



CONTENTS

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS.....	2
Application Site	2
Surrounding Area.....	5
Planning History.....	7
ES Baseline.....	8
CONCLUSIONS	8

FIGURES

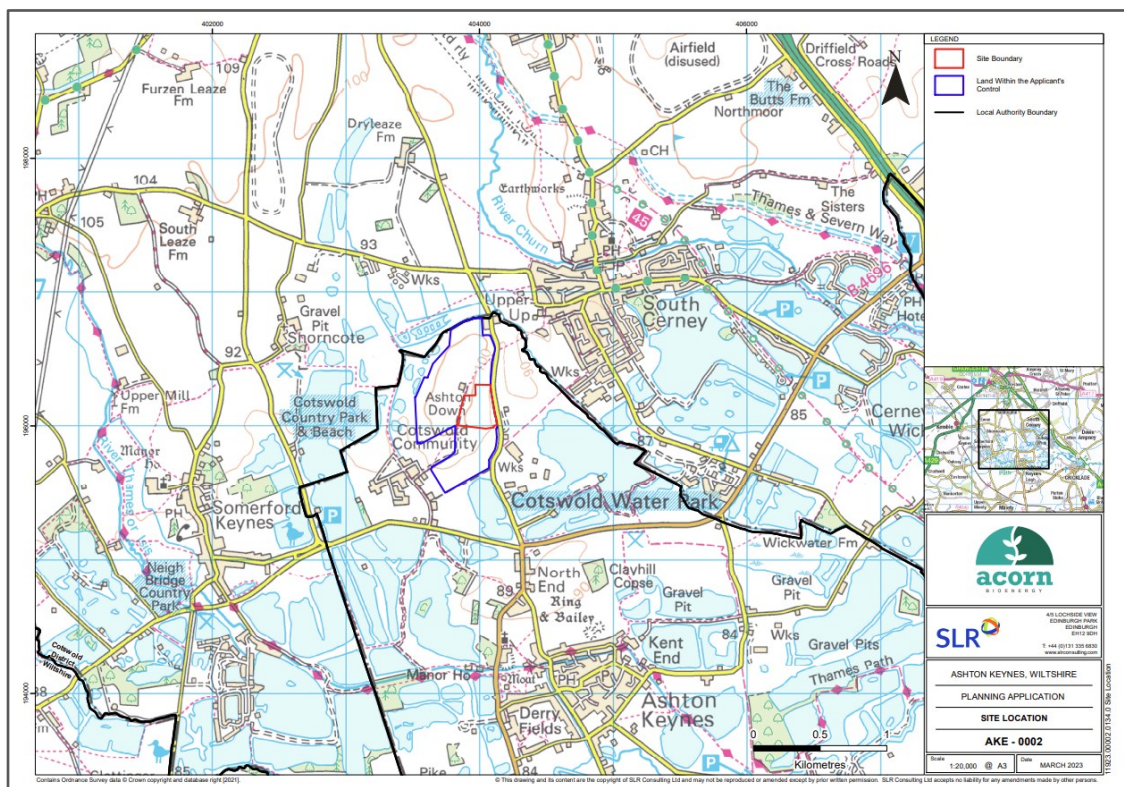
Figure 2-1 - Site Location Plan (Drawing Number AKE-0002)

Figure 2-2 Site Location Plan Aerial Photograph

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 This Chapter describes the application site (the Site) and the surrounding area and is intended to provide the reader with an understanding of its setting in the local area and how it presently looks. This chapter of the Environment Statement should be read in conjunction with the planning application drawings provided as part of the Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS).
- 2.2 For identification purposes, the proposed development would be located on agricultural land off Ashton Road, southeast of South Cerney, Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire, and falls entirely within the administrative boundaries of Wiltshire Council. The Site itself does not have a postcode, however the closest postcode to the site is SN6 6QT. The Site is situated on NGR **SU 03993 96195** as shown edged red in Figure 2-1 Site Location Plan (Drawing Number AKE - 002).

Figure 2- 1 - Site Location Plan



Application Site

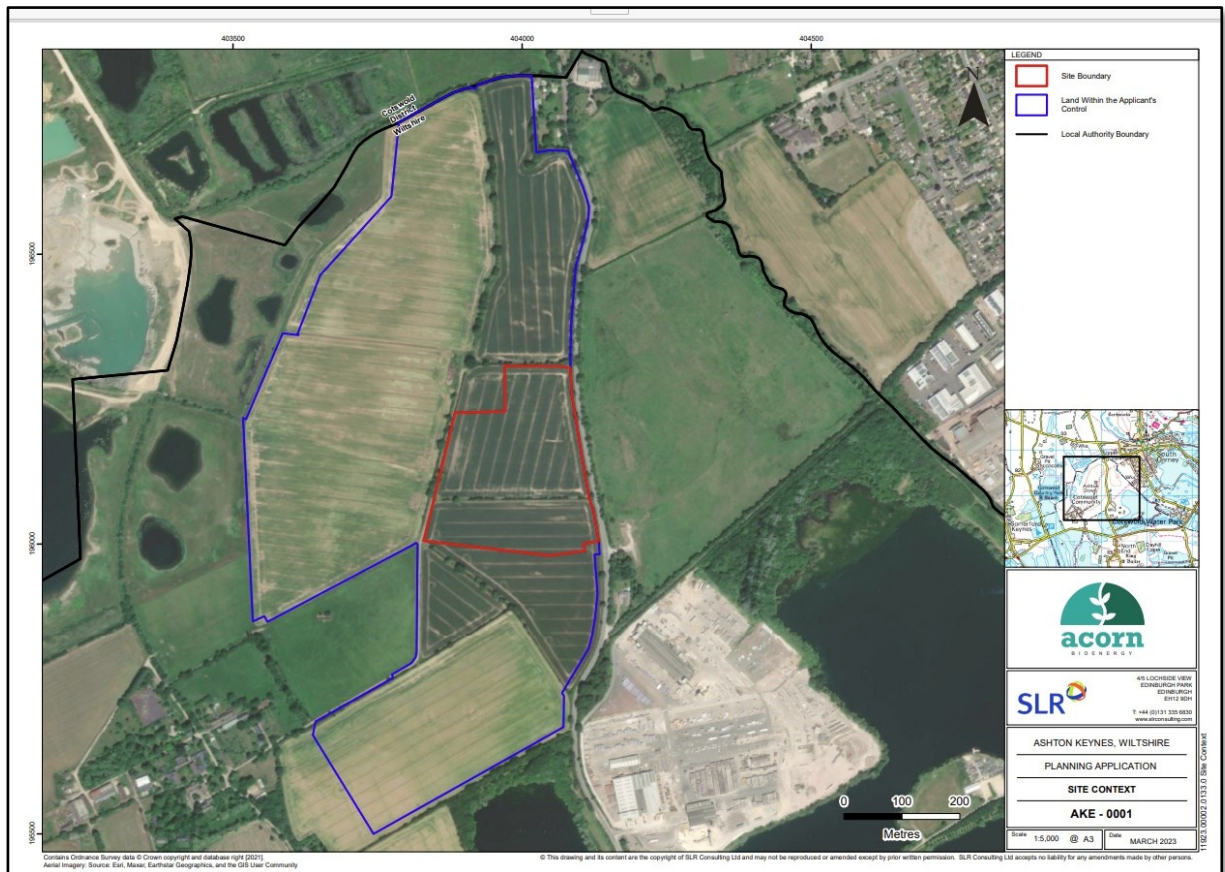
- 2.3 The 6.99 Ha Site is located immediately west of Ashton Road in an agricultural area approximately 2km north of the village of Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire. Ashton Road runs adjacent to the eastern

boundary of the site. Its junction with Spine Road (B4696) is to the south of the site approximately 1km away.

- 2.4 The Site is formed of one complete field and a portion of a second field immediately to the south, which are bound to the east by Ashton Road. Both fields which form the site are in arable use, and the fields are divided by an intermittent hedge and low trees. A shallow drainage ditch lies on the northern side of the divide between the two fields.
- 2.5 The Site is typically bound by hedges on all sides except the southern boundary which bisects the southern field. Further shallow drainage ditches are present outside the north and eastern boundaries. An unsurfaced access track runs along the outside of the western boundary.
- 2.6 The land east of the Site, beyond Ashton Road is a closed landfill and has been restored to sheep pasture. The likelihood of the site being classified as Best and Most Versatile (BMVL) agricultural land is anticipated to be low, as the Agricultural Land Classification map for the Southwest Region¹ suggesting that the site would be Grade 3 ('good to moderate').
- 2.7 Figure 2-2 shows the application site in the context of the surrounding area.

¹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/144017?category=5954148537204736>

Figure 2-2 – Site Location Plan – Aerial Photograph



Geology

- 2.8 No artificial deposits are recorded on the Site. Worked ground is recorded to the east and southeast.
- 2.9 Mudstone bedrock is present at or close to the surface across most of the Site, with no overlying superficial deposits with the exception of a strip of Northmoor sand and gravel superficial geology present along the eastern edge of the Site. The superficial and gravel extends across a significant area to the north, east, south and west of the site with the deposits only absent across the extent of the elevated area of land upon which the Site is located.

Topography

- 2.1 Topographic data was provided by the Environment Agency's open data website in order to define the ground elevations and the natural man-made features of the Site. The survey showed that the levels across the site range between approximately 102.1m along the western boundary and 89.7m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the south-east with elevations falling towards the east.

Hydrology

- 2.2 The Site falls completely within the planning jurisdiction of Wiltshire Council, who is also the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for the site. The site falls in Flood Zone 1 which is low risk.
- 2.10 The river Thames flows to the south of the Site in a west-east alignment, approximately 2km south. The River Churn and Cerney Wick Brook, subsidiaries of the Thames also flow, primarily in an eastern direction, near to the Site, eventually joining the Thames at different intervals. At its closest, the River Churn flows approximately 1km northeast of the Site. Cerney Wick Brook is a tributary of the Thames, at its closest it runs approximately 350m northeast of the Site before joining the Thames 4km of the Site in the southeast.
- 2.11 The site is located within a unique environment created of a series of large man-made lakes created via mining for the gravel industry. The nearest lakes are situated approximately 1km to the southeast and 0.7km to the west respectively. There are approximately 20 lakes present within 2km of the Sites boundary; the closest being Lake 26 approximately 350m to the southeast and Lake 62 approximately 400m to the south.
- 2.12 Additionally, the Site lies within an area that is classified as a Source Protection Zone 2 (Outer Protection), a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (Surface Water), a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone (Surface Water) and a SSSI Impact Risk Zone.

Surrounding Area

- 2.13 The Site is surrounded by agricultural land on all sides. Beyond Ashton Road, to the east, is a previous historic landfill site, which has since been restored to sheep pasture. To the south-east is an Aggregate Industries concrete works.
- 2.14 The site is set within a landscape of similar open fields characteristic of the area, on a wider scale the area is also noted for its large network of the lakes. The lakes, used mostly for leisure purposes make up a network of approximately 170 lakes, creating the Cotswold Water Park SSSI. The villages of South Cerney and Ashton Keyes are approximately 2km away to the southwest and north respectively.
- 2.15 The closest residential properties are located at the Old Farmhouse/ Cotswold Community this is situated to the southwest of the site. There are further residential properties to the north, in a small hamlet situated on the B4696.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 2.1 A PRoW runs along the Site's western boundary in a north-south alignment connecting the Old Farmhouse/ Cotswold Community to South Cerney via Ashton Road. A public bridleway runs to the southeast and southwest

- 2.2 More information on the PRoW network is set out in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) chapter of the ES.

Archaeological Designations and Listed Buildings

- 2.3 An Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment (HEDBA) was undertaken to assess the potential effect of the proposed development on heritage assets. There are no designated heritage assets of an archaeological nature within the boundary of the Site, historic mapping suggests the Site has always been undeveloped agricultural land. There are also no World Heritage Sites, Registered Battlefields or Registered Parks and Gardens within the Site boundary or within the wider 1km search area.
- 2.4 A Designated Heritage Asset was identified within the 1km study area – A Scheduled Monument comprising the Settlement E of Ashtonfield (LUID:1004691) located approximately 0.3km to the south of the site.
- 2.5 Four Grade II Listed Buildings were identified approximately 0.3km to the southwest – Ashtonfields Reception Offices of Cotswold Community (LUID: 31766); Ashtonfields Community Hall and Chapel, Cotswold Community (LUID: 317665); Ashtonfields and Attached Staff Rooms (LUID: 317664); and Ashton Field Farmhouse (Cotswold Community) (LUID: 317663).

Ecological Designations

- 2.6 The Site is not situated on any sites of statutory designation; however, the Site lies within 2km of the Cotswold Water Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the impact risk zone for this SSSI slightly encroaches onto the proposed site on its western boundary. The Wildmoorsway Meadows SSSI is situated 2.8km northeast; and Clattinger Farm SSSI is 3.3km to the southwest. Other statutory designations include:
- Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (6km northwest);
 - Coke's Pit Lake Local Nature Reserve (1.5km southwest);
 - North Meadow Cricklade National Nature Reserve (5km southeast); and
 - North Meadow & Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation (3.2km southwest/ 5km southeast).
- 2.7 There are a number of Conservation Areas situated within 5km of the study area, these include:
- There are a number of Conservation Areas within the 5 km Study Area. These include:
 - Preston Conservation Area (CDC) (circa 4.42 km to the northeast);
 - Harnhill Conservation Area (CDC) (circa 4.77 km to the northeast);
 - Driffield Conservation Area (CDC) (circa 4.44 km to the northeast);

- South Cerney Conservation Area (WC) (circa 0.58 km to the northeast);
- Ashton Keynes Conservation Area (WC) (circa 1.01 km to the southwest);
- Oakesey Conservation Area (WC) (circa 3.75 km to the southwest);
- Somerford Keynes (CDC) (circa 1.97 km to the southwest);
- Kemble Conservation Area (CDC) (circa 4.67 km to the west); and
- Ewan Conservation Area (CDC) (circa 3.34 km to the west).

2.8 There are no areas of ancient woodland i.e., both semi-natural and ancient replanted present within 2km of the Site. The nearest areas of woodland are situated approximately 6km to the west of the site; Kemble Wood (6km west); Oaksey Wood (6.3km southwest); and Flittridge Wood/ Maskedyne (6.7km southwest).

Landscape Designations

2.9 The Site and all of the 5km Landscape Study Area (considered as part of the LVIA lie within National Character Area (NCA) Profile:108 Upper Thames Clay Vales. The Site is identified in the Wiltshire Council Local Landscape Character Assessment and lies within Landscape Character Type 12a Thames Open Clay Vale.

Likely Visual Receptors

2.10 The closest residential properties (likely visual receptors) are located to the southwest of the Site, at the Cotswold Community building area cluster approximately 400m south. Visual Receptors will also likely include users of the Public Right of the Way (PRoW) immediately to the west and north of the Site, as well as those using Ashton Road recreationally to the east.

Planning History

2.11 A search of the Wiltshire Council planning portal shows that there is one planning application for the site, for the formation of an agricultural access from Ashton Road in the southeast corner (20/04771/FUL).

2.12 The area comprising the former Cotswold Community area c.500m to the south of the site has three associated permissions:

- 21/0520/REM- Reserved matters application for 27 residential units, replacement of 27 existing and conversion of the four Listed Buildings within the adjoining former Cotswold Community area – Approved Dec 2022; and

- 21/02481/LBC – Application for Listed Building Consent associated with above works. Proposed housing layout, with proposed site to the west – Approved Dec 2022.
- PL/2022/04973 - Variation of condition 2 on 16/02765/WCM to extend the time the land needs to be restored to until 1st July 2023. Approved Sept 2022.

ES Baseline

2.13 The above summary of baseline conditions represents a brief overview of the much more detailed consideration of current circumstances set out in the Environmental Statement chapters, notably:

- Chapter 4 Air Quality (Earthcare Limited)
- Chapter 5 Ecology;
- Chapter 6 Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Scheme;
- Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual;
- Chapter 8. Land Quality;
- Chapter 9 Transport; and
- Chapter 10 Heritage.

2.14 In addition, the following technical reports accompany this planning application:

- Lighting Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Preliminary Ecology Assessment and Biodiversity Gain Plan
- Tree Survey

CONCLUSIONS

2.15 This Chapter has described the Site and the surrounding area and provided the reader with aspects of setting and constraints which could be impacted by the proposed development. These considerations are assessed in more detail within the accompanying technical reports submitted in support of the planning application and the remaining chapters of this Environmental Statement.