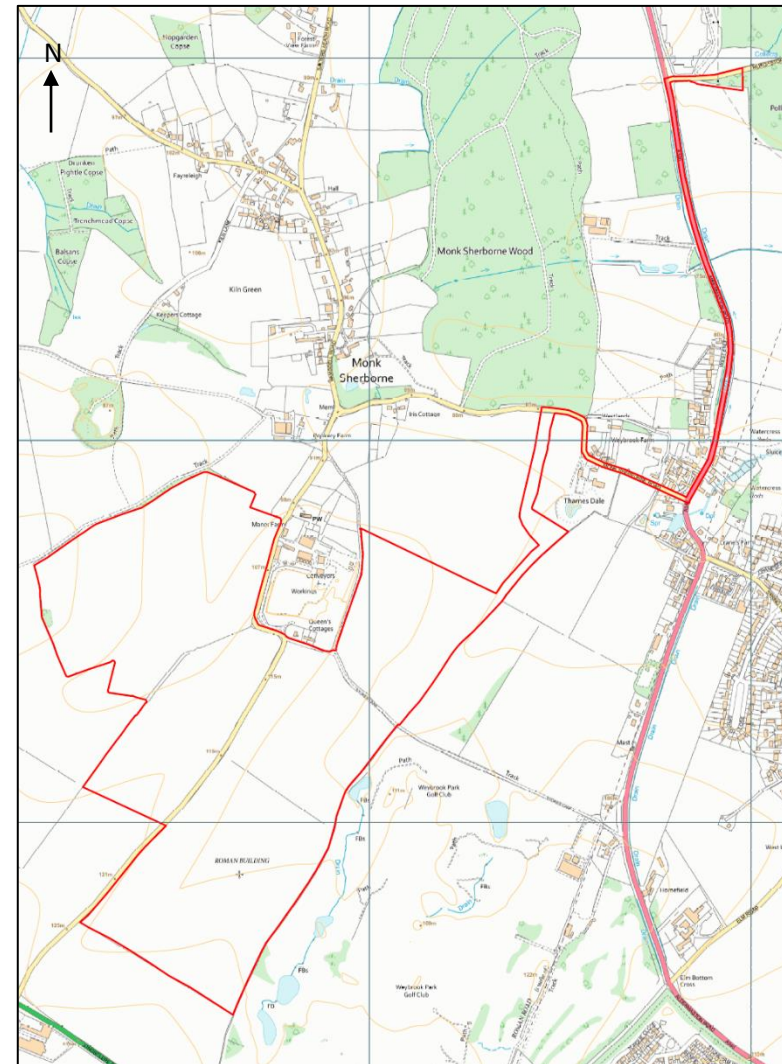
- 3.8 The Site Layout Plan (**Extract 5**) shows the layout of the solar panels and associated infrastructure for the Proposed Development. The layout of the Site has been designed to reduce environmental effects where possible, particularly in regards to landscape, visual and heritage effects.

Transport and Access

- 3.9 Primary access to the Site would be taken from two new priority junctions from Rookery Farm Lane. One access point will use an existing field entrance opposite Manor Farm to serve the western part of the Site. The second new access point will be created on the eastern side of Rookery Farm Lane to serve the eastern areas of the Site.
- 3.10 Construction traffic will follow a designated route, approaching the Site from the east via the A339 and turning onto Rookery Farm Lane. No construction traffic will approach from the west along the A339.

Components of the Proposed Development

- 3.11 The Proposed Development would comprise series of linear rows (also known as arrays) of solar panels; eight power stations (which will be used to export electricity to the grid); internal

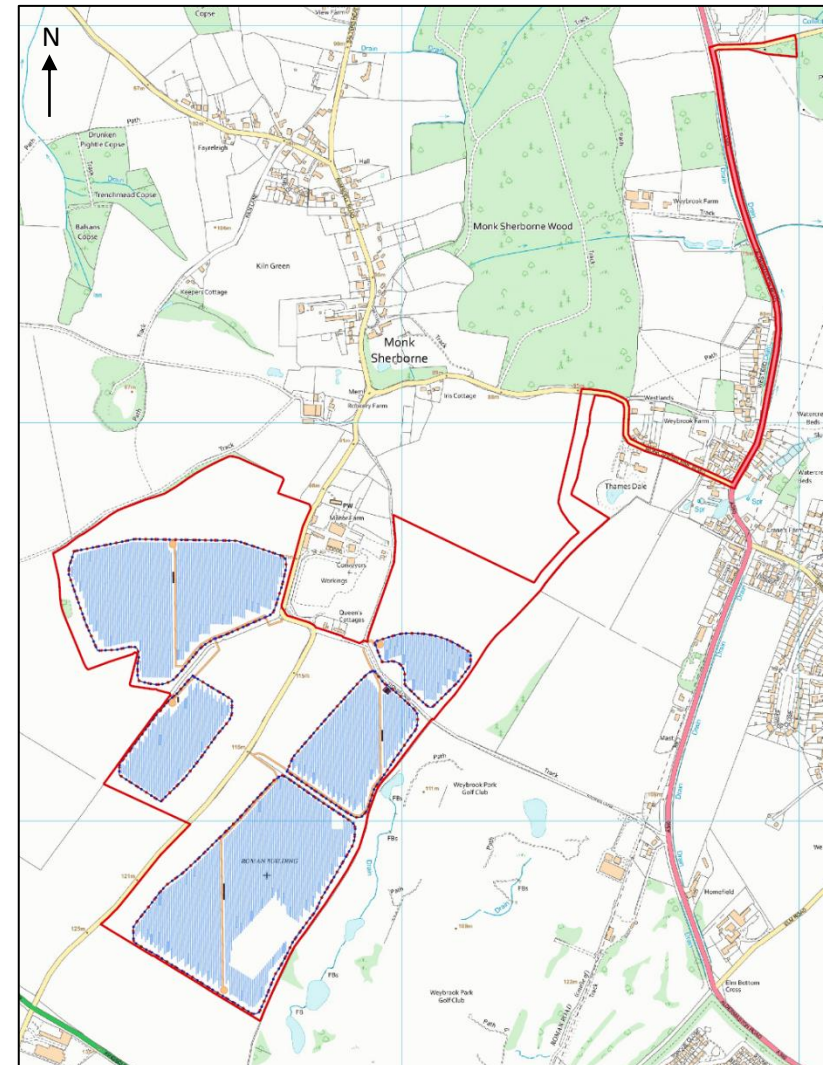


Extract 4: Site Boundary

access roads; cabling; customer and substations; spare parts containers; security fencing and CCTV; a temporary construction compound; and landscape planting.

Solar Panels and Layout

- 3.12 The solar farm will use polycrystalline solar panels (PV modules), which are designed to capture sunlight efficiently throughout the day and across different sun angles. The panels generate electricity without producing air pollution, waste, or using water. The layout of the panels is shown in blue on **Extract 5**.
- 3.13 The panels will be mounted on steel frames that are fixed into the ground. The modules will be fixed to a dual-axis solar tracker system able to take advantage of the best angle for solar panels for renewable energy generation.
- 3.14 To reduce shading between rows and to improve performance during winter months, the rows will be spaced about 2.1m apart, depending on ground levels. The panels will be aligned north to south, to allow the panels to move east to west to track the sun for maximum efficiency. Space will be left around the ends of each row to allow for maintenance access and to support landscaping and ecological improvements.
- 3.15 The supporting frames will be driven approximately 1.5m into the ground. Once installed, the panels will reach a maximum height of about 3.1m. The lowest edge of the panels will be around 1m above ground level, allowing sheep to graze beneath them.



Extract 5: Site Layout Plan

Electrical Layout and Grid Connection

- 3.16 The solar farm will connect into the Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) distribution network via a underground cable, which will connect from the new substation at the Site, to a point of connection (POC) at the existing SSEN overhead line, where it crosses Morgaston Road. The underground grid connection route will run the substation north to Monk Sherborne Road. The grid connection route will then follow the road east, until it adjoins the A340, heading north on Aldermaston Road. At Morgaston Road, the grid connection route terminates at the existing power pole.

Power Stations

- 3.17 The solar farm will include eight power stations, which are standard infrastructure required for export of the electricity generated by the solar panels. These contain electrical equipment that converts the electricity generated by the solar panels into a form suitable for the local electricity network. Each power station will measure approximately 12.2m long, 2.4m wide and 2.9m high.

Customer Cabin and Spare Parts Container

- 3.18 One customer cabin will be installed on Site. This building will house electrical safety equipment used to control and protect the solar farm. The cabin will measure approximately 12.7m long, 4m wide and 3m high and will be coloured dark green to blend into the surrounding landscape.

- 3.19 A single storage container will also be located on Site to store spare parts needed for maintenance. This will measure approximately 13.7m long, 2.4m wide and 2.6m high.

Security Measures

- 3.20 For safety and security, the solar farm will not be open to the public during construction, operation or decommissioning. A perimeter security fence approximately 2.6m high will be installed at the start of construction and will remain in place for the lifetime of the development. A main access gate will also be provided.
- 3.21 The fence will be designed to allow small animals to pass through and will be positioned behind existing and newly planted hedgerows so that it blends into the surrounding countryside.
- 3.22 Security cameras will be installed within the site, mounted on poles up to 2.4m high and facing inwards. No permanent external lighting will be used during operation.

Landscaping Strategy

- 3.23 The landscaping strategy has been designed to consider the local landscape character context, and to conserve and enhance where possible the key landscape characteristics within the Site. This will include the following measures:
- Preservation and protection of the vegetation along the Site field boundaries;
 - Implementation of a new species-rich native hedgerows and native trees;

- Large area of modified grassland within the fenced solar array areas and implementation of species-rich grassland for areas outside of the fence and within the field boundaries;
- Large areas of retained agricultural land not required for the Proposed Development; and
- Implementation of new permissive path to link existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW).

Drainage Strategy

- 3.24 The Proposed Development proposes to direct all rainwater flowing off the Site and solar panels to the ground. It is proposed to incorporate infiltration drainage measures adjacent to access tracks and power stations (where feasible and required) which will collect surface water runoff and encourage natural processes, including infiltration of runoff into the ground and evaporation where feasible. Surface water runoff from the substation area will be conveyed by below ground pipework to an infiltration swale.
- 3.25 Attenuation storage will be provided to store surface water runoff generated across access tracks, power stations and the substation area.

⁶ A CEMP outlines the environmental management and control measures, mitigation strategies and monitoring procedures to be implemented on-site for the construction stage of a project to avoid /

Operation and Decommissioning

- 3.26 The solar farm is anticipated to operate for 40 years. After which, all panels and associated infrastructure would be decommissioned and removed, and the land restored to its original condition as agricultural use. Cables connecting the solar farm to the grid connection will be left within the carriageway to avoid unnecessary disturbance by their removal.

Construction of the Proposed Development

- 3.27 Construction is expected to take approximately 12 months, with completion anticipated in 2029 (subject to planning permission). Construction works will take place within the Site, with the exception of the laying of the cable route within the local highway.
- 3.28 A commitment has been made to adopt a series of environmental management best practices to avoid, offset and reduce environmental effects associated with the construction stage. These measures will be delivered via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)⁶, covering all aspects of the construction stage. These measures are derived from best practice measures or technical specific guidance / recommendations. As such, these measures are 'tried and tested' to effectively mitigate construction related environmental effects.

minimise adverse effects on the environment from construction activities.

- 3.29 Construction traffic will be routed to the Site via the A339 from the east. No construction traffic will arrive from the west of the A339. A Construction Traffic Management Plan will specify these routes, and any other measures for the safe management of construction traffic during the construction stage.

Reasonable Alternatives

- 3.30 The EIA Regulations require “...a description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer...”, including in relation to alternative sites; design; or technology. If no alternatives have been studied, the EIA does not necessarily need to report or assess reasonable alternatives. All reasonable alternatives were considered further and a summary of each is set out below.

Alternative Sites

- 3.31 A detailed site selection process was undertaken to identify land capable of supporting a viable solar farm whilst reducing environmental effects. Factors considered included proximity to an available grid connection, land suitability for solar energy generation, accessibility, land availability, planning constraints and environmental considerations such as landscape, ecology, heritage assets, flood risk and visual effects.
- 3.32 The selected Site was identified as the most suitable and deliverable option. Alternative areas were discounted due to nearby environmental designations, land ownership constraints,

availability of grid infrastructure, or difficulties securing land agreements and cable routes.

Alternative Designs

- 3.33 The design of the Proposed Development has evolved in response to environmental surveys, technical assessments, stakeholder engagement and community consultation.
- 3.34 A range of studies, including ecology, landscape and visual, heritage, transport, flood risk, arboricultural, noise and glint and glare assessments, informed the design process. This resulted in a number of changes to avoid or reduce potential environmental effects for the 2025 planning application, including:
- Retaining buffer zones around sensitive landscape, ecological and heritage features;
 - Removing development from land closest to the North Wessex Downs National Landscape;
 - Increasing separation distances from nearby homes, including a buffer around Queens Cottages;
 - Removing panels from more visually prominent areas, including higher ground and locations close to Stokes Lane;
 - Setting back panels from roads and PRowWs to reduce visibility;
 - Enhancing existing hedgerows and field boundaries through additional planting and management;

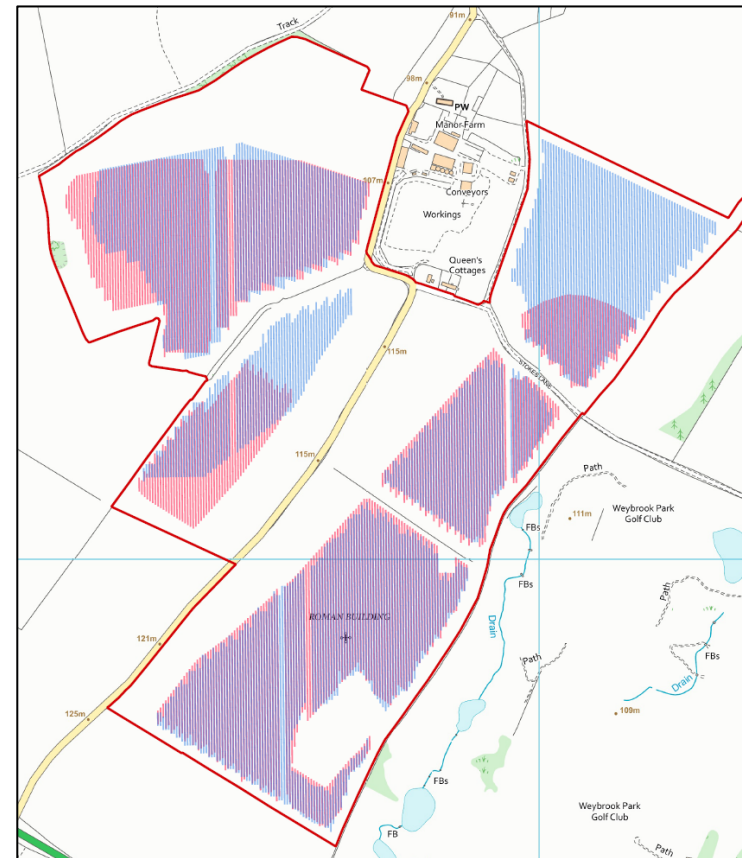
- Avoiding areas with archaeological potential and heritage sensitivities; and
- Incorporating a new permissive footpath to improve local access and connectivity.

3.35 Feedback from local communities and Parish Councils also influenced the final design and helped shape a number of the mitigation measures incorporated into the Proposed Development.

3.36 As part of this 2026 ES, in response to consultation comments, the Proposed Development was further refined and the following design changes have been made and assessed as part of the 2026 ES:

- Reduction of panels from the north eastern most field, such that panels are only located in the southern half of this field parcel;
- Redistribution of panels to the west of Rookery Farm Lane, to allow for greater distance between the start of the panels Manor Farm and Queen's Cottages;
- Relocation of the proposed substation from the northern side of Stokes Lane to the southern side; and
- Adjustments to the proposed landscape planting strategy to ensure that proposed areas of new landscape planting are more respectful of existing landscape character.

3.37 **Extract 6** below shows the 2025 layout in blue, and the new 2026 layout in red, to show where panels have been relocated as part of the 2026 design changes. Purple areas show overlap of both designs.



Extract 6: Comparison of 2025 and 2026 layouts

Alternative Technologies

- 3.38 Alternative renewable energy technologies and different solar mounting systems were considered. Ground-mounted solar photovoltaic panels were selected because they represent a well-established, reliable and efficient technology that can respond flexibly to the characteristics of the Site.
- 3.39 No alternative technology was identified that would provide clear environmental advantages or improve the overall deliverability of the Proposed Development.

'Do Nothing' Scenario

- 3.40 If the Proposed Development did not proceed, the Site would be expected to remain in agricultural use and existing land management practices would continue.
- 3.41 While this would avoid the effects associated with construction and operation of the solar farm, it would also mean that the environmental and socio-economic benefits of the Proposed Development would not be realised. In particular, there would be no contribution to renewable energy generation, climate change objectives, or national and local net-zero targets.

4. Baseline

- 4.1 As set out within **Extract 3**, in order to determine the environmental effects of the Proposed Development it was necessary to establish the existing characteristics of the Site and surrounding area (i.e. the existing baseline conditions). As such, a summary of the relevant baseline information for the environmental topics ‘scoped into’ the assessment is provided below.

Landscape and Visual Amenity

- 4.2 The southern part of the Site is located within the National Character Area (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.*”
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 The Site lies within the Basingstoke Open Downs Landscape Character Area (LCA) 8B: Basingstoke Open Downs which describe the area as a rolling landscape of large-scale arable

farmland, generally characterised by open views, low woodland cover, fragmented hedgerows and a strong sense of countryside, despite the influence of nearby roads and the edge of Basingstoke.

- 4.5 The Site also lies within Local LCA 2, which is characterised by rolling landform, field hedgerows and hedgerow trees (eroded in places by removal as a result of twentieth century farming practices), the fringes of the urban area of Basingstoke, and generally arable/pastoral farmland.
- 4.6 The landscape surrounding the Site is largely agricultural, with scattered farmsteads, rural lanes and small villages. While the area retains a rural character, it is influenced by nearby urban development, transport routes and recreational land uses, including Weybrook Park Golf Club to the east. The Site also forms part of the wider landscape setting of Sherborne St John, Monk Sherborne and the western edge of Basingstoke.
- 4.7 Although located outside the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, the Site lies close to its boundary. The designated landscape is situated approximately 300m to the southwest and is valued for its scenic quality, tranquillity, historic features and extensive network of PRoWs.
- 4.8 The Site sits on gently undulating land, with ground levels gradually falling from west to east and north-east. This topography, together with the pattern of hedgerows, woodland belts and trees, influences the extent of views into and out of the Site. In some locations, particularly along local roads and PRoWs,

open views across the Site and surrounding countryside are available. In other areas, existing vegetation provides substantial screening.

- 4.9 Vegetation within and around the Site consists primarily of hedgerows, hedgerow trees, tree belts and small woodland blocks. While some hedgerows are fragmented or weak in places, they contribute to the landscape structure and help define field boundaries. Existing vegetation is an important feature of the local landscape and provides visual containment from some viewpoints.
- 4.10 Several PRoWs pass through or close to the Site, including sections of St James' Way, a long-distance walking route. These routes provide opportunities for people to experience views of the Site and the surrounding countryside. Additional receptors include users of local roads, residents of nearby properties, and users of the Church of All Saints and its churchyard
- 4.11 Views of the Site are generally most extensive from Rookery Farm Lane, which passes through the centre of the Site, and from sections of nearby PRoWs where hedgerows are less dense. Views from more distant locations, including parts of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, are typically filtered by vegetation, landform and distance, with the Site forming part of a wider agricultural landscape.
- 4.12 Overall, the baseline landscape is characterised by rolling farmland, hedgerows, occasional woodland, rural lanes and open countryside views. The area has a moderate degree of

tranquillity and provides an important rural setting for nearby villages and the edge of Basingstoke.

Cultural Heritage

- 4.13 The Monk Sherborne Conservation Area is adjacent to the northwest of the Site, and the underground cable route passes through the Sherborne St John Conservation Area.
- 4.14 There are several listed buildings within close proximity to the Site that have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development. These include:
 - Church of All Saints (Grade I Listed Building);
 - Rookery Farmhouse (Grade II Listed Building);
 - Appletree Cottage (Grade II Listed Building);
 - Eastrop Cottage (Grade II Listed Building);
 - Monk Sherborne War Memorial (Grade II Listed Building); and
 - Thames Dell (Grade II Listed Building).
- 4.15 Manor Farm Buildings, Vyne Road is a locally listed non-designated heritage asset, and additionally, the Queen's Cottages although not locally listed, are identified within the Monk Sherborne Conservation Area as positive historic buildings contributing to the architectural and historic character of the

conservation area buildings so are therefore considered to comprise non-designated heritage assets for the purpose of the assessment.

Natural Evolution of the Site

- 4.16 The EIA Regulations require the provision of, as far as reasonably possible, an estimation of the future natural evolution of the Site (i.e. the future baseline conditions) were the Proposed Development not to go ahead.
- 4.17 It was determined that the future baseline would likely be the same as the existing baseline if no development was to occur, and the Site would remain in its current use, albeit the existing trees and boundary vegetation would continue to grow.

5. Effects of the Proposed Development

- 5.1 A summary of the findings and conclusions of the technical assessments undertaken as part of the EIA and reported in the ES are provided below.

Landscape and Visual

What effects were considered?

- 5.2 The following effects were considered in the assessment of **Landscape and Visual**:
- Changes in landscape character or quality / condition; and
 - Changes to Views / Visual amenity.
- 5.3 During operation, the assessment identified effects at the first year of the Proposed Development operating (Year 1), and the 15th year (Year 15). The Proposed Development will deliver a **Landscape Strategy**, and it will take time for new planting to mature and develop to provide the full level of screening. Therefore, effects are assessed at Year 1 and Year 15 to show effects when the Proposed Development is first built as a worst case scenario, and also what the long term effects will be.

What receptors were considered?

- 5.4 The following landscape and visual receptors were assessed in the ES under **Chapter 2: Landscape and Visual**:

- Site/Landscape Fabric; and
- PRoW users of St James' Way long distance footpath (Ref: 267/7013; 208/1/3; 161/4/1 and 161/5/1).

- 5.5 The assessment of all receptors and effects is included within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, submitted as **Appendix 2.1** as part of the ES.

What mitigation commitments have been made?

Construction

- 5.6 Potential landscape and visual effects arising from construction works would be mitigated through the use of site hoardings, tree and hedgerow protection measures, management of construction traffic, control of working hours and other appropriate housekeeping on the Site in accordance with the CEMP.

Operation

- 5.7 During the operation, a Landscape Strategy will be implemented which will include the following measures:
- The solar farm has been designed to fit within the existing chalk downland landscape, maintaining its open and rural character and avoiding features that would appear out of place;
 - Solar panels and associated infrastructure would be located in lower-lying, less visible areas, making use of the

existing landform, vegetation and natural screening to reduce visual effects;

- Existing hedgerows, trees and woodland would be retained and enhanced where appropriate, with any new planting focused on strengthening existing landscape features rather than introducing extensive new vegetation;
- The design of the Proposed Development seeks to protect important views, including those associated with the Church of All Saints, the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and local PRoWs such as St James' Way; and
- The Proposed Development would be integrated with the surrounding landscape through sensitive layout design, setbacks from roads and footpaths, and where appropriate, the reinforcement of historic field patterns and existing vegetation.

What did the assessment in the ES identify?

Construction

- 5.8 The assessment considered the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape character of the Site and surrounding area, together with the effects on people who may experience views of the development from nearby PRoWs, residential properties and recreational areas.
- 5.9 During construction, the Site would temporarily change from open agricultural land to an active construction area. Activities such as ground preparation, the movement of construction

vehicles, installation of solar panels and associated infrastructure, and the presence of temporary compounds would alter the appearance of the Site.

- 5.10 The most noticeable effects would occur within the Site itself, where the existing agricultural landscape would experience a temporary but noticeable change. Once construction is complete, these temporary effects would cease.
- 5.11 Although construction activities would be visible from some locations, existing hedgerows, trees and landform would help to screen views in many areas. Construction effects would be temporary and limited to the duration of the works.

Site/Landscape Fabric

- 5.12 The Proposed Development would change the character of the Site from arable farmland to a solar energy development. This would introduce solar panel arrays, access tracks, fencing and associated infrastructure into the existing agricultural landscape. Topsoil stripping would introduce areas of bare ground. The introduction of construction vehicles and compounds would urbanise the area.
- 5.13 Existing field boundaries, hedgerows and trees would be retained where possible and strengthened through additional planting. While the character of the Site itself will be subject to changes throughout construction, the wider landscape would retain its key characteristics, including its rolling landform, hedgerow network and rural setting. The effect would be a temporary

moderate to major adverse during construction, which would be 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)

- 5.14 During construction, users of St James' Way would experience temporary views of construction activities in locations where gaps in existing vegetation allow views into the Site. However, much of the route is screened by established hedgerows, trees and vegetation, limiting visibility of construction works. The extent of the footpath that would be affected by the Proposed Development is limited, in the context of the entirety of St James' Way. There would be a temporary, moderate adverse effect, which would be significant.

Operation

Site/Landscape Fabric

- 5.15 Once operational, the solar farm would introduce solar panel arrays and associated infrastructure into an existing agricultural landscape. Therefore, the Proposed Development would be experienced as a new feature within the landscape. The extent of the change would be decreased by the relatively low height of the solar panels and the retention of existing field boundaries but one that would remain closely associated with the existing pattern of farmland and field boundaries. As the landscaping matures, visibility of the solar farm will decrease and reduce its influence on the landscape character.

- 5.16 At both Year 1 and Year 15, the effect is considered to be temporary, moderate to major adverse effect, that is considered to be 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)

- 5.17 Depending on the section of St James' Way, the Proposed Development will be more or less visible. Areas adjacent to the Weybrook Park Golf Club are generally more shielded by vegetation. Field entrances and occasional breaks in the hedgerow would be subject to more open views. Where views are available, solar panels and associated infrastructure would introduce a new feature into the landscape. Proposed planting and landscape enhancements would help to reduce visibility over time, with effects expected to lessen as vegetation becomes established.
- 5.18 The effect would be temporary moderate adverse at Year 1, and temporary minor to moderate adverse at Year 15. The effect would be significant at Year 1, but decrease with implementation of the Landscaping Strategy to be not significant at Year 15.

Cultural Heritage

What effects were considered?

- 5.19 The following effect was considered:
- Effect on Heritage Significance, including Setting; and

- Change to the character and appearance of the Sherborne St John Conservation Area.

What receptors were considered?

5.20 The following:

- Monk Sherborne Conservation Area.
- Sherborne St John Conservation Area
- Keyhole Enclosure SE of Field Barn Farm (Scheduled Monument).
- All Saints Church, Monk Sherborne (Grade I Listed Building).
- Rookery Farmhouse (Grade II Listed Building)
- Appletree Cottage (Grade II Listed Building).
- Eastrop Cottage (Grade II Listed Building).
- Thames Dell (Grade II Listed Building).
- Monk Sherborne War Memorial (Grade II Listed Building).
- Manor Farm (Non-Designated Heritage Asset).
- Queen's Cottages (Non-Designated Heritage Asset).

What mitigation commitments have been made?

- 5.21 During construction and operation, potential heritage setting and visual effects arising from the construction operations would be mitigated in the same manner as Landscape and Visual Effects (**Paragraphs 5.6 and 5.7**).

What did the assessment in the ES identify?

Construction

- 5.22 During construction, activities such as site preparation, the installation of solar panels and associated infrastructure, construction traffic and temporary compounds would introduce short-term changes within the wider setting of a number of heritage assets.

Effect on Heritage Significance, including Setting

- 5.23 The assessment found that most construction activities would be screened by existing vegetation, hedgerows and landform, meaning visibility would generally be limited. Where construction activities could be seen, views would be localised and temporary.
- 5.24 The assessment concluded that construction effects on all heritage assets would be temporary minor adverse or negligible, and would not be significant.

Change to the character and appearance of the Sherborne St John Conservation Area.

- 5.25 The cabling route would run through the Sherborne St John Conservation Area, however this will be placed within the

existing highway, which will be resurfaced following the works. These works will be limited and undertaken in sections.

- 5.26 Therefore, there will be a negligible effect upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, which would not be significant.

Operation

Effect on Heritage Significance, including Setting

- 5.27 During operation, the solar farm would introduce solar panel arrays and associated infrastructure into parts of the agricultural landscape. The assessment found that the contribution made by the Site to the significance of most heritage assets is limited, and that existing hedgerows, trees, vegetation and topography would restrict views of the Proposed Development.
- 5.28 For the Monk Sherborne Conservation Area, limited views of the Proposed Development would be available from parts of the southern approach to the village and would result in small change to the wider rural setting of the Conservation Area. However, the historic character, settlement pattern and key views within the Conservation Area which make a contribution to the Conservation Areas significance would remain largely unchanged. Effects were assessed as temporary minor adverse and not significant.
- 5.29 Similarly, for the Sherborne St John Conservation Area, the Proposed Development would have very limited visibility and would not affect the appreciation of the historic village or its key

characteristics. Effects were assessed as negligible and not significant.

- 5.30 The setting of the Grade I listed Church of All Saints would experience only a limited change. The church, its churchyard and its relationship with surrounding historic features would remain readily appreciable, and effects were assessed as temporary minor adverse and not significant.
- 5.31 Similarly, the Keyhole Enclosure Scheduled Monument would not be physically affected and its archaeological significance would remain unchanged. While there would be some change within the wider landscape setting, effects were assessed as temporary minor adverse and not significant.
- 5.32 For nearby Grade II listed buildings, including Rookery Farmhouse, Appletree Cottage, Eastrop Cottage, Thames Dell and the Monk Sherborne War Memorial, existing vegetation, topography and distance would limit views of the Proposed Development. Effects were assessed as negligible and not significant.
- 5.33 For the Manor Farm and Queens Cottages, whilst the solar farm would introduce a modern feature into part of their wider agricultural setting, the historic buildings themselves and their immediate surroundings would remain unchanged. Effects were assessed as negligible to minor adverse and not significant.

Change to the character and appearance of the Sherborne St John Conservation Area.

- 5.34 As there are expected to be no operational works throughout the Sherborne St John Conservation Area aside from the use of buried cable, there will be no change to elements which form the Conservation Areas the character and appearance. Therefore, effects will be negligible.

6. Cumulative Effects

What are cumulative effects?

- 6.1 It is a requirement of the EIA Regulations to assess the cumulative effects arising from a proposed development with other permitted and emerging developments. There is no standard methodology for the assessment of cumulative effects, but it is common for the following to be considered:
- **Effect interactions** – which considers different effects from the Proposed Development affecting the same receptors in the local area (e.g. changes in noise levels and views at a particular location); and
 - **In-combination effects** – which considers effects from the Proposed Development alongside those from other projects impacting a common receptor (e.g. residential receptors in the wider area).
- 6.2 For both types of cumulative effects there needs to be a 'common receptor'. By this it is meant that the same receptors are considered in either two or more technical assessments (for effect interactions) or by the Proposed Development and other consented projects (for in-combination effects). If there is an absence of a common receptor it is considered that a cumulative effect does not occur.

Effect Interactions

- 6.3 The evaluation of effect interactions first looks to combine all of the effects assessed within all technical chapters and 'categorise' them into 'receptor groups'. By sorting all effects into receptor groups, the potential for an effect interaction to occur can be identified.
- 6.4 The receptors groups are based on the list of 'factors' that are specified within the EIA Regulations - Population, human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, air, climate, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape. Therefore, as the receptors assessed fall under different factors (landscape and human health for Landscape and Visual effects, and cultural heritage for Cultural Heritage effects), there is no overlap in receptor groups, and therefore there are no effect interactions identified for the Proposed Development.

In-Combination Effects

Approach

- 6.5 The first stage for this assessment is to identify other existing or approved projects that should be considered in cumulation with the Proposed Development ('Cumulative Projects'). These projects have been selected based a 5km radius from the Site.
- 6.6 The evaluation of is informed by technical reports submitted in support of the Cumulative Projects, or where this is not available professional judgement is applied.

6.7 The evaluation is as follows:

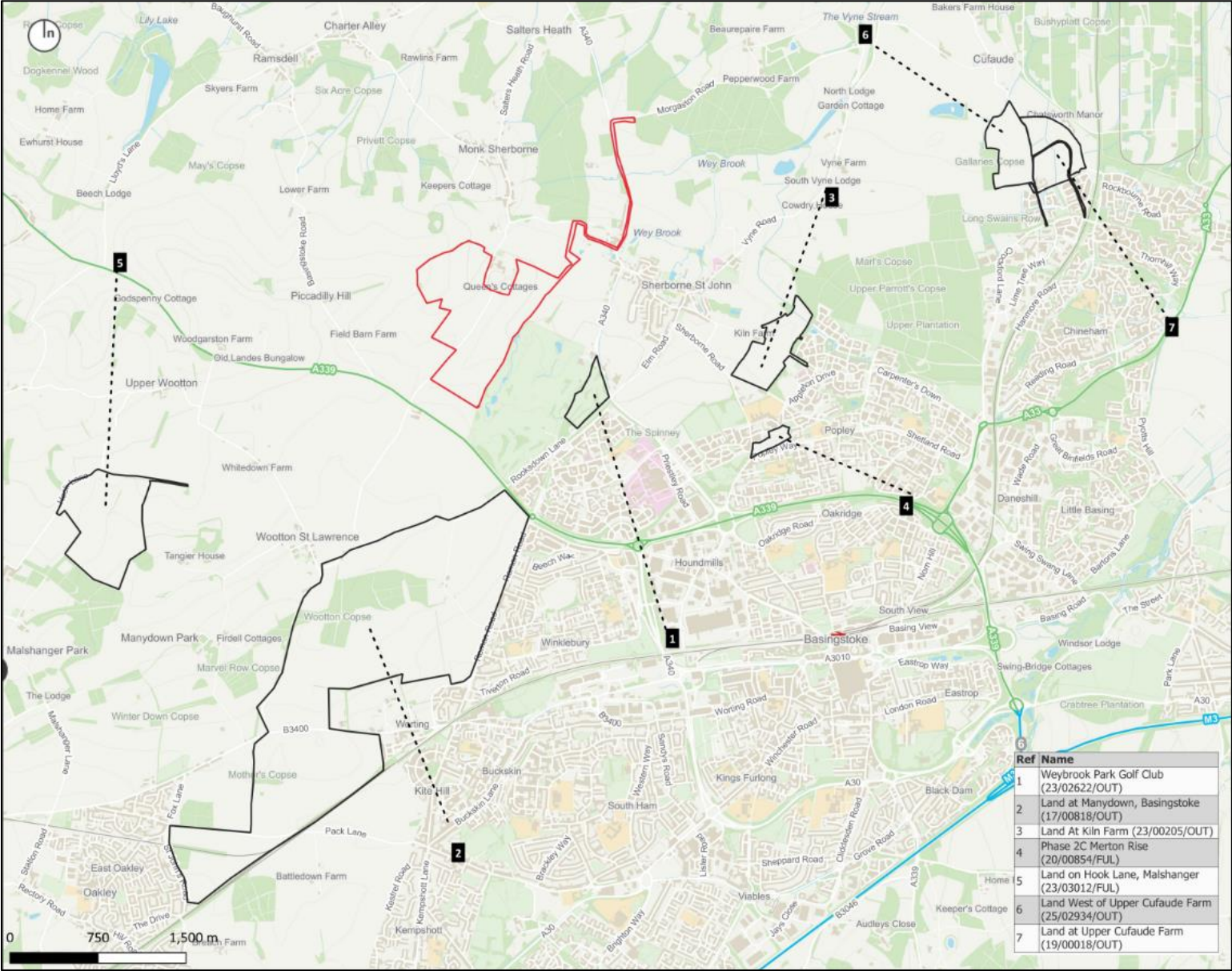
a) Do the projects share a common receptor, across either the construction, operation or decommissioning stages?

(b) Does the combined effect of each project together give rise to an effect that is greater than that reported for the Proposed Development in isolation?

6.8 The Cumulative Projects identified and to be assessed as part of the cumulative effects assessment are set out in the table below and shown on **Extract 7**.

ID	Planning application reference and name / address
1	23/02622/OUT Weybrook Park Golf Club Rooksdown Lane Basingstoke Hampshire Outline planning application for up to 220 homes.
2	17/00818/OUT Many down Lane, Basingstoke Residential development of approximately 3,200 homes (up to a maximum of 3,520 homes) and; local centres; two primary schools; land for one secondary school; open spaces.
3	23/00205/OUT Land At Kiln Farm Kiln Road Sherborne St John Basingstoke Hampshire

ID	Planning application reference and name / address
	Outline planning application with all matters reserved except access for up to 350 dwellings, landscaping, public open space and associated infrastructure.
4	20/00854/FUL Phase 2C Merton Rise Chineham Lane Basingstoke Hampshire Erection of 138 dwellings, public open space and associated car parking and levels for Phase 2C.
5	23/03012/FUL Land Adjacent to Hook Lane Solar farm and associated development.
6	25/02934/OUT Land West Of Upper Cufau de Farm Cufau de Lane Bramley Hampshire Outline planning application for 245 residential units.
7	19/00018/OUT Land At Upper Cufau de Farm Cufau de Lane Residential development for up to 350 dwellings and land reserved for a primary school.



Extract 7: Cumulative Project Plan

Evaluation

Landscape and Visual

- 6.9 For Cumulative Projects 1, 2 and 3, all three developments are located within the wider Basingstoke Down Landscape Character Area and would result in some loss of open land. Collectively, they would increase the presence of development within the wider landscape surrounding Basingstoke. However, the solar farm would remain distinct from the residential developments, as it would represent a rural renewable energy use rather than an extension of the urban area.
- 6.10 Existing vegetation, landform, settlement patterns and the physical separation between the sites would help maintain the distinction between the developments and the surrounding countryside. Although there would be some localised changes to landscape character, the key characteristics of the area, including its rolling landform, agricultural field pattern and rural setting, would remain evident. The cumulative effects on landscape character are not considered significant at Years 1 and 15.
- 6.11 The assessment considered cumulative effects on views experienced by users of St James' Way from Cumulative Project 1. In some locations, the solar farm and residential developments may be experienced during the same journey, increasing the perception of development within the landscape. The greatest effects would occur for users of St James' Way at Year 1 when the Landscape Strategy will be yet to mature. As proposed landscape planting becomes established, visual effects

would reduce over time for many receptors. Overall, significant moderate adverse cumulative visual effects are predicted at Year 1 for users of St James' Way. Effects would be minor to moderate adverse for Year 15 for users of St James' Way, and not significant.

- 6.12 Cumulative Projects 4, 5, 6 and 7 are either not intervisible with the Proposed Development and/or are experienced within different landscape receptors. On this basis, no cumulative landscape and visual effects are anticipated for these projects.

Cultural Heritage

- 6.13 During construction, standard good practice measures, including traffic management, protection of trees and hedgerows, and controls on construction activities, would minimise temporary effects. As a result, no significant cumulative effects on heritage assets are expected during the construction phase.
- 6.14 During operation, Cumulative Projects 1, 2 and 3, which comprise residential developments to the west, south and east of the Site, would contribute to additional built development within the wider landscape around Basingstoke. However, existing buildings, landform and vegetation limit opportunities for these developments to be experienced alongside the Proposed Development in relation to heritage assets. Cumulative Projects 4, 5, 6 and 7 are either not visible in combination with the Proposed Development or relate to different heritage assets. Overall, the assessment concludes that no significant cumulative effects on the significance or setting of heritage assets.



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