

Environmental Statement – Volume 1: Main Report

Environmental Statement: Part 5 Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

3MW solar array and ancillary development

Land north of the A303, Chicklade, Wiltshire, England, SP3 5SS

Date: February 2026 | DKR Ref: 02482

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. DKR Rural Planning (DKR) have been instructed by Enviromena (the Applicant) to prepare this Environmental Statement (ES) as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), undertaken in support of a planning application submitted to Wiltshire Council, as Local Planning Authority (LPA), for a 3MW solar array and ancillary development (Proposed Development) on land north of the A303, Chicklade, Wiltshire, England, SP3 5SS (the Site).
- 1.2. The ES author holds The Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (formerly the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment) Practitioner Membership Standard, reflecting a practical knowledge of EIA.
- 1.3. The proposal comprises the construction of a temporary (for a period of 40 years) solar farm to include the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels to generate electricity, comprising:
- PV Array;
 - Perimeter Fence;
 - Transformer Station;
 - Vehicular access;
 - Hedgerow planting; and
 - Ancillary works.
- 1.4. The purpose of this ES is to provide the LPA with sufficient information with respect to the potential significant environmental effects arising from the Proposed Development in order to aid the decision-making process.
- 1.1. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC) Planning Practice Guidance¹ states that the purpose of EIA is:
- “... to protect the environment by ensuring that a local planning authority when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project, which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects, and takes this into account in the decision-making process. The regulations set out a procedure for identifying those projects which should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, and for assessing, consulting and coming to a decision on those projects which are likely to have significant environmental effects”. Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 4-002-20140306.
- 1.2. Planning Practice Guidance states² (Paragraph: 035 Reference ID: 4-035-20170728):
- “The Environmental Statement should be proportionate and not be any longer than is necessary to assess properly those effects”.
- 1.3. To this end the ES is concise and focusses on the potentially significant effects discussed in the LPA's interim LPA Scoping Opinion.
- 1.4. DKR prepared a Scoping Report for the LPA's attention, requesting a formal Scoping Opinion under Part 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)

¹ [Environmental Impact Assessment – GOV.UK](#)

² [Environmental Impact Assessment – GOV.UK](#)

Regulations 2017³ (EIA Regs), which was submitted on 03rd December 2025. The LPA requested an extension of time to issue their Scoping Opinion until January 29th 2026, an interim Scoping Opinion was received on 22nd January 2026, with an onward extension of time agreed until 24th February for issue of the LPA's final Scoping Opinion.

1.5. The Scoping Opinion is considered further at **Section 2** below.

1.6. The following reports form part of the ES and are included in full at ES **Volume 2**: Appendices:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Metric Assessment – EcoLogic January 2026; and
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – LHC Design January 2026.

This ES should be read in conjunction with the corresponding planning application and documents that comprise that planning application.

Structure and Content of the Environmental Statement

1.7. This ES comprises three volumes:

Volume 1: Main Text

1.8. This document, containing the full text of the EIA.

Volume 2: Appendices

1.9. This provides the detailed supporting data and the full text of Technical Chapters presented in Volume 1.

Volume 3: Non-technical Summary (NTS)

1.10. The NTS provides a concise summary, in non-technical language, of the key information in the EIA.

Statement of EIA Competence

1.11. This ES has been compiled and co-ordinated by DKR Rural Planning and has included input from relevant technical experts.

1.12. Regulation 18, Part 5 18 (5)(b) (The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017) requires; the environmental statement must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts. **Table 1** below constitutes the competency statement and summarises the experience of the ES contributors:

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/571/part/4>

Consultant	Contribution	Relevant Expertise
DKR Rural Planning	ES collation. Chapters 1 – 5 and 9 - 11	Jonny Rankin BA (Hons) Urban Studies and Planning, Dip TP, MRTPI, PISEP 20 years of experience in both the private and public sector, preparing environmental impact assessments for major planning applications. Holds Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment – Practitioner Membership Standard.
EcoLogic	Chapter 6	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Biodiversity Metric Assessment author Rebeka Pajor-Papai: 2.5 years' experience delivering protected species surveys and Preliminary Ecological Assessments. Overseen by: Andrew Charles BSc (Hons) in Environmental Biology & an MSc in Habitat Creation & Management, became a full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management in 2006. 22 years working as a professional Ecological Consultant, Andrew holds Species Survey Licenses for Bats, Great crested newts, Dormouse & Barn owl, and has held development licences relating to numerous bat roosts and badger.
Enviromena	Chapter 5 and 7	Steven Bainbridge BSc first class Hons Environmental Studies, UEA, MSc Town Planning, MRTPI. Steven has 22 years of planning experience and is head of planning at Enviromena, an independent power producer operating across the UK and Europe, with nearly 400MWp under management.
LHC Design	Chapter 8	Mr. David Entrican BEng PGDip Landscape Architecture David is a Senior Landscape Architect with 11 years of experience in the industry, delivering Landscape Visual Impact Assessments and Landscape Design for multi-disciplinary projects.

Table 1 - Competency of ES contributors

Where to Find and Consult on the Environmental Statement

- 1.13. Copies of this ES can be obtained from Enviromena Project Management UK Limited at the following address: Enviromena, Diddenham Court, Grazeley, Reading, RG7 1JQ. A charge of £25 will be made for each paper copy of the report provided, based on the cost of reproducing and posting the documents.
- 1.14. Copies of the ES can also be viewed, by arrangement, at Wiltshire Council Planning Department, County Hall, Bythessea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN. Or via the planning application search on the Wiltshire Council website.

2. Environmental Impact Assessment

- 2.1. This chapter sets out the general approach to the EIA process. It describes the process of identifying the environmental issues to be addressed in this ES and used to identify potential effects and assess their significance.
- 2.2. The key objectives of this EIA process are to:
- Set out baseline information for the study area to identify those features which may be impacted upon by the development;
 - Identify and assesses predicted environmental impacts;
 - Identify where environmental impacts can be avoided, and environmental benefits achieved, through mitigation inherent within the site design; and
 - Taking any mitigation measures into account, assesses the residual impacts of the development proposal.

Scoping Context

- 2.3. The proposed development falls within category 3 (a) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations⁴, applicable to any 'Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water' where 'The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare'. The red line boundary for the application extends to 12 hectares, however, the proposed solar array takes up just 2.8 hectares, in excess of the 0.5 hectare threshold given at Schedule 2.
- 2.4. To assist with the consideration of Schedule 2 development the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have published the Indicative Screening thresholds table⁵, the 'indicative criteria and threshold' is "Thermal output of more than 50 MW" which is not relevant to solar PV, therefore there is no given indicative threshold. The table also provides the following (bold added for emphasis) "Level of emissions to air, arrangements for the transport of fuel and any visual impact".
- 2.5. Schedule 3 of the EIA Regs provides 'Selection Criteria for Screening Schedule 2 Development', inclusive of 2.— (1):
- The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered, with particular regard, to—*
- (c)the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas—*
- (viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.*
- 2.6. Schedule 2 developments are only 'EIA development' where they have the potential to give rise to likely significant effects on the environment by factors such as their nature, size and location, that is worthy of further assessment.

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/schedule/2>

⁵ [eia-thresholds-table.pdf](#)

- 2.7. Accounting for the Schedule 2 thresholds considered above and the environmental setting, within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, it was considered that EIA, on precautionary principle, is applicable in this instance.

Determining Scoping the Environmental Impact Assessment

- 2.8. Determining the scope of the component technical assessments is a key part of the EIA process. The scoping process identifies the potential for significant environmental effects to occur (prior to mitigation) as a result of the proposed development and the methods that will be used to assess the environmental effects. It also identifies the aspects of the environment (the ‘topics’) that should be scoped out from the assessment where it is unlikely there would be significant effects on the environment.
- 2.9. As per Regulation 15 – (1)⁶ of the EIA Regs reflected at Paragraph: 036 of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)⁷ EIA scoping is not a formal requirement, but it is good practice for:
- “A person who is minded to make an EIA application may ask the relevant planning authority to state in writing their opinion as to the scope and level of detail of the information to be provided in the environmental statement (a “scoping opinion”)”.
- 2.10. While scoping is not a statutory requirement under the 2017 EIA Regulations, the preparation of a scoping report is considered best practice as it identifies, at an early stage, the key issues to be addressed in the ES.
- 2.11. As such, a Scoping Request was submitted to the LPA on 03rd December 2025. The LPA requested an extension of time until 29th January and an interim Scoping Opinion was received, dated 22nd January 2026. A further extension of time until the 17th of February has been agreed to allow for issue the LPA’s final Scoping Opinion.
- 2.12. All EIA Scoping correspondence to take is included, in full, at **Appendix 1.1** within **Volume 2** of this ES.

Scope of the ES

- 2.13. Following receipt of the interim Scoping Opinion on the 22nd of January 2026 and subsequent correspondence with the LPA on 26th January 2026, a summary of the scope of the EIA is presented at **Table 2** below:

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/regulation/15>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment>

Topics to be Scoped In to the ES	Topics to be Scoped Out of the ES
Biodiversity	Agricultural Land Classification
Climate Change	Archaeology
Landscape	Contamination and the Water Environment
	Ecology
	Flood Risk and Drainage
	Glint and Glare
	Ground Conditions and Contamination
	Designated Heritage Assets and Built Heritage
	Lighting
	Major Accidents and Disasters
	Pollution and Nuisance
	Socio-economics, Health and Population
	Traffic and Transport

Table 2 - Scope of the EIA

2.14. **Table 3** below summarises the statutory consultee responses to the EIA Scoping process, with responses cross-referenced to the relevant ES Chapter or submitted report:

Consultee	Scoping Response Summary	ES Chapter / Planning Application Reference
Archaeology	The desk assessment should be informed by a non-intrusive geophysical survey of the area of the proposed solar array. This will go some way to establishing the likely archaeological content of the site and the likely harm that the proposal will have upon buried archaeological remains.	See the submitted Archaeological Assessment.
Conservation	I see no reason to disagree with the conclusion regarding the exclusion of built heritage from the ES.	See the submitted Heritage Impact Assessment.
County Highways	I note the EIA scoping opinion request. In terms of the local highway network managed by this Authority, I do not believe that an EIA would be required for highway impacts	See the submitted Construction and Operational Transport Management Plan.
Drainage	A surface water drainage strategy should be submitted as part of future planning applications.	See the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy.
Ecology	The site is not covered by any statutory nature conservation designations however it is located within three 6km Barbastelle SAC parcel buffers associated with the Chilmark Quarries SAC. The site consists of an arable field and supports some habitats of ecological value to local wildlife, contributing to habitat connectivity with the wider landscape area, providing function for commuting and foraging by a range of species, via hedgerows with trees and grass margins.	See the submitted Ecology Report (EcoLogic – January 2026) and ES Chapter 6 ,
Environment Agency	The Site Location Plan (Ref: 00267–05-SiteLocation) includes areas which are located on a Source Protection Zone 3 which is a	See the submitted Flood Risk Assessment

Consultee	Scoping Response Summary	ES Chapter / Planning Application Reference
	groundwater resource particularly sensitive to contamination. SPZs.	and Drainage Strategy.
Natural England	A robust assessment of environmental impacts and opportunities based on relevant and up to date environmental information should be undertaken prior to a decision on whether to grant planning permission.	See the submitted Ecology Report (EcoLogic – January 2026) and ES Chapter 6 ,
National Highways	An assessment of transport related impacts of the proposal should be carried out and reported as described in current national planning practice guidance. A construction traffic management plan will be required for our approval and acceptance which will need to consider construction vehicle routing and the adequacy of the existing site access arrangements to accommodate construction vehicle movements. A glint and glare assessment will need to be provided which should consider any potential impacts on trunk road users.	See the submitted Transport Assessment, CTMP and Glint and Glare Assessment submitted in support of the planning application.
Public Protection	Upon submission of a full application, this department would expect a Noise Impact Assessment to be undertaken and a report provided to demonstrate that the installation of inverters at this location will not result in any adverse impact on the nearest noise-sensitive receptors.	See the submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement
Rights of Way	The site access for this is over a Public Bridleway known as CHIC5. The bridleway is recorded with a minimum width of 2 metres. It should be noted that we are in receipt of an application to modify the definitive map for this path and record it as a Byway open to all traffic with a width of 40 metres.	Please see the submitted plans [the proposed access point has changed since submission of the Scoping request].

Table 3 - Consultee Responses to Scoping

Study Area

- 2.15. The ES should focus upon potential significant effects to the baseline environment. With this in mind the study area was selected in order to allow studies to focus on significant effects, whilst each discipline will require a bespoke study area, the principal assessment which informs the establishment of the study area is landscape.
- 2.16. Informed by ZTV intervisibility mapping, fieldwork observations and viewpoint appraisal, it was the professional opinion of the landscape architect, that a 5km radius study area would ensure adequate assessment of potentially significant effects. The approximately 5km study area is shown at **Figure 1** below:

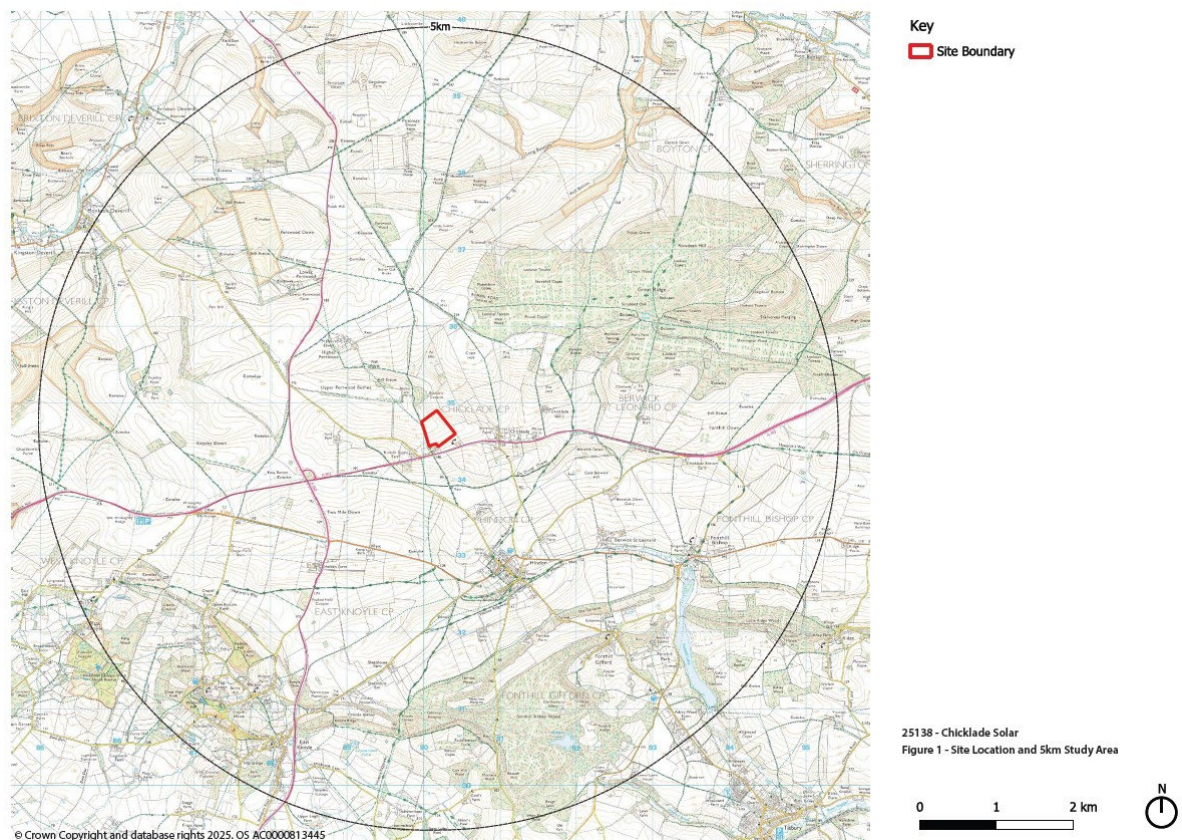


Figure 1 - Study Area

Significance Criteria

- 2.17. The significance of effects has been evaluated with reference to legislation and accepted criteria relevant to the individual chapter topics. Where it has not been possible to quantify effects, qualitative assessments have been carried out based on available knowledge and professional judgement. Where uncertainty exists, this has been noted in the relevant assessment sections of the topic chapter.
- 2.18. The significance criteria generally lead to a common outcome of classifying the significance of effects as major, moderate, minor or negligible. Effects are also described according to whether they are considered to be adverse, negligible or beneficial.

2.19. Specific significance criteria for effects have been developed, giving due regard to the following:

- Extent and magnitude of the effect;
- Duration of the effect (whether short, medium or long-term);
- Nature of the effect (whether direct or indirect, temporary or permanent);
- Whether the effects occur in isolation or are cumulative;
- Performance against environmental quality standards;
- Sensitivity of the receptor; and
- Compatibility with environmental policies.

2.20. For effects where definitive quality standards do not exist, significance has been based on the:

- Local, regional or national scale of the effect;
- Nature of the effect in relation to established quality standards, laws or guidelines;
- Number of receptors affected;
- Sensitivity of these receptors;
- Duration of the effect; and
- Professional experience and judgement of the assessor.

2.21. The following terminology has been used in this ES to define residual effects:

- **Adverse** – Detrimental or negative effects to an environmental resource or receptor;
- **Negligible** – No determinable effect; and
- **Beneficial** – Advantageous or positive effect to an environmental resource or receptor.

2.22. Where adverse or beneficial effects have been identified, these have been assessed against the following scale:

- Negligible – Barely perceptible effects to an environmental resource or receptor;
- Minor – Slight, very short or highly localised effect;
- Moderate - Limited effect (by extent, duration or magnitude); and
- Major - Considerable effect (by extent, duration or magnitude) of more than local scale or in breach of recognised acceptability, legislation, policy or standards.

2.23. A significance matrix can be used when determining the significance of an effect. Criteria to describe the levels of magnitude and receptor sensitivity will be provided within the topic chapter.

2.24. For the purposes of reporting within this ES, major / moderate and major effects are considered to be significant.

Difficulties and Limitations

2.25. No specific difficulties or limitations have been encountered. Consequently, a robust and comprehensive EIA has been undertaken as reported in this ES, providing the LPA with the information required to determine the application.

3. Site Description

Site Location

- 3.1. The Site is centred on OS grid coordinates 390243, 134534 and comprises a 12 hectare field unit (corresponding with the red line boundary), with the proposed solar array taking up 3.4 hectares. The Site is located approximately 120m to the north of the A303 and 900m to the west of Chicklade itself. Chicklade Services Station is approximately 170m to the south east of the Site and there is a cluster of commercial and residential properties at 'Newlands' approximately 100m to the south west.
- 3.2. The Site comprises a cropped arable field and the Site Location is shown at **Figure 2** below:

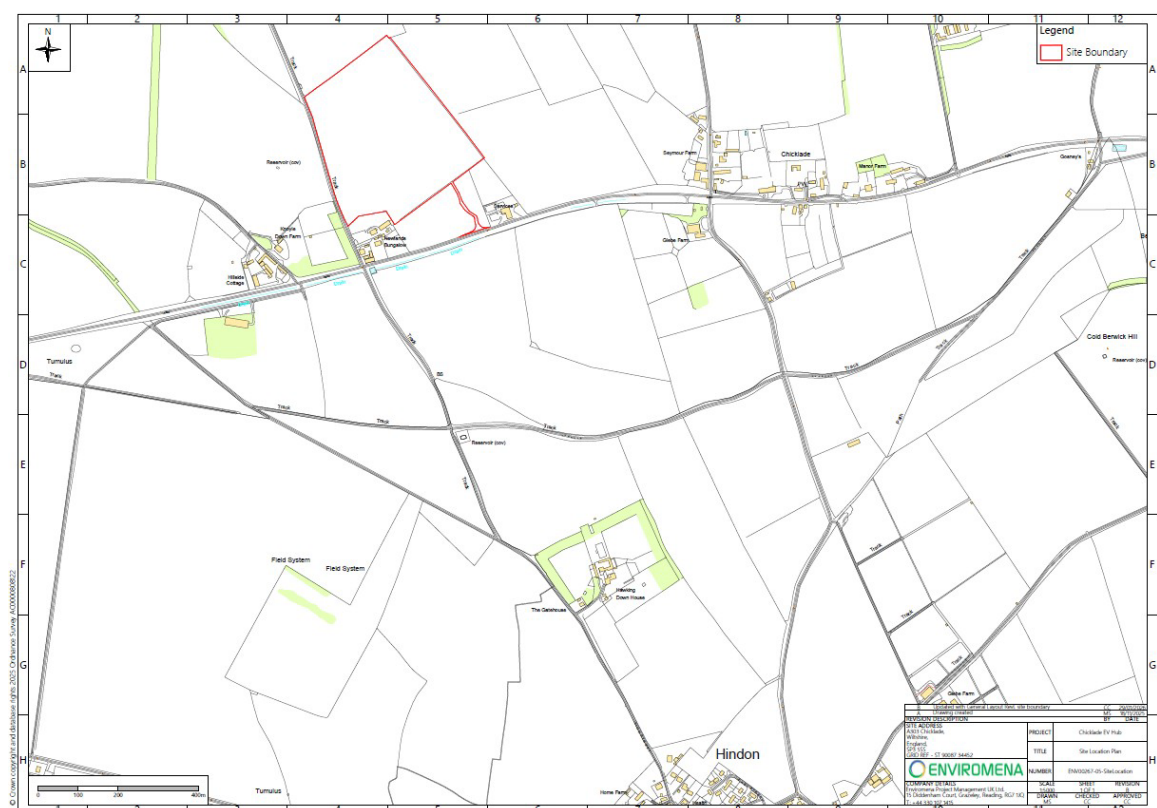


Figure 2 - Site Location – outlined red

Existing Environmental Conditions

- 3.3. Kernon Countryside Consultants have undertaken an Agricultural Land Classification of the Site, as shown at **Figure 3** below, the Site is classified Grade 3a, with a portion of 3b in the north – east corner. The Natural England published Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region⁸ confirms that Grade 3 Agricultural Land is considered 'Good to Moderate' and as can be seen at **Figure 4** (which follows), Grade 3 is the most abundant Grade of Agricultural Land in the South West Region:

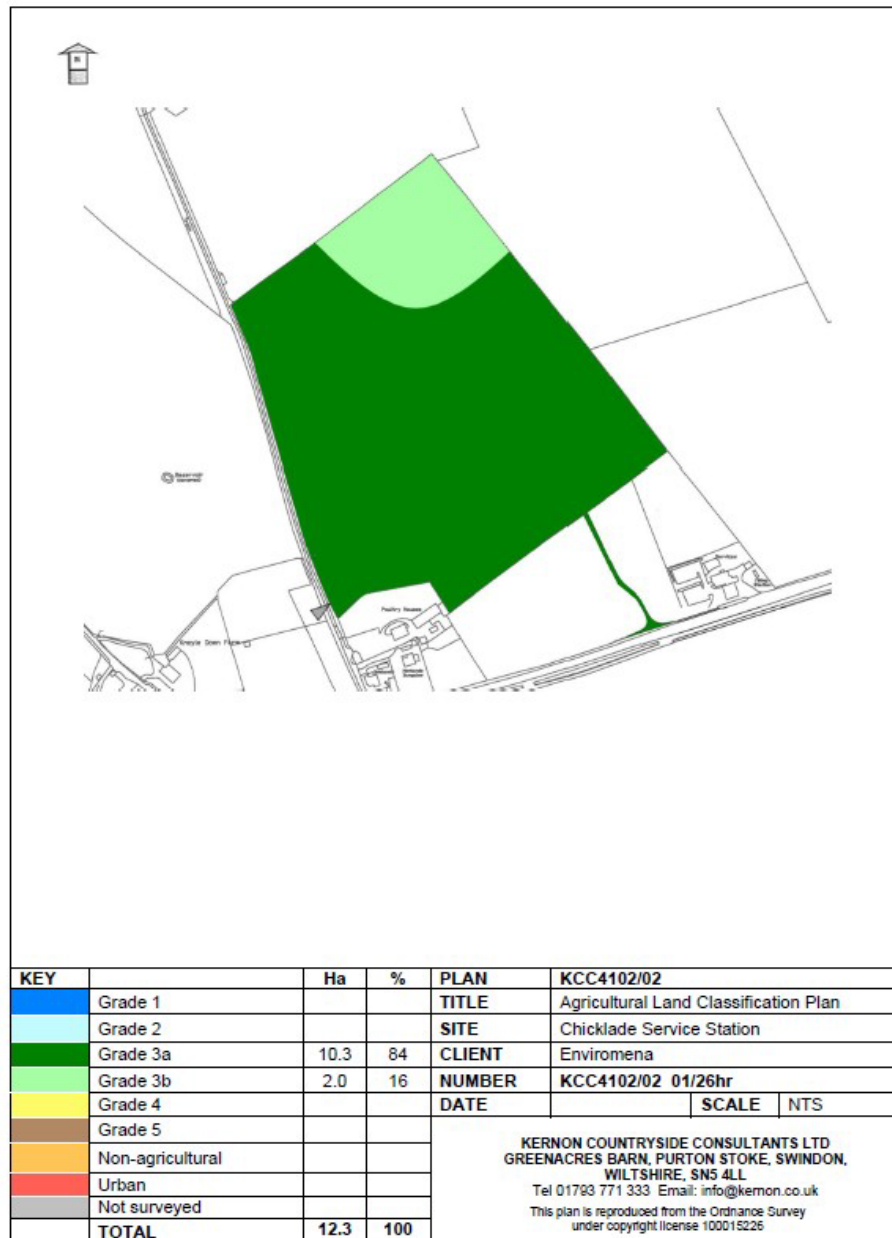


Figure 3 - Agricultural Land Classification (Site circled red)

⁸ [Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region - ALC006](#)

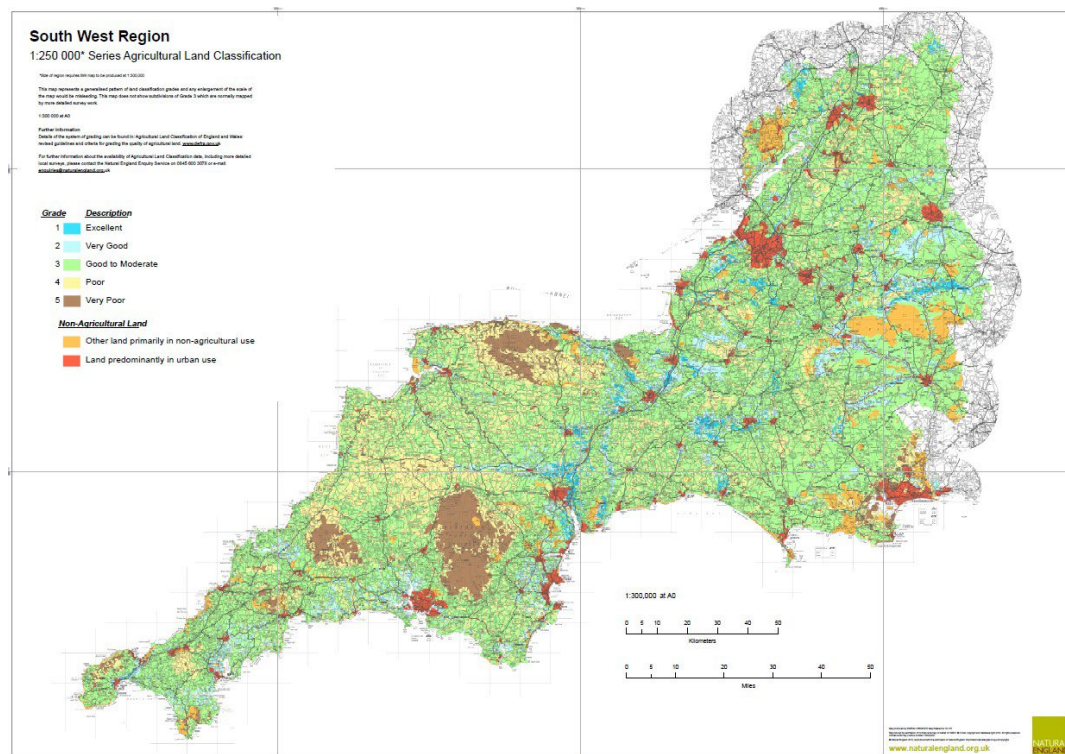


Figure 4 - Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region

- 3.4. Noting the temporary (40 year) lifespan of the proposal and lack of invasive foundations, the Proposed Development is reversible, and arable land can be reinstated at the end of the solar array operational lifespan.
- 3.5. The submitted Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) appraised Historic England's 'The List' and the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record. **Figure 5** below replicates the heritage assets identified within proximity of the Site, Listed buildings are marked by blue pins, red circles indicates Scheduled Monuments and Orange pins have been added to indicate locations of non-designated heritage assets.
- 3.6. The closest Listed Building is the Grade II Listed Chicklade House approximately 780m to the east of Site, Bowl barrow Scheduled Monument is approximately 700m to the south – west and the closest non-designated asset is Knoyle Down Farm approximately 550m to the west of Site. Whilst the effect upon the settings of the designated and non-designated heritage assets is assessed in detail within the submitted HIA, the distances involved between the assets and Proposed Developments preclude the potential for significant environmental effects upon the setting of those assets:

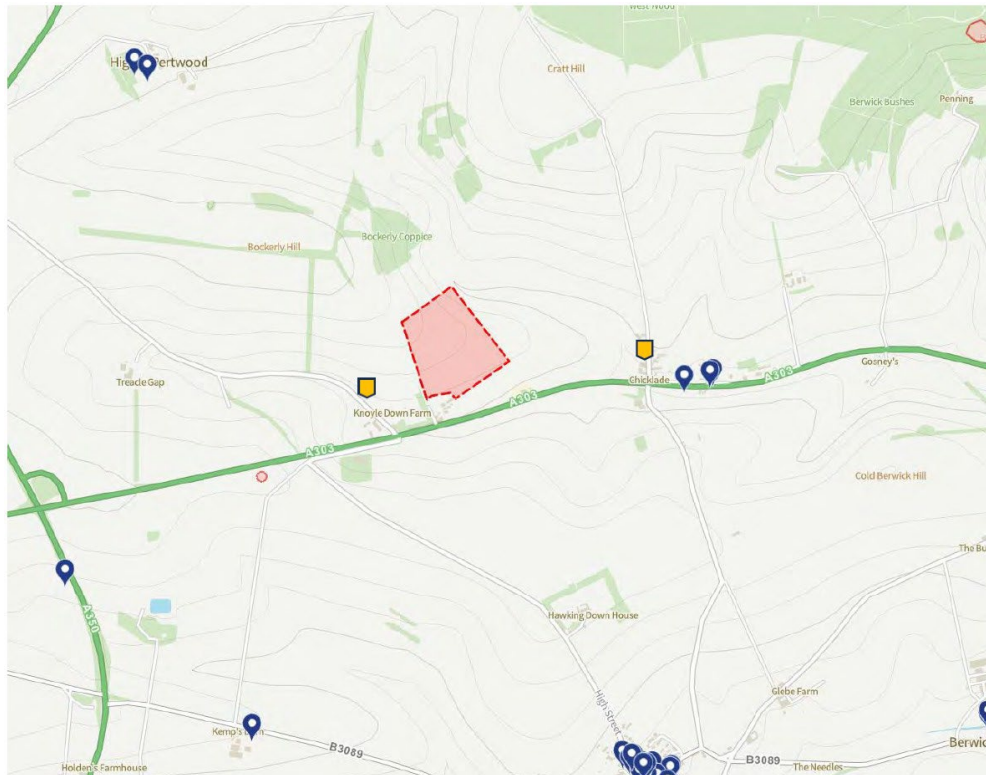


Figure 5 - Proximate Heritage Assets

- 3.7. The site is outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3, within Flood Zone 1, at the lowest risk of flooding and is not in an area subject to surface water flooding according to the Government Flood map for planning⁹, which is replicated at **Figure 6** below:

⁹ <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

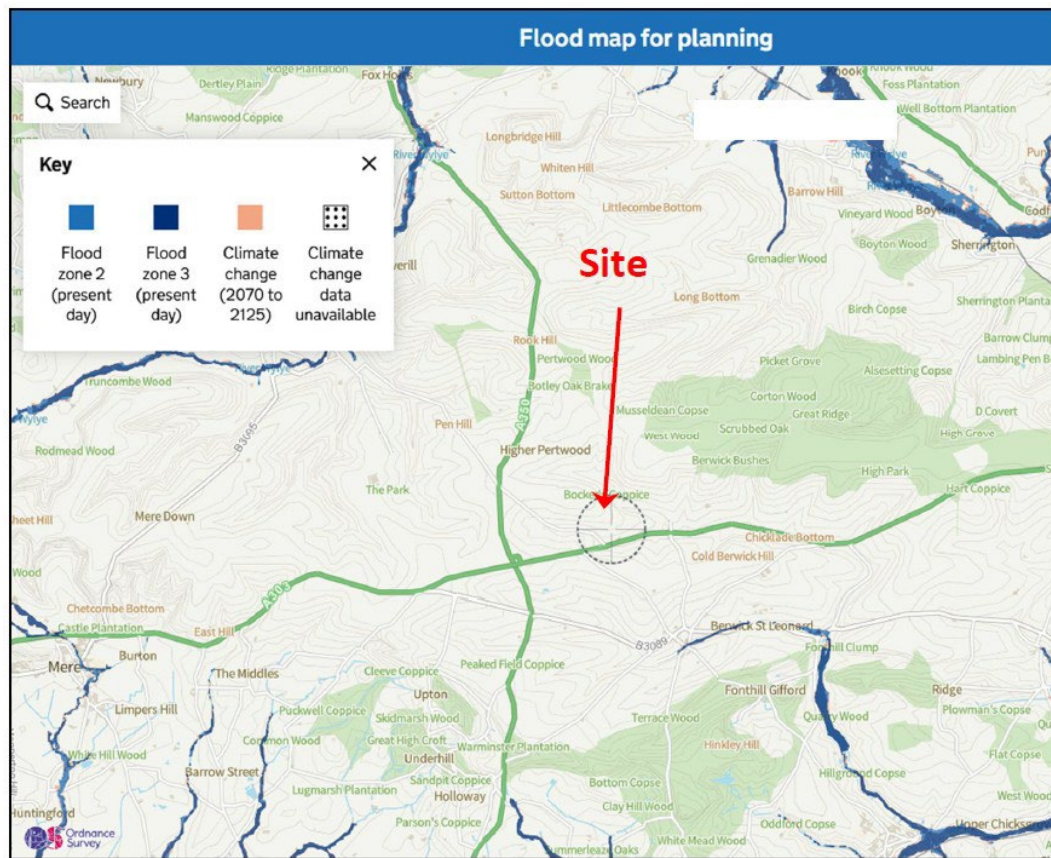


Figure 6 - Flood Map for Planning

- 3.8. The Site is not located within or proximate to any ecological designations. The Site is within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the Fonthill Grottoes SSSI, situated some 4.6km to the south – east, which can be seen on the below extract from the Government's Magic Map¹⁰:

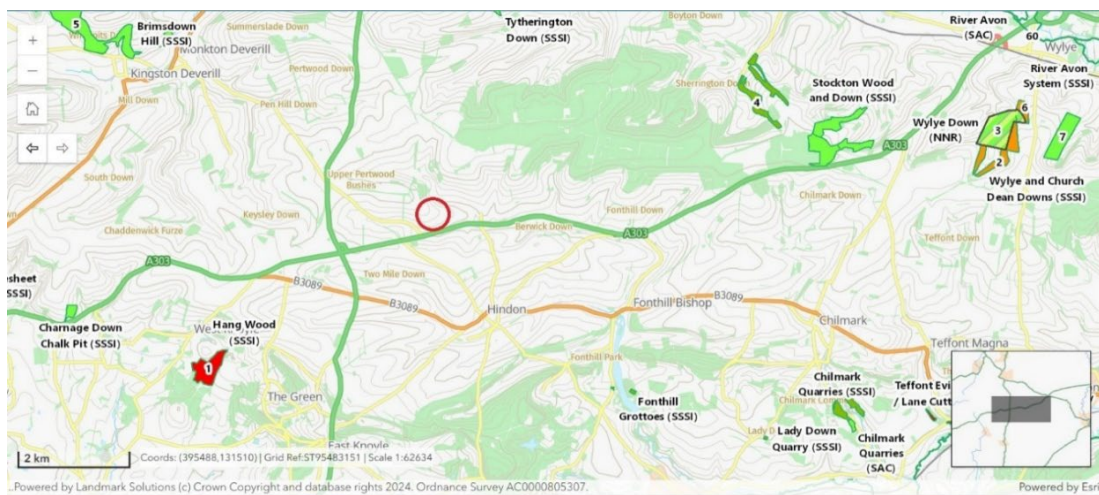


Figure 7 - Ecological Designations (site circled red)

¹⁰ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.html>

4. Description of the Development

Proposed Development

- 4.1. The Site is centred on OS grid coordinates 390243, 134534 and comprises a 12 hectare field unit (corresponding with the red line boundary), with the proposed solar array taking up just 3.4 hectares of the red line. The Site is located approximately 120m to the north of the A303 and 900m to the west of Chicklade itself. Chicklade EV charging services station is approximately 170m to the south east of the Site and there is a cluster of commercial and residential properties at 'Newlands' approximately 100m to the south west.
- 4.2. The Proposed Development is a 3MW 'private wire' array which will serve the new EV charging service station.
- 4.3. The Site comprises a cropped arable field and the Site Location is shown at **Figure 8** below:

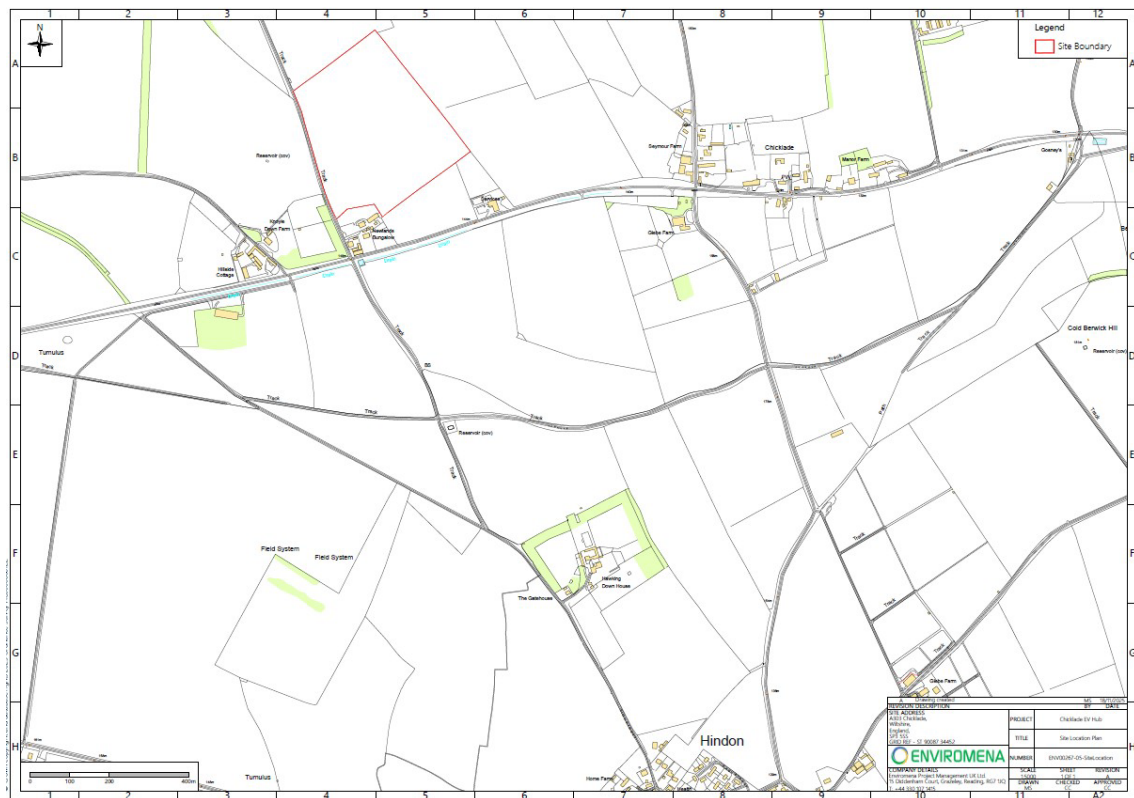


Figure 8 - Site Location (red lined)

- 4.4. The proposed layout is shown at **Figure 9** below:

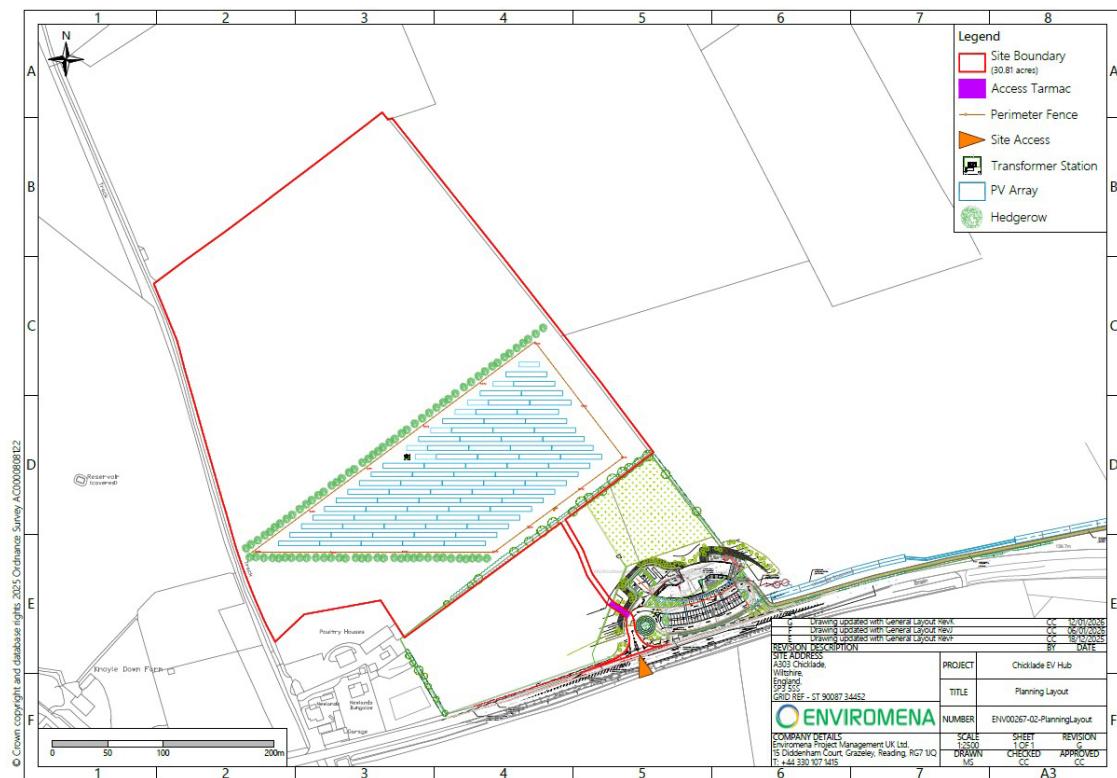


Figure 9 - Proposed Site Layout

4.5. Solar array sectional detail is shown at **Figure 10** below:

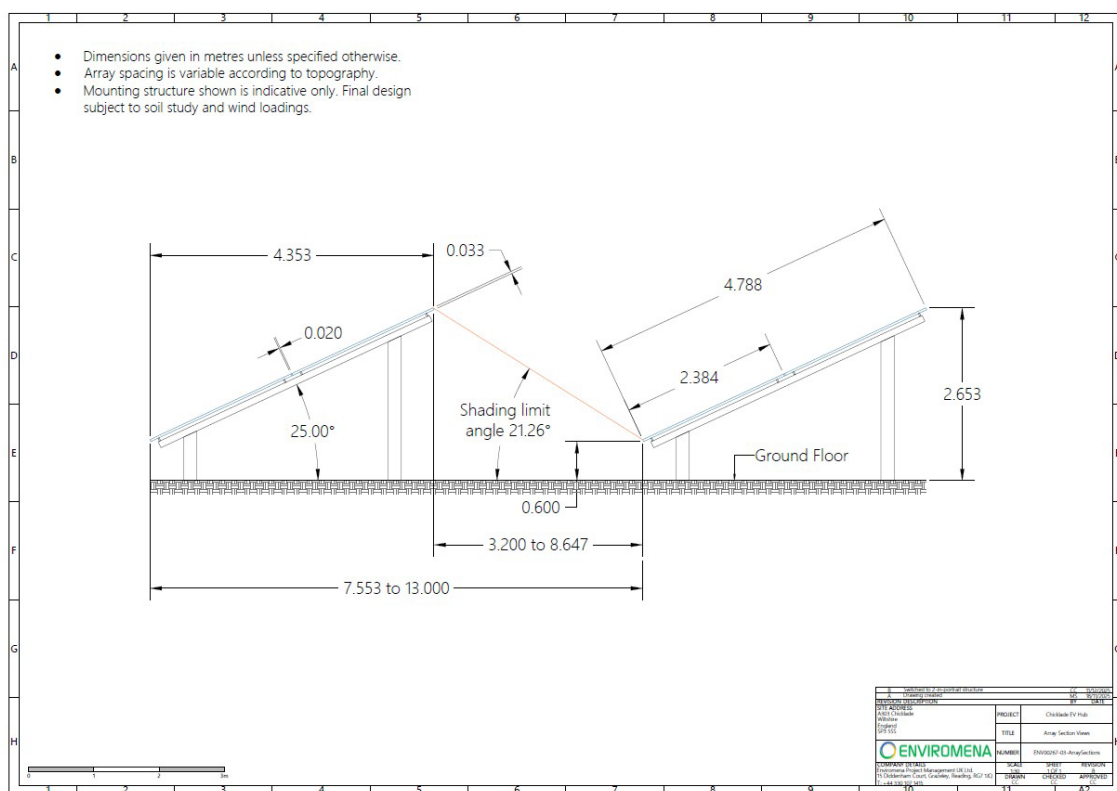


Figure 10 - Solar Array Section

Need for Development

International

- 4.6. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change, the Sixth Assessment Report of the IPCC working group has reported that:

Global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least mid-century under all emissions scenarios considered. Global warming of 1.5 °C and 2 °C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades¹¹.

- 4.7. And:

From a physical science perspective, limiting human-induced global warming to a specific level requires limiting cumulative CO₂ emissions, reaching at least net zero CO₂ emissions, along with strong reductions in other greenhouse gas emissions. Strong, rapid and sustained reductions in CH₄ emissions would also limit the warming effect resulting from declining aerosol pollution and would improve air quality.

The United Nations confirms “Every fraction of a degree of warming matters. With every additional increment of global warming, changes in extremes and risks become larger¹²” and:

Exceeding 1.5 °C could also trigger multiple climate tipping points — such as breakdowns of major ocean circulation systems, abrupt thawing of boreal permafrost, and collapse of tropical coral reef systems — with abrupt, irreversible, and dangerous impacts for humanity¹³.

The IPCC have identified the reduction of greenhouse gases and reduction of reliance on fossil fuels the route to addressing climate impacts:

Many climate impacts, especially sea-level rise from ice sheets, disappearance of mountain glaciers, and ocean acidification, are essentially permanent for many generations to come and will take centuries to thousands of years to restore to even today’s conditions. To minimize losses and damages, it is crucial to minimize the magnitude and duration of temporarily exceeding 1.5 °C by urgently and significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions and phasing out fossil fuels¹⁴.

¹¹ [IPCC AR6 Working Group 1: Summary for Policymakers | Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis](#)

¹² [1.5°C: what it means and why it matters | United Nations](#)

¹³ [Exceeding 1.5°C global warming could trigger multiple climate tipping points | Science](#)

¹⁴ [Overshooting 1.5°C is fast becoming inevitable. Minimising the magnitude and duration of overshoot is essential – 10insightsclimate](#)

National

- 4.8. Renewable energy projects such as this proposed solar array support the green economy, contributing some 3.8%¹⁵ to the UK economy, the low carbon and renewable energy economy generating £41.2 billion in the UK, during the year 2020 alone¹⁶.
- 4.9. It also supports agricultural diversification, helping UK farmers to balance the ever-complex issues of food production, international price competition, increasing animal welfare & environmental standards and workforce shortages at all levels.
- 4.10. The proposed solar array will have an approximate capacity of 3MW, creating enough clean, renewable energy to power approximately 2,000 homes per annum.
- 4.11. The solar array would avoid 1,200 tonnes of CO₂ being generated per annum from fossil-fuel based energy generation, the equivalent of taking 800 cars off the road each year.
- 4.12. The British Energy Security Strategy (BESS)¹⁷ published in April 2022 sets out how the UK intends to secure clean and affordable energy for the 'long-term'. Realising the strategy requires 70GW of solar generation capacity by 2035. This is a significant increase from the 13.7GW of solar as of February 2022.
- 4.13. Over the five-year period up to the publishing of the BESS, the UK increased its solar capacity by only 1.8GW, highlighting the extraordinary need for a significant increase in the deployment of decentralised solar energy schemes of the proposed Development's scale if the BESS targets are to be met. The BESS offers clear support for solar development that is co-located with other functions to maximise the efficiency of land use – this includes dual solar and agricultural land use.
- 4.14. The Energy Security Bill now known as the 'Energy Bill', published in July 2022, builds upon the British Energy Security Strategy to invest in homegrown energy and maintain the diversity and resilience of the UK's energy supply. The Bill establishes the need to accelerate the growth of low-carbon technologies.
- 4.15. As part of 'Energy Security Day', in March 2023 the Government released a suite of documents mapping out their proposals to strengthen energy security and independence as part of the UK's mission to achieve net zero by 2050 entitled Powering Up Britain: Net Zero Growth Plan (updated 04th April 2023)¹⁸.
- 4.16. The plans strongly recognise the importance of solar deployment at all scales in the power sector, achieving UK energy security and delivering net zero more widely. The Government's commitment to quintuple solar generation to 70GW by 2035 is re-stated and supported through a 'solar taskforce', designed to further enable the delivery of the solar target and publish a solar roadmap in 2024.

¹⁵ [Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit | The UK's net zero economy](#)

¹⁶ [Low carbon and renewable energy economy, UK – Office for National Statistics](#)

¹⁷ [British energy security strategy – GOV.UK](#)

¹⁸ [Powering Up Britain: Net Zero Growth Plan – GOV.UK](#)

- 4.17. Following earlier Governments, the current Government have made Net Zero and renewable energy a stated priority since coming into office. With the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, stating on 17th September 2024¹⁹:

“British-based renewable energy is the cheapest and fastest way to reduce vulnerability to volatile global fossil fuel markets.”

- 4.18. The Labour Party Manifesto (2024) includes the stated aim to ‘triple solar power’ by 2030 making ‘Britain a Clean Energy Superpower’²⁰.

- 4.19. The Government have set out how they will create the Clean Energy Superpower in the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan: A new era of clean electricity (UK Government December 2024)²¹ including delivery of 45-47 GW of solar power.

- 4.20. The Solar Roadmap: United Kingdom Powered by Solar (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero June 2025)²² details how Government will triple solar power on the way to making Britain a Clean Energy Superpower. The Solar Roadmap includes the following points:

“Ground-mounted solar is one of our cheapest electricity sources to build and operate at scale, with costs falling by around 50% since 2016, enabling the supply of low-cost power directly to the grid.”

And:

“The deployment of solar also boosts the UK’s energy security, through diversifying the energy mix and reducing exposure to international fossil fuel markets.”

Local

- 4.21. At its meeting held on 26 February 2019 Full Council resolved to acknowledge that 'there is a climate emergency and to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030'. Cabinet subsequently committed to make the council carbon neutral by 2030²³.

- 4.22. The pledge relates to the council's carbon emissions (or 'carbon footprint') that are within its direct control, i.e. those from its operations and buildings²⁴. As well as support for private enterprise supporting de-carbonisation, such as the Applicant.

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/energy-uk-conference-2024-keynote-speech-by-by-ed-miliband>

²⁰ <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Labour-Party-manifesto-2024.pdf>

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-power-2030-action-plan>

²² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/solar-roadmap>

²³ [Council continues commitment to tackling the climate emergency – Wiltshire Council](#)

²⁴ [Towards carbon neutral: Our overall challenge – Wiltshire Council](#)

5. Alternatives

Introduction

- 5.1. The EIA regulations at Schedule 4 paragraph 2. requires; A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects²⁵.

Planning Policy and Legislative Context

- The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

- 5.2. The EIA regulations at Part 5 Regulation 18 (2) and (3) state²⁶:

A subsequent application is to be taken to be accompanied by an environmental statement for the purpose of paragraph (1) where the application for planning permission to which it relates was accompanied by a statement referred to by the applicant as an environmental statement for the purposes of these Regulations, but this is subject to regulation 9²⁷.

(3) An environmental statement is a statement which includes at least—

[...]

(d) a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment.

Baseline Conditions

- 5.3. Planning application PL/2022/06298 approved the demolition of the existing service station (comprising petrol filling station, shop, cafe, outbuilding and associated infrastructure) and the erection of a new service station (comprising electrical vehicle charging points, shop, restaurant / cafe, toilets and associated infrastructure) together with landscaping, revised vehicular access and formation of a new pedestrian link, some 160m to the south east of the proposed solar array.
- 5.4. The EV service station has annual electricity demands which will need to be met via electricity supplied via the national grid, roof mounted solar panels or onsite renewable generation.

²⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/schedule/4>

²⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/regulation/18>

²⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/regulation/9>

Assessment of Effects

Technology

- 5.5. Given the 'private wire' connection from the proposed array to the EV charging service station, there is a clear rationale behind the siting. Such proximity reduces transition losses over distance, compared with energy from the national grid, even if the supply was originally generated via renewable sources elsewhere.
- 5.6. The Applicant has the fullness of available renewable energy technology available to them, in deciding on solar generation, as an extension of the roof mounted solar on the EV charging service station, there is a continuity of generation.
- 5.7. Wind turbine generation was discounted owing to the location within the National Landscape and hydro, for example, was not feasible in geographic and topographical terms.
- 5.8. As can be seen at **Appendix 2.1**, within Volume 2, the solar array was sized to meet and indeed exceed the EV hub's annual demand. The proposed solar array has a rated capacity of 3,285 kWp, resulting in 3,670.4 MWh/year.
- 5.9. Combined with the EV charging service station roof mounted solar panels the solar array will offsets approximately 1,385 tonnes of CO₂e every year.

Layout Evolution

- 5.10. As can be seen by comparing **Figure 10** with the Scoping Layout, **Figure 11** below, the layout has evolved considerable since the initial design, amends include:
- Amended vehicular access from the south, instead of utilising the bridleway and existing field entrance in the south – west corner of the Site;
 - Moving the solar panels to the north east, increasing the stand-off to the cluster of buildings at Newlands; and
 - The increase in proposed hedgerow planting on the southern boundary of the array.

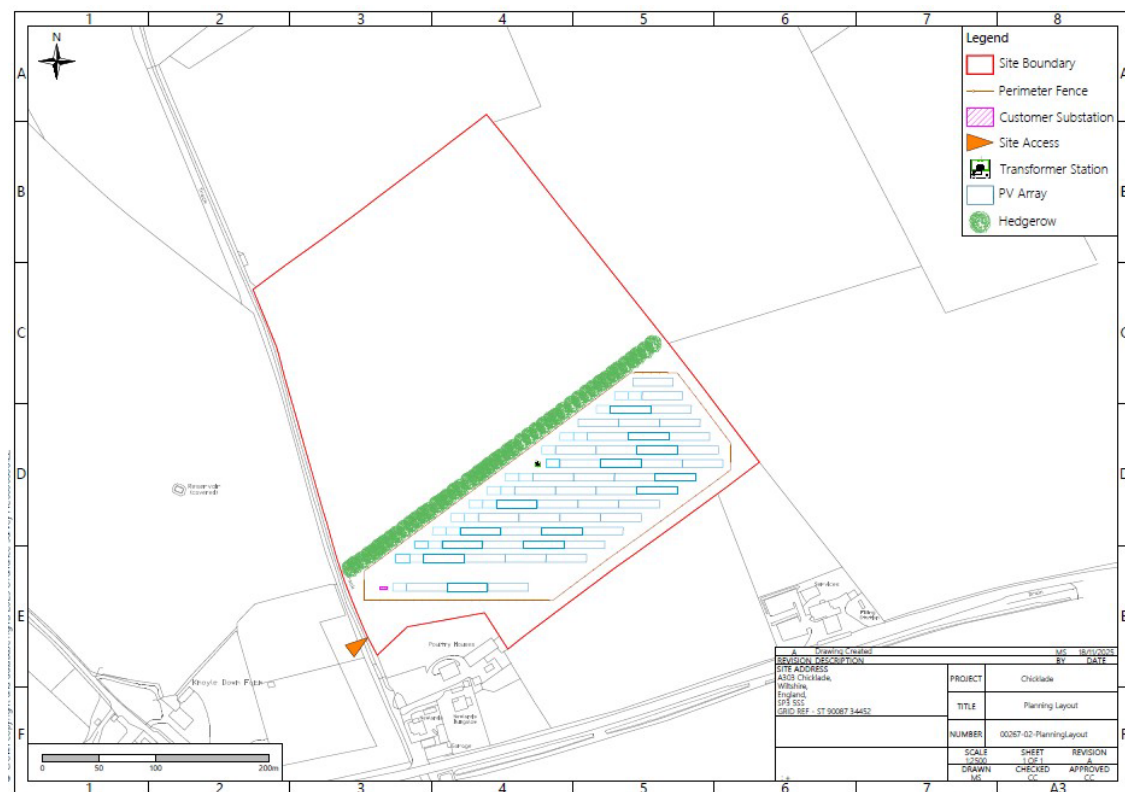


Figure 11 - Scoping Layout

Mitigation and Monitoring

- 5.11. No mitigation is required to address any impacts resulting from the development proposals when considering alternatives in EIA terms.

Residual Effects

Residual effects arising from carbon offset and the combatting of climate change are predicted, are considered further at **Chapter 7** below.

Conclusions

- 5.12. It has been demonstrated in this chapter that there are no preferential alternative sites for the proposed development to supply renewable energy to the Chicklade (EV) service station. The Applicant and appointed consultants consider this to be the most appropriate solution to meet the EV hub's annual demand. Having regard to the assessments undertaken and engagement with stakeholders, the siting of the 3MW solar array and ancillary development, provides the best quality development solution.

6. Ecology and Biodiversity

Introduction

- 6.1. This chapter of the ES has been prepared by DKR in conjunction with EcoLogic Consultant Ecologists who have undertaken a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Metric Assessment of the Proposed Development.
- 6.2. The Ecological Assessment describes the habitats, protected and valued species potential, any designated nature conservation sites, and any other ecological issues within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development. This has allowed for an ecological assessment of the proposed development to be completed. Avoidance measures, mitigation, compensation and ecological enhancements are specified.
- 6.3. The full report is included at **Appendix 3.1** of Volume 2 to this ES, and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric spreadsheet has been submitted with the planning application for the attention of the allocated officer and relevant consultees.

Planning Policy and Legislative Context

Statutory Site Designations

- The European Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC) as amended directs the designation of important wildlife sites through the European Community as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and gives statutory protection to habitats and species listed in the Directive as being threatened or of community interest. Sites identified as candidate SAC (cSAC) are provided with the same level of protection as SAC;
- Annex I of 92/43/EEC as amended lists habitat types which are regarded as being of European importance. Included within these are a number of 'priority habitat types' which are habitats regarded as being in danger of disappearance and whose natural range falls broadly within the European Union. This European law had been transposed into UK legislation by The Conservation (Natural Habitats) &c Regulations 1994, now replaced by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019;
- Habitats of European-wide importance for birds are listed under the EC Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) as amended. Habitats designated under this Directive are notified as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and are identified for holding populations > 1% of the reference population as defined in Appendix 4 of the SPA review of bird species listed in Annex 1 of the same Council Directive. Sites identified as potential SPA (pSPA) are provided with the same level of protection as SPA. This has also been transposed into UK legislation by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019;
- SACs and SPAs, post Brexit, are referred to as "National Site Network Sites" and retain the same level of protection as when the UK was an EU member state;
- Wetlands of International Importance are designated under the Ramsar Convention;
- National ecological designations, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are also afforded statutory protection. SSSIs are notified and protected under the jurisdiction of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). SSSIs are notified based on specific criteria, including the general condition and rarity of the site and of the species or habitats supported by it;

- NNRs are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. NNRs are selected as exemplary, nationally important nature reserves, and they must be at least partially accessible to the public. Most NNRs are managed by Natural England, with some managed by other organisations such as the RSPB or local wildlife trusts; and
- LNRs are designated by local authorities, which must own or have control of the land. As with NNRs, LNRs must be at least partially publicly accessible.

Non-Statutory County Site Designations

- Local authorities may designate certain areas as being of local conservation interest. The criteria for inclusion may vary between areas. Most individual counties have a similar scheme; within Suffolk such sites are designated as County Wildlife Sites (CWS). Designation of such sites does not itself confer statutory protection, but they are a material consideration when planning applications are being determined.

Species Designation and Protection

- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it unlawful to knowingly kill, capture, disturb or injure an individual badger *Meles meles*, or to intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct an area used for breeding, resting or sheltering by badgers (i.e. a sett);
- All bat species are listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Bats and their roosts also receive protection from disturbance from by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This protection extends to both the species and roost sites. It is an offence to kill, injure, capture, possess or otherwise disturb bats. Bat roosts are protected at all times of the year (making it an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts), regardless of whether bats are present at the time;
- All bird species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This prevents killing or injuring any bird or damaging or destroying nests and eggs. Certain species (including barn owl *Tyto alba*) are also listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which prohibits intentionally or recklessly disturbing the species at, on or near an 'active' nest;
- The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) lists Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC), which fall into three categories: Red-listed - species of high concern; Amber-listed - species of medium concern; and Green-listed - species of lower concern. Species are placed on these lists based, among other criteria, on the percentage decline of breeding or wintering populations in recent years. These lists do not indicate rarity for the species concerned, and many listed species are currently common and widespread;
- The great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* is listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. The species is also protected by Sections 9(4) and 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly kill, injure, disturb, handle or sell the animal, and this protection is afforded to all life stages. It is unlawful to deliberately or recklessly damage, destroy, or obstruct the access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection; this includes both the terrestrial and aquatic components of its habitat;
- All native reptiles are listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are afforded protection under Sections 9(1) and 9(5);

- The water vole *Arvicola amphibius* is protected in accordance with Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which water voles use for shelter or protection, or to disturb water voles whilst they are using such a place. It is also an offence to kill, injure, capture or possess water voles;
- The otter *Lutra lutra* is protected in accordance with Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take an otter from the wild, or to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any habitat used by otters or to disturb the otters which make use of those habitats;
- The white clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* is listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) but only receive protection under Sections 9(1) and 9(5). This makes it an offence to take or sell white-clawed crayfish. Section 9 applies to all stages in their life cycle;
- Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) lists plant species which are afforded special protection. It is an offence to pick, uproot or destroy any species listed on Schedule 8 without prior authorisation, and all plants are protected from unauthorised uprooting (i.e. without the landowner's permission) under Schedule 13 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); and
- A Vascular Plant Red List for England provides a measure of the current state of England's flora measured against standardised IUCN criteria. Any taxon that is threatened – Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU) – or Near Threatened (NT) does not have statutory protection but should be regarded as a priority for conservation in England. It should be noted that 'threat' is not synonymous with 'rarity'; some of the species concerned remain relatively common and widespread.

Priority Species and Habitats

- Other priority species and habitats are a consideration under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, placing responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to encourage biodiversity in and around developments. There is a general biodiversity duty in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (Section 40) which requires every public body in the exercising of its functions to 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'. Biodiversity, as covered by the Section 40 duty, includes all biodiversity, not just the Habitats and Species of Principal Importance; and
- Section 41 of the NERC Act lists a number of species and habitats as being Species/Habitats of Principal Importance. These are species/habitats in England (commonly known as Priority Habitats/ Species) which had been identified as requiring action under the UK BAP, and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. The protection of either Priority Species or Habitats is not statutory, but "specific consideration" should be afforded by Local Planning Authorities when dealing with them in relation to planning and development control. Also, there is an expectation that public bodies would refer to the Section 41 list when complying with the Section 40 duty.

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

- 6.4. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken to consider and assess the perceived ecological impacts associated with the proposal, including any perceived impacts to:
- Legally protected species or species of conservation concern;
 - Legally protected habitats or habitats of conservation concern;
 - Any statutory or non-statutory sites of conservation interest; and,
 - Opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancement(s).
- 6.5. A desk study was undertaken for the site and its surroundings including:
- Review of the Government's (DEFRA) mapping website MAGIC;
 - Review of the Government's Natural England Open Data Geoportal website; and,
 - Data purchased from Wiltshire Biodiversity Records Centre (WBRC).
- 6.6. Review of the ecological data included a search of:
- International & European designated sites (Natura 2000 sites) –within a 10 km radius of the site;
 - Statutory designated sites (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)) within a 1 km radius of the site;
 - Non-statutory designated sites (e.g. Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)) designated for wildlife conservation within a 1 km radius of the site;
 - Priority habitats – within a 1 km of the site;
 - Protected species licence records issued by Natural England since 2009 –within 4 km of the site;
 - Great crested newt pond survey records within 1 km of the site; and,
 - Location of the site within any consultation zones designated for protected species.

Field Survey:

- 6.7. The field survey consisted of a walkover assessment of all areas of the site using the UK Habitat Classification System methodology (UKHab, 2023). This is a standard technique designed for classifying and mapping British habitats.

Biodiversity Metric Assessment:

- 6.8. For each site habitat feature identified within the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric (2024), the metric records:
- Habitat type;
 - Area or length;
 - Distinctiveness;
 - Strategic significance; and
 - Connectivity.

6.9. From the recorded parameters, the metric calculates:

- 'Habitat units' for area habitats (e.g. grassland, woodland etc.);
- 'Hedgerow units' for hedges and lines of trees; and
- 'River units' for rivers and streams.

6.10. The habitat values assigned to created and enhanced habitats include factors associated with 'risk' relating to the difficulty and/or time required to establish the new habitat type.

Baseline Conditions

Desk Study

6.11. The desk study identified two sites of international importance within 10 km of the site as described in **Table 14** below:

Ecological Feature	Site Type	Importance	Summary	Distance
Chilmark Quarries	Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	International	Significant due to providing suitable hibernation conditions for numbers of greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe, barbastelle and Bechstein's bats.	Approx. 4km south east
River Avon	SAC	International	Significant due to water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation. As well as species such as Desmoulin's whorl snail, sea lamprey, brook lamprey, Atlantic salmon and bullhead.	Approx. 7km east

Table 4 - Statutory sites with international designation within 10 km of the site boundaries

6.12. There were no statutory sites designated for nature conservation of national importance within 1 km of the site.

6.13. The desk study identified one non-statutory designated site within 1 km of the site as described in **Table 5** below:

Ecological Feature	Site Type	Importance	Summary	Distance
Cratt Hill Down	Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	Local	A gently undulating chalk site with unimproved calcareous grassland, improved grassland and mature scrub.	Approx. 230m north east

Table 5 - Statutory sites with local designation within 1 km of the site boundaries

- 6.14. **Priority Habitats:** The desk study identified areas of deciduous woodland and lowland calcareous grassland within 1 km of the site. The closest priority habitat was an area of deciduous woodland, which was located 5 m west of the survey site.
- 6.15. **European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs):** The desk study identified three EPSLs for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, serotine, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe granted within 4 km of the site. The nearest of which was located approximately 1.9 km south of the site, consisting of a licence for brown long-eared bat, serotine, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe allowing the destruction of a resting place.
- 6.16. **Dormouse:** The desk study identified no EPSLs granted for dormouse within 4 km of the site.
- 6.17. **Great Crested Newt:** The desk-based review identified no EPSLs or survey licence returns for great crested newt within 4 km of the site.
- 6.18. **GCN Impact Zone:** The desk study identified that the site is situated within a 'Green Zone' for great crested newts. The designation of this zone indicates that the area is less likely to contain important pathways of connecting habitat for this species.
- 6.19. **Chilmark Bat SAC consultation zone:** The desk study identified that the site lies outside the Chilmark Quarries Special Area of Conservation (SAC) but within the associated bat consultation zone. This SAC is designated for its importance to greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe, barbastelle and Bechstein's bat populations.
- 6.20. **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty:** The desk-based review identified that the site is located within the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Field Survey

- 6.21. The survey site consisted of areas of non-cereal crops (c1d), tussocky arable field margins (c1a5), bare ground (u1c) and native hedgerows (h2a).
- 6.22. **Amphibians:** The arable field margins within the site provide limited suitability for amphibians, offering only general dispersal habitat due to the actively managed, open nature of the site and limited availability of suitable terrestrial refuge. The hedgerows represented suitable habitat for the terrestrial phases of amphibians.
- 6.23. **Badger:** WBRC held records for badger within 1 km of the site. There were no signs of badger noted during the surveys. However, it is considered possible that badger/s may frequent the site when dispersing and/or foraging on occasion.
- 6.24. **Bats:** WBRC held records for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe, noctule, serotine, barbastelle, Daubenton's, whiskered, Natterer's and Leisler's within 2 km of the site.
- 6.25. **Foraging and Commuting Bats:** The non-cereal crop land provides limited suitability for bat foraging due to it being a monoculture with limited invertebrate suitability. The arable field margin and the hedgerows present across the site provide potential commuting and foraging habitat, with the hedgerows forming linear features within the wider agricultural landscape.

- 6.26. **Roosting Bats:** No potential bat roosting features were identified on site.
- 6.27. **Birds:** WRBC held records for red listed species such as house martin, corn bunting, yellowhammer, linnet, spotted flycatcher, wheatear, house sparrow, marsh tit, whinchat, starling, fieldfare and mistle thrush. The hedgerows and arable field margins provide suitable nesting and foraging habitat for common farmland and hedgerow bird species. The non-cereal crop land may also provide seasonal foraging opportunities.
- 6.28. **Dormouse:** The hedgerows present on site represent suitable habitat for dormouse, although fragmented within the wider landscape.
- 6.29. **Hedgehog:** There were no signs of hedgehog noted during the surveys. However, it is considered possible that hedgehog/s may frequent the site when dispersing and/or foraging.
- 6.30. **Invertebrates:** The arable field margins and hedgerows provide suitable habitat for a range of common invertebrate species. The non-cereal crop land and areas of bare ground provide limited ecological value for invertebrates.
- 6.31. **Reptiles:** The arable field margins may provide a limited extent of habitat for reptiles, offering only general dispersal habitat due to the actively managed, open nature of the site and limited availability of suitable terrestrial refuge. The hedgerows represent suitable habitat for reptiles.
- 6.32. **Other Mammals:** WRBC held records for brown hare, rabbit and harvest mouse within 1 km of the site. Hedgerows and arable field margins may provide limited habitat and connectivity for these species within the wider agricultural landscape.

Biodiversity Metric Assessment

- 6.33. The site does not lie within Wiltshire and Swindon's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, therefore the site is considered to be of low strategic significance within the Biodiversity Metric.
- 6.34. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment demonstrates that the proposal will result in a net gain of 38.87 area habitat units (150.18% gain), delivered through the creation of other neutral grassland, traditional orchards, lowland mixed deciduous woodland and modified grassland. In addition, a net gain of 5.40 hedgerow units (91.11% gain) will be achieved through the creation of hedgerows and enhancement of hedgerows on site.

Assessment of Effects

Statutory Designated Sites

- 6.35. The data search identified two sites within 10 km of the site. The data search identified no sites within 1 km of the site.
- 6.36. There are no perceived impacts to the statutory designated sites identified within the desk study area, due to the intervening distances and character of the designated sites.

Non-statutory Designated Sites

- 6.37. Cratt Hill Down is located 230m to the northeast of the surveyed field. This site is designated through providing a gently undulating chalk site with unimproved calcareous grassland, improved grassland and mature scrub.
- 6.38. There are no perceived impacts to the habitats of this site identified within the desk study, due to the intervening distance and character of the designated site.

Priority Habitats

- 6.39. The desk study identified areas of deciduous woodland and lowland calcareous grassland within 1km of the site. The closest priority habitat was deciduous woodland, which was located 5m west of the survey site.
- 6.40. It is understood that lighting will not be introduced as part of the development, so no impacts on the adjacent priority habitat woodland are perceived.

Amphibians

- 6.41. The arable field margins within the site provide limited suitability for amphibians, offering only general dispersal habitat due to the actively managed, open nature of the site and limited availability of suitable terrestrial refuge. The hedgerows represent suitable habitat for the terrestrial phases of amphibians.

Common Amphibians

- 6.42. Common amphibians, such as common frog, common toad and smooth newt are less dependent on established ponds and have a widespread distribution.
- 6.43. The arable field margins within the site provide limited suitability for amphibians, offering only general dispersal habitat due to the actively managed, open nature of the site and limited availability of suitable terrestrial refuge.
- 6.44. The proposed development will result in localised ground disturbance associated with the installation of a solar farm and EV charging infrastructure and a limited extent of hedgerow to be removed for an access gate. While the site provides limited suitability for amphibians, precautionary and mitigation measures will be implemented during construction and the landscaping of the site to avoid harm or injury and increase opportunities post-development.

Great Crested Newt

- 6.45. The desk-based review identified no EPSLs or survey licence returns for great crested newt within 4 km of the site. The desk study also identified that the site is situated within a 'Green Zone' for great crested newts. The designation of this zone indicates that the area is less likely to contain important pathways of connecting habitat for this species. No ponds were also identified within 1 km of the site.
- 6.46. Due to the lack of records and aquatic breeding habitat for great crested newts nearby, it is considered that they are absent from the site.

Badger

- 6.47. WBRC held records for badger within 1 km of the site.
- 6.48. There were no signs of badger noted during the surveys. However, it is considered possible that badger/s may frequent the site when dispersing and/or foraging on occasion.
- 6.49. Precautionary measures should be employed to ensure no badgers are harmed or injured during the construction period of the development.

Bats

- 6.50. No potential bat roosting features were identified on site.

Foraging and Commuting Bats

- 6.51. The non-cereal crop land provides limited suitability for bat foraging due to it being a monoculture with limited invertebrate suitability. The arable field margin and the hedgerows present across the site provide potential commuting and foraging habitat, with the hedgerows forming linear features within the wider agricultural landscape.
- 6.52. As a signatory to the Bonn Convention (Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe) the UK has committed to protecting bat habitats, which necessitates the identification and protection from damage or disturbance of feeding areas and commuting routes.
- 6.53. There will be no lighting introduced and there will be an increase in opportunities for foraging and commuting bats associated with the habitat creation of woodland, hedgerows, other neutral grassland and a traditional orchard as part of the development.

Birds

- 6.54. WRBC held records for red listed species such as house martin, corn bunting, yellowhammer, linnet, spotted flycatcher, wheatear, house sparrow, marsh tit, whinchat, starling, fieldfare and mistle thrush.
- 6.55. The hedgerows and arable field margins provide suitable nesting and foraging habitat for common farmland and hedgerow bird species. The non-cereal crop land may also provide seasonal foraging opportunities.
- 6.56. It is understood that a limited extent of hedgerow for an access gate and extents of arable field margin and non-cereal crop land will be removed as part of the development. As such mitigation and compensation measures for birds will be required.

Dormouse

- 6.57. The hedgerows present on site represent suitable habitat for dormouse, although fragmented within the wider landscape.
- 6.58. There will be no lighting introduced and there will be an increase in opportunities for dormice associated with the habitat creation of woodland and hedgerows.

Hedgehog

- 6.59. There were no signs of hedgehog noted during the surveys. However, it is considered possible that hedgehog/s may frequent the site when dispersing and/or foraging.
- 6.60. Precautionary measures will be employed to ensure no hedgehogs are harmed or injured during the construction period of the development.

Invertebrates

- 6.61. The arable field margins and hedgerows provide suitable habitat for a range of common invertebrate species. The non-cereal crop land and areas of bare ground provide limited ecological value for invertebrates.
- 6.62. The proposals consist of the development of a solar farm to facilitate an EV charging hub. The works will result in localised ground disturbance during construction, primarily within areas of non-cereal crop. The associated habitat creation as part of the landscaping will create habitat for invertebrates.

Reptiles

- 6.63. The arable field margins may provide a limited extent of habitat for reptiles, offering only general dispersal habitat due to the actively managed, open nature of the site and limited availability of suitable terrestrial refuge. The hedgerows represent suitable habitat for reptiles.
- 6.64. The proposed development will result in localised ground disturbance associated with the installation of a solar farm and EV charging infrastructure and a limited extent of hedgerow to be removed for an access gate. While the site provides limited suitability for reptiles, precautionary and mitigation measures will be implemented during construction and the landscaping of the site to avoid harm or injury and increase opportunities post-development.

Other Mammals

- 6.65. WRBC held records for brown hare, rabbit and harvest mouse within 1 km of the site.
- 6.66. The hedgerows and arable field margins within the site provide limited habitat and connectivity for these species within the wider agricultural landscape. The proposed development will result in localised habitat loss and disturbance; however, given the small scale of works and the nature of habitats affected and habitats created, impacts on these species are anticipated to be negligible.

Biodiversity Metric Assessment

- 6.67. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment demonstrates that the proposal will result in a net gain of 38.87 area habitat units (**150.18% gain**), delivered through the creation of other neutral grassland, traditional orchards, lowland mixed deciduous woodland and modified grassland. In addition, a net gain of 5.40 hedgerow units (**91.11% gain**) will be achieved through the creation of hedgerows and enhancement of hedgerows on site.
- 6.68. With the proposed habitat creation, the development currently exceeds the minimum legal requirement of +10% for area and hedgerow habitat biodiversity units.

Mitigation and Monitoring

- 6.69. To ensure the identified protected species are not harmed or injured during development the following measures should be undertaken for protected species:
- 6.70. **Retained Habitats:** Root protection areas (RPAs) of the retained hedgerows must be taken into account and buffered accordingly. This is to avoid direct damage through the compaction and disturbance of root protection areas which could cause the deterioration of the trees. Any retained trees within the hedgerows adjacent to the development will be protected with additional tree protection fencing for the duration of the proposed works and will be removed upon completion.
- 6.71. **Vegetation Management:** The arable crop land and arable field margins should be maintained with a short sward height prior to and during the works to discourage amphibian and reptile colonisation.
- 6.72. **Hedgerow Removal:** The limited extent of hedgerow removal for an access gate will need to be phased, sensitively timed and undertaken with ecological supervision to consider the potential presence of any amphibians, active bird nests, dormice and reptiles. Two approaches can be undertaken:
- The removal can be undertaken in October avoiding the bird and dormouse nesting season, and the dormouse hibernation season, which extends from March – September and November – February respectively, under supervision by an ecologist, searching for the presence of any protected species by a fingertip search; or
 - Alternatively, a two-stage approach can be undertaken, with vegetation above 20 cm removed first between November & February, and the remaining hedgerow below 20 cm removed between April & October under supervision by an ecologist, searching for the presence of any protected species by a fingertip search.
- 6.73. **Timing of Construction Works:** All works are to be undertaken within daylight hours to ensure there is no disturbance to protected species from lighting or machinery.
- 6.74. **Excavations:** Any excavations, which are to remain open overnight, should be fenced or covered to prevent any potential entrapment and/or injury of species such as badger or hedgehog.

Enhancement measures:

- 6.75. Enhancement measures will be required to compensate for habitats lost and provide additional opportunities for the protected species on-site. These will include:
- **Wildlife Provisions:** Three bat and three bird provisions are to be positioned upon on-site trees within the hedgerows at a minimum height of 3m and 4m, respectively;
 - **Orchard Planting:** Traditional orchard habitat will be created within the southwestern portion of the site through the planting of native fruit trees within a managed grassland sward. The orchard will comprise open-grown trees that support invertebrates, birds, amphibians, reptiles and foraging bats, with planting and long-term management undertaken;
 - **Woodland Planting:** Lowland mixed deciduous woodland will be established along the eastern boundary of the site through the planting of native broadleaved trees. This woodland will enhance habitat connectivity and provide nesting, shelter and foraging opportunities for birds, dormice, invertebrates and bats, trees will be planted;
 - **Other Neutral Grassland:** Areas of other neutral grassland will be created across the northern and western extents of the site through the establishment of a species-rich grassland sward. The meadow will be managed to provide nectar and pollen resources for invertebrates and foraging opportunities for bats and birds;
 - **Hedgerow Creation and Enhancement:** Native hedgerows and native hedgerows with trees will be created within the site, alongside the enhancement of existing boundary hedgerows through traditional laying and re-stocking. These works will strengthen habitat connectivity and provide valuable habitat for birds, bats and other wildlife.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.76. To achieve the required +10% biodiversity net gain (BNG), the landscaping proposals include on-site habitat creation and enhancement measures. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment calculated that the percentage gain for area habitats will be +150.18% (38.87 units), delivered through the creation of other neutral grassland, traditional orchards, lowland mixed deciduous woodland and modified grassland. In addition, a +91.11% gain (5.40 units) will be achieved for hedgerow habitats through the creation and enhancement of native hedgerows.
- 6.77. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment (BMA) results in an 150.18% gain for area habitats and a 91.11% gain for hedgerow habitats, with mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures provided for protected species. Consequently, the development is considered to demonstrate a positive biodiversity impact at the local level.
- 6.78. The Compensation and Enhancement Plan (replicated from Appendix 6 of the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Metric Assessment is shown at **Figure 12** below:

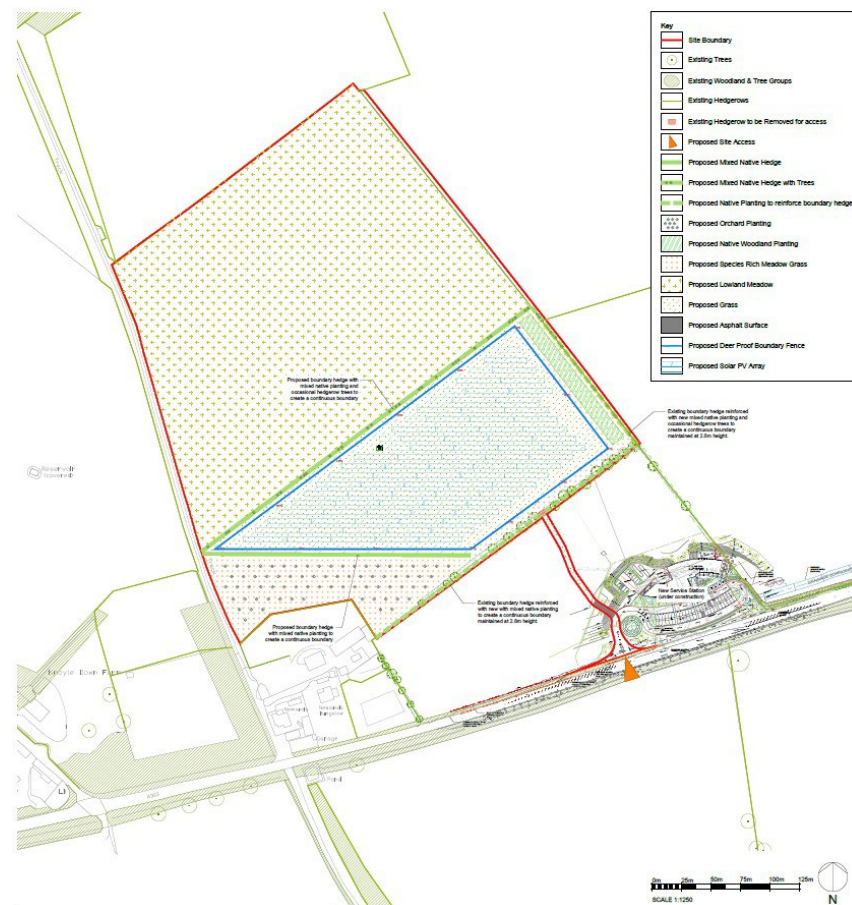


Figure 12 - Landscape Framework Plan

Residual Effects

Mitigation and Monitoring

- 6.79. Mitigation is proposed in respect of retained habitats, vegetation management, hedgerow removal and timing of construction works and excavations. As no significant impacts upon ecology are expected in EIA terms, these impacts are for planning purposes and to ensure legislative compliance.
- 6.80. Enhancement measures include bird and bat boxes, orchard planting, woodland planting, creation of neutral grassland and hedgerow creation / enhancement. The resulting BNG for habitats is +150.18% (38.87 units) and +91.11% gain (5.40 units) for hedgerows.

Residual Impacts

- 6.81. The residual effects of the scheme resulting from the BNG measures is considered to be moderate to major beneficial at a local scale for the lifetime of the development.

Conclusions

- 6.82. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment (BMA) results in an 150.18% gain for area habitats and a 91.11% gain for hedgerow habitats, with mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures provided for protected species. Consequently, the development is considered to demonstrate a significant positive biodiversity impact at the site level.

7. Climate Change

Introduction

- 7.1. This chapter of the ES has been prepared by DKR in conjunction with the Applicant and considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development on climate change.
- 7.2. In accordance with the EIA Regulations, the assessment addresses both:
- the impact of the Proposed Development on climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions); and
 - the vulnerability of the Proposed Development to climate change (climate resilience and adaptation).
- 7.3. The Proposed Development comprises a temporary (40-year) solar photovoltaic (PV) array and associated infrastructure on land north of the A303, Chicklade, Wiltshire.
- 7.4. The Proposed Development is a 3MW 'private-wire' solar array intended to serve the adjacent electric vehicle (EV) charging hub (approved and under construction) and is therefore closely linked to transport decarbonisation objectives, both nationally and locally.
- 7.5. The assessment is proportionate and focuses on likely significant effects, consistent with the approach adopted across this ES and considered to be best practice.

Planning Policy and Legislative Context

- The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017; and
- Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to: Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation (IEMA 2020).

Policy context

- 7.6. Wiltshire Council has acknowledged a climate emergency (February 2019) and committed to becoming carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030, and to seek to make Wiltshire carbon neutral in the same timeframe. The LPA's Wiltshire Climate Strategy Delivery Plan 2025 is included, in full, at **Appendix 4.1** within Volume 2 of this ES.
- 7.7. Wiltshire Council's Local Transport Plan 4 identifies decarbonisation of transport as central to its strategy and notes that transport is the largest sector for greenhouse gas emissions in Wiltshire. Wiltshire Council's Local Transport Plan 4 Electric vehicle infrastructure sub-strategy March 2025 is included, in full, at **Appendix 4.2** within Volume 2 of this ES.
- 7.8. Wiltshire's approach to climate response in the transport context is framed within the Wiltshire Council Local Transport Plan 4: Draft LTP4 Carbon Paper (October 2024) which is included, in full, at **Appendix 4.3** within Volume 2 of this ES:
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation); and
 - preparing for impacts of climate change (adaptation).

- 7.9. Wiltshire's EV Infrastructure Sub-Strategy identifies that the transition from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles to electric vehicles represents the greatest opportunity to reduce GHG emissions from transport in the short to medium term.
- 7.10. Wiltshire Council's Climate Strategy Delivery Plan 2025 highlights adoption and implementation of LTP4 (with decarbonisation of transport at its centre) as a key area of opportunity.

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

- 7.11. Effects are described as adverse, negligible or beneficial and assessed using the ES significance scale (negligible, minor, moderate, major). Moderate and major effects are considered significant.
- 7.12. This chapter follows current good practice guidance which recognises that climate change assessment within EIA includes two key strands:
- Impact of the project on climate (climate change mitigation), and
 - Vulnerability of the project to climate change (climate change resilience and adaptation).
- 7.13. For the purposes of this chapter:
- A beneficial effect would include measurable reductions in GHG emissions compared with the baseline (e.g. renewable electricity displacing grid electricity and/or reduced emissions from transport); and
 - An adverse effect would include material increases in GHG emissions, or a material vulnerability to climate change that would increase environmental harm or compromise the safe operation of the Proposed Development.

Baseline Conditions

Current emissions context

- 7.14. Wiltshire Council's Carbon Paper identifies that in 2022 transport contributed 38% of Wiltshire's overall greenhouse gas emissions, representing the largest emitting sector in the county.
- 7.15. Wiltshire is a largely rural county, with a high reliance on private vehicles, and this is reflected in both transport patterns and emissions sources.

Electricity and transport baseline

- 7.16. In the baseline scenario (without the Proposed Development), the EV hub would import electricity from the national grid mix. Although grid electricity continues to decarbonise over time, it retains a carbon intensity and therefore contributes to emissions.
- 7.17. In the baseline scenario (without the EV hub), vehicles would continue to refuel using fossil fuels or would charge at alternative locations, with associated emissions remaining within the transport sector.

Future baseline (climate change context)

- 7.18. Good practice guidance recognises the importance of considering a future baseline for climate change, including general trends in future climate (IEMA 2020).
- 7.19. For the purposes of this assessment, the future baseline is considered in narrative terms over the lifetime of the Proposed Development (40 years). The assessment recognises that future climate conditions may include more frequent extreme weather events and changes in rainfall patterns, with potential implications for drainage performance, construction activities and ongoing maintenance requirements.
- 7.20. In line with good practice, this assessment adopts a UK Climate Projections²⁸ (UKCP18) scenario approach to avoid underestimating future climate risks.
- 7.21. The National Trust have published a Climate Hazards Map²⁹, based on Representative Concentration Pathways (RCP) 8.5 where greenhouse gas emissions continue to grow unmitigated, leading to a best estimate global average temperature rise of 4.3 °C by 2100³⁰. **Figures 13 – 15** below show that the Site would be:
- High Risk of Overheating and Humidity in the Future;
 - Medium Risk from Storm Damage; and
 - High risk of average daily mean temperature exceeding 12 – 14 degrees.

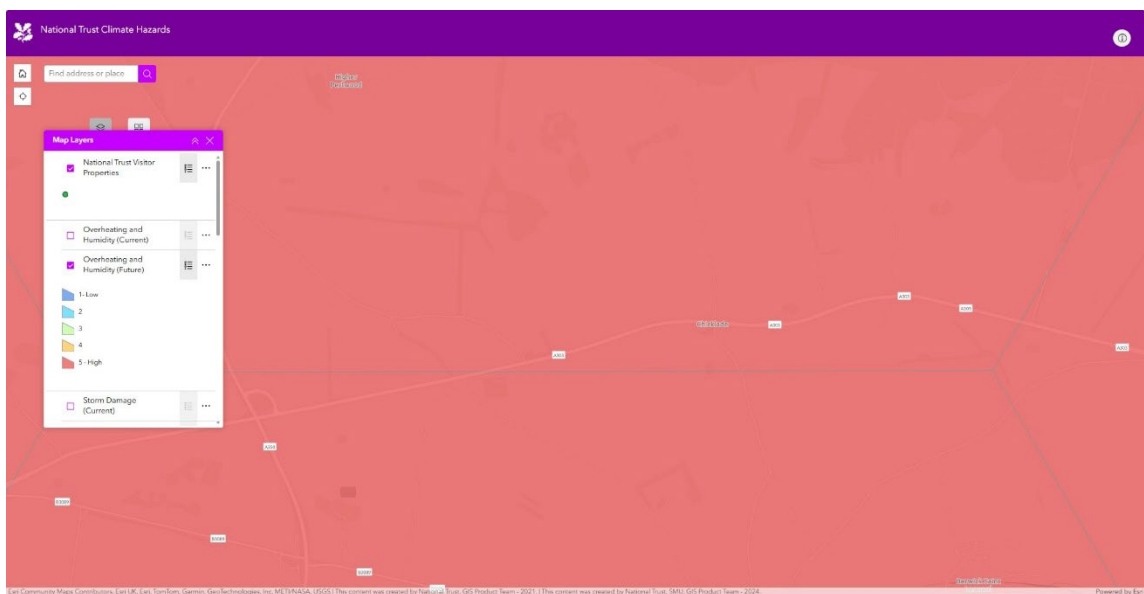


Figure 13 - Overheating and Humidity

²⁸ [UK Climate Projections \(UKCP18\) guidance and reports – Met Office](#)

²⁹ [Climate Hazards 23](#)

³⁰ [ukcp18-guidance---representative-concentration-pathways.pdf](#)

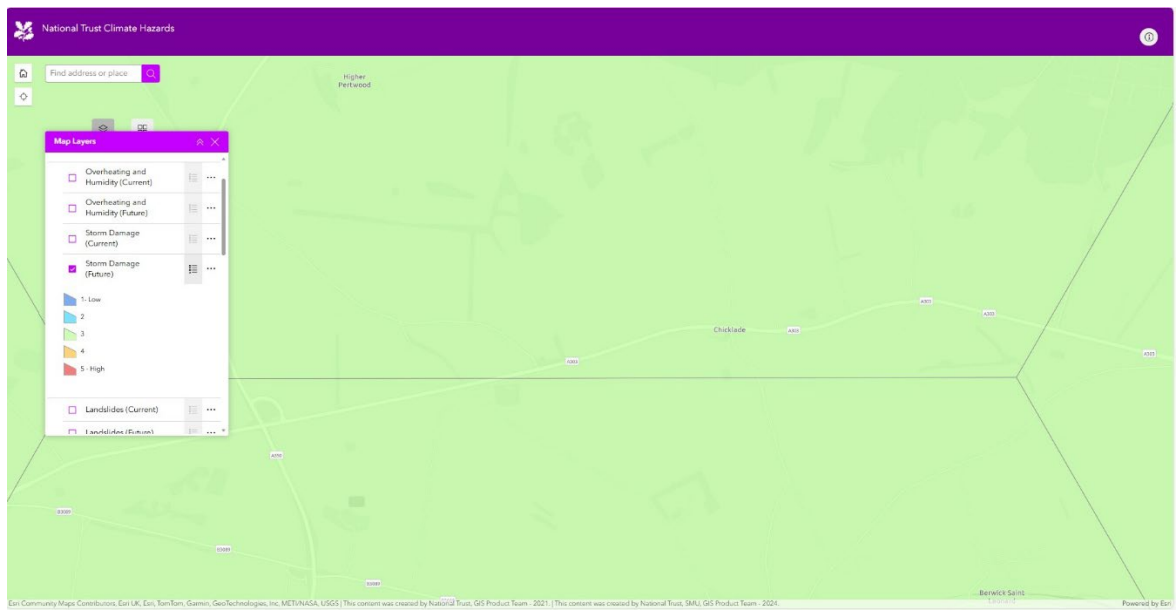


Figure 14 - Storm Damage

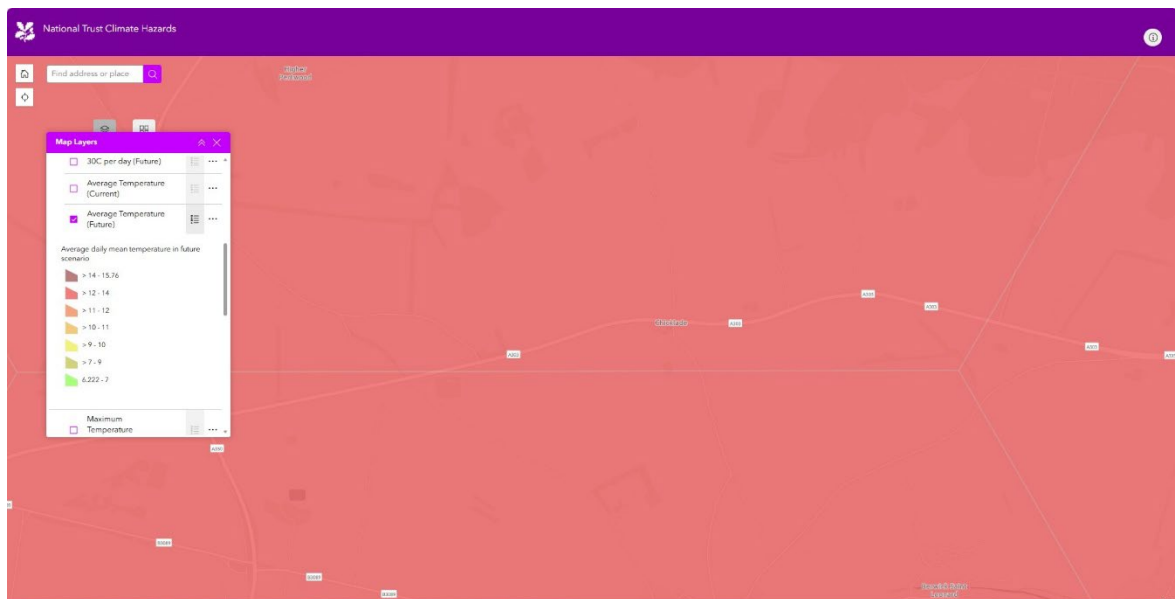


Figure 15 - Average Temperature

Assessment of Effects

Renewable energy generation and grid displacement

- 7.22. The Proposed Development will generate renewable electricity. As per **Appendix 2.1** (within Volume 2), the combined solar generation associated with the EV hub as:
- Ground-mounted solar: 3,670.4 MWh/year;
 - Roof-mounted solar: 71.49 MWh/year; and
 - Total generation: 3,741.89 MWh/year.
- 7.23. The Applicant estimates the EV hub annual electricity demand as 1,314,000 kWh/year.
- 7.24. As the annualised solar generation significantly exceeds the EV hub's annual electricity demand, the facility operates as a net-exporter of renewable electricity on an annualised basis. This means that the EV charging demand can be met by renewable generation and surplus electricity can be exported back to the wider network.
- 7.25. Based on the displacement calculation provided, total solar generation results in an estimated carbon saving of 662.3 tonnes CO₂e/year (relative to drawing the same electricity from the grid).

Enabling transport decarbonisation through EV charging

- 7.26. Wiltshire Council's EV Infrastructure Sub-Strategy identifies that transport emissions in Wiltshire are predominantly created by private vehicles and that the transition to EVs is the greatest opportunity to reduce emissions in the short to medium term.
- 7.27. The Proposed Development directly supports this objective by enabling renewable electricity supply to the EV charging hub, supporting EV uptake and providing charging capacity on the strategic road network.
- 7.28. The carbon displacement note estimates that the EV transition benefit associated with the hub is 722.7 tonnes CO₂e/year.
- 7.29. The combined annual impact (solar generation displacement plus EV transition benefit) is estimated to be approximately 1,385.0 tonnes CO₂e/year.
- 7.30. This represents a substantial beneficial effect in the context of Wiltshire's stated need to decarbonise transport, which is the largest emitting sector in the county.

Magnitude and significance of mitigation effects

- 7.31. The Proposed Development provides a long-term, quantifiable and direct contribution to climate change mitigation through:
- renewable energy generation; and
 - enabling and supporting transport decarbonisation infrastructure.
- 7.32. The magnitude of the mitigation effect is considered to be beneficial and, given the estimated scale of annual emissions savings, is assessed as moderate beneficial (significant) at a local level.

- 7.33. The assessment recognises that the carbon intensity of the national electricity grid is expected to reduce over time. However, the Proposed Development would continue to provide beneficial effects by displacing residual grid emissions, supporting decarbonised EV charging, and exporting surplus renewable electricity to the local distribution network.

Likely Significant Effects – Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation (Vulnerability of the project to climate change)

- 7.34. Good practice guidance recognises that climate change adaptation assessment within EIA is distinct from other topics, as it considers how the Proposed Development may be affected by future climate conditions (see **Figures 13 – 15** above).
- 7.35. The Proposed Development is temporary (40 years) and consists primarily of the solar panels and associated electrical equipment).
- 7.36. The Proposed Development is not expected to materially increase vulnerability to climate change impacts. In particular:
- the development does not introduce sensitive populations or receptors to the site;
 - operational activity is low intensity; and
 - the Proposed Development is not expected to materially change local climatic conditions.

Mitigation and Monitoring

- 7.37. No mitigation is required to address any impacts resulting from the development proposals when considering alternatives in EIA terms.

Residual Effects

- 7.38. Residual effects arising from carbon offset and the combatting of climate change are predicted. The magnitude of the mitigation effect is considered to be beneficial and, given the estimated scale of annual emissions savings, is assessed as moderate beneficial (significant) at a local level.

Conclusions

- 7.39. The Proposed Development will result in a significant beneficial effect in relation to climate change mitigation by generating renewable electricity and supporting the adjacent EV hub, thereby contributing to transport decarbonisation objectives.
- 7.40. The carbon displacement information indicates that the combined annual benefit of renewable generation and EV transition is approximately 1,385 tonnes CO₂e/year, assisting the LPA with their carbon neutral ambitions.

8. Landscape

Introduction

- 8.1. This chapter of the ES has been prepared by DKR in conjunction with LHC Design who prepared the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and assesses the likely landscape and visual effects resulting from the Proposed Development.
- 8.2. This chapter provides a description of the methods used in the assessment. This is followed by a description of the relevant baseline conditions of the Site and surrounding area, and an assessment of the likely environmental effects of the Proposed Development during the construction works and once the Proposed Development is completed and operational. Mitigation measures are identified (where appropriate) to avoid, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects identified, together with the nature and significance of likely residual effects.
- 8.3. The proposed Site comprises of a single field currently in arable use. Key changes to the site resulting from the proposal include:
- New vehicle access from an adjacent field to the south and connecting to an existing vehicular junction with the A303, shared with Chicklade Service Station;
 - Stock proof fencing 2m in height, surrounding the Solar PV Arrays;
 - Solar PV Modules (located in the southern portion of the field only) offset from field boundaries and with transformer stations and CCTV located as required and shown on the site layout plan; and
 - New mixed native hedgerows, wildflower and woodland tree planting, and reinforcement of existing gappy hedgerow boundaries in the south and east.
- 8.4. This chapter is accompanied by the following appendices, provided in Volume 2 of this ES:
- Appendix 5.1 – LVIA;
 - Appendix 5.2 – LVIA Methodology;
 - Appendix 5.3 – LVIA Diagrams; and
 - Appendix 5.4 – Photographs.

Planning Policy and Legislative Context

- 8.5. The following planning policy and guidance and legislative context is relevant to this chapter of the ES:
- European Landscape Convention 2007;
 - Town and Country Planning Act 1990;
 - Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017;
 - National Planning Policy Framework; and
 - Supported by Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3).

European Landscape Convention 2007

- 8.6. The European Landscape Convention (ELC)³¹ came into force in the UK on 1st March 2007; providing a people-centred and forward-looking approach to reconcile management of the environment with the social and economic challenges of the future and aims to help people reconnect with place. It is dedicated to the protection, management and planning of the landscape, and raising awareness of landscape issues at all levels.
- 8.7. The ELC adopts a broad definition of landscape: “landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”
- 8.8. This places a broad emphasis on landscapes everywhere and in any condition – land, inland water, marine, natural, rural and peri-urban, outstanding, ordinary or degraded. It therefore provides the focus on landscape as a resource in its own right.
- 8.9. The ELC recognises that today’s landscapes are the result of continuous change and that this change will continue in the future. The ELC Implementation Framework places the emphasis on the effective planning, good design and sensitive management of landscapes with people in mind. UK planning policy is compliant with this approach.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 8.10. The importance of understanding the landscape character is recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 187), which states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to the natural environment by: “recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services”. Landscape character assessment is the process which can identify these intrinsic values and unique characteristics of the diverse landscapes in the UK.
- 8.11. For a full appraisal of the NPPF please refer to the submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement (Enviromena January 2026).

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

- 8.12. The third edition of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) was published in collaboration with IEMA and came into force on 17 April 2013.

Baseline Conditions

Site and Immediate Surroundings

- 8.13. The site is located within a rural setting, however one that is significantly impacted by the busy A303 transport corridor which has been observed with almost constant traffic flow, including many HGV vehicles, resulting in a significant level of noise and disturbance in the landscape. As it passes the site, the A303 runs along a valley with rising land to the north and the south. A commercial business, agricultural buildings and a couple of houses are situated next to the road and south west of the site. Chicklade Service Station is situated next to the road to the south of the site. This is currently undergoing redevelopment, and it is proposed that the solar access track will share the service station access. The small village

³¹ <https://rm.coe.int/16806b07e4>

of Chicklade is located approximately 600m east of the site, with most houses and a church located to the north of the road, the majority surrounded by trees, although some homes do have west facing views towards the site.

- 8.14. The farmed valley slopes, leading away from the transport corridor is characterised rolling pastoral and arable fields with some small clumps of woodland and a few isolated trees dotted across the landscape. Field boundaries are generally low in height and many are incomplete or have frequent gaps, leading to a sense of openness. Ridges to the north and south of the A303, form a barrier to long distance views, as is illustrated on the ZTV diagrams (Figures 2 and 3, Appendix 2).

Landscape Character and Sensitivity

- 8.15. The LVIA considers the effect of development on the characteristics of the site and its surroundings, and on the landscape character of the area. The assessment judges the degree to which the development integrates into the local landscape character. Landscape effects are judged against the landscape character and management objectives for the relevant landscape character areas.

The Site and Immediate Surroundings

- 8.16. The site comprises a single arable field located approximately 80-140m north of the A303 road, within a valley location. The field slopes gently upwards to the north and slopes downwards again in the north-east of the site, following the local rolling landscape characteristic. There are several commercial, agricultural and residential buildings to the south west, separating the site from the A303 road. The site is approximately 600m west of the small village of Chicklade. A close service station, between the site and the A303, is currently being redeveloped as a new electric vehicle charging service station. A public bridleway runs alongside the west boundary of the site, separated from it by a gappy hedgerow, which has recently been strengthened with new native hedge planting to create a continuous hedge. The other boundaries, similarly, have gappy hedgerows, although some new hedge planting is evident. This provides the opportunity to strengthen hedgerows and create new ones as part of a landscape framework.
- 8.17. The site lies within a landscape characterised by a patchwork of arable farmland and pasture. Fields are generally enclosed by hedgerows of low condition, interspersed with groups of trees and areas of woodland, predominantly located on ridges or along the A303 transport corridor. In the immediate vicinity of the site, field boundary hedgerows are fragmented or absent in places, presenting opportunities for landscape enhancement. The site sits within a relatively limited visual envelope within its valley location, with visibility largely constrained by ridges to the north, west and south. The exception to this is in the east, where longer distance views are possible, looking along the valley and transport corridor.
- 8.18. The village of Chicklade lies east of the site and comprises an attractive cluster of dwellings and farm buildings set within a dense framework of mature trees and hedgerows. Properties on the western edge of the village have some open views towards the site, although the village's Grade II Listed buildings have no intervisibility of the site due to location and vegetation. The landscape character of Chicklade is adversely affected by the presence of the busy A303 corridor, which forms a dominant and incongruous feature in the surrounding landscape. Associated infrastructure, including overhead telecommunications lines and road signs, further detract from landscape quality and contributes to a significant localised reduction in tranquillity and visual sensitivity.

National Character Area

- 8.19. The site is situated wholly within the Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs National Character Area (NCA) which is summarised as a “sparsely settled, predominantly agricultural area with a strong sense of remoteness and openness. The dominant element in the landscape – apart from the expansive sky – is the gently rolling chalk downland. Around one third of this NCA is also designated as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The fields here are seemingly endless. With hedgerows rare, they often lack clearly visible boundaries. Most of the NCA lies within the county of Wiltshire. The NCA contains significant historical and cultural assets, including a wealth of buried and above-ground archaeological remains of international importance, and many historic houses and estates. There is a strong sense of historical continuity underpinned by the prehistoric landscape features identified in the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site at Stonehenge in the southern part of the Plain, along with many other prehistoric monuments.”
- 8.20. The NCA lists four statements of environmental opportunity which are: protection and enhancement of chalk grassland to support biodiversity, improving the river system, conserving the rich historic and archaeological resource and protecting the agriculture interest, while working in harmony with the nationally recognised and distinctive character of the landscape, its natural beauty and scenic quality.

Local Landscape Character Types Areas

- 8.21. The Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment characterises the county by local character type profiles, identifying 16 different typologies in total. The more recent Cranborne Chase National Landscape has identified fourteen Local Landscape Character Areas (2024), which nest within the broader character areas of the earlier Wiltshire assessment.
- 8.22. The proposed development site, and all the predicted visibility, lies wholly within the Open Chalk Downland Landscape Character Type (LCT), and in particular the West Wiltshire Downs Open Chalk Downland Landscape Character Area (LCA).

Cranborne Chase National Landscape (formally Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB)

- 8.23. Cranborne Chase is a National Landscape, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and covers 380 square miles of countryside, overlapping the boundaries of Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset. The long-distance footpaths of the Wessex Ridgeway, Jubilee Trail and the Monarch’s Way all criss-cross the National Landscape.
- 8.24. The Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan (2019 – 2024) presents objectives and policies that partners can apply to help conserve and enhance this nationally important landscape.
- 8.25. It is stated that the “primary purpose of AONB designation is ‘conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area’, but that “account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of economic and social development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.”
- 8.26. The Management Plan also notes that “high levels of tranquillity comprise important elements of the natural beauty of the AONB” and “views across and along these landscapes

can be wide and expansive whilst in the valleys they are more focussed and channelled. Unspoilt and panoramic views are characteristics of this AONB.”

- 8.27. Section 5 outlines that the AONB document is not prepared in isolation and there are other factors which have influence. Some notable items include:
- 8.28. “Climate change mitigation describes measures or actions aimed at reducing the long-term risk and hazards of climate change. Climate change adaptation describes measures or actions that help individuals, groups and natural systems to prepare for and respond to changes in the climate. Alongside other organisations and individuals, the AONB Partnership will seek to build resilience and will support and promote mitigation and adaptation measures wherever practicable.” (Paragraph 5.18).
- 8.29. The landscapes of the AONB provide us with many ‘goods and services’ these need sustaining. They range from measurable things, like fresh food, clean water, healthy soils, sustainable energy and clean air; and less easily defined benefits, such as inspiration, awareness, health and wellbeing, and;
- 8.30. ‘Development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. This means that within this AONB, great weight is given to conserving and enhancing natural beauty. Development has to be in the right location, at the right scale and of the right design using the right materials. (Paragraph 5.45).
- 8.31. Policy PT16, Renewable Energy Generation within the AONB says:
- 8.32. Policy PT16 “Support renewable energy generation by technologies that integrate with the landscape character, are neither visually intrusive to the AONB or its setting, nor impair significant views to or from it, are not harmful to wildlife, and are of an appropriate scale to their location and siting.”

[Wiltshire Council Renewable Energy Study. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment \(2023\)](#)

- 8.33. A 2023 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment categorises the Wiltshire landscape by local character area (according to the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment) with a rating for sensitivity of an area for solar (or wind) farm developments in general terms – i.e. without specific sites analysed. The introduction to this report describes this as follows:
- 8.34. “1.2 This Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for wind energy and solar photovoltaic (PV) schemes provides judgements on the landscape sensitivity of different parts of Wiltshire to these forms of development. The findings of this study will allow the Council to identify broad areas for renewable energy development and establish a local policy framework for such development, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.”
- 8.35. The area which includes the proposed site has been assessed for sensitivity as level 1 – Greater landscape impact (from a scale of 1 – Greater to 5 – Lesser landscape impact).
- 8.36. Appendix A (User Guide) describes that:
- 8.37. “A.9 Priority should be given to views from distances of less than 3km and from sensitive locations (e.g. residential areas, areas popular with visitors or for outdoor recreation where views may be focussed on the landscape and recognised/iconic views).”
- 8.38. And sites should demonstrate how they enhance the landscape:

- 8.39. “A.11 Enhancement aims to improve the character and quality of the landscape. It may take many forms, including improved land management or creation of new landscapes or features. Landscape enhancement, as part of a proposal, will be looked upon favourably.”
- 8.40. The LVIA report utilises the procedures for analysis listed within Appendix A and describe the perceived landscape and visual effects likely due to the site-specific proposals.

Heritage Assets

- 8.41. There are several historic assets within the study area, including Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
- 8.42. The closest historic asset to the site is the scheduled monument, an historic Bowl Barrow located approximately 700m away from the site to the south-west. From the Historic England website, bowl barrows are described as follows: “Bowl barrows the most numerous form of round barrow, are funerary monuments dating from the Late Neolithic period to the Late Bronze Age.” The text goes on to say that “Often occupying prominent locations, they are a major historic element in the modern landscape and their considerable variation of form and longevity as a monument type provide important information on the diversity of beliefs and social organisations amongst early prehistoric communities. They are particularly representative of their period and a substantial proportion of surviving examples are considered worthy of protection”. There is no predicted visibility between this scheduled monument and the proposed development, which was confirmed with a field visit. The scale of the proposals and lack of intervisibility will therefore not have any impact on the monument or its setting.
- 8.43. A number of other scheduled monuments are generally located over 2km away from the site in the west, north and north east and include an Earthwork enclosure in Penning Wood, a Scrubbed Oak enclosure and an Earthwork enclosure in Great Ridge wood and a Long and Oval barrow on Keysley Down. There is no visibility between these monuments and the site, so the proposed development will not have any impact on their settings.
- 8.44. A section of Roman Road on Pertwood Down is situated approximately 2.5km away north west of the site. There is no intervisibility between the site and this monument due to the undulating landscape, therefore the proposals will not have an impact on its setting.
- 8.45. Hindon village, approximately one mile south of the A303 has a conservation area covering a large part of the village centre which includes many Grade II listed buildings, including the Church of St John the Baptist. There is no predicted visibility between this area and the site, which was confirmed with a field visit. The proposals will not have any impact on this conservation area or the listed buildings within it.
- 8.46. There are several other listed buildings within the study area, dotted across the area, mainly to the north, west and south. There are three listed buildings within Chicklade village, the closest (Chicklade House, Grade II) approximately 700m away. The Grade II Church of All Saints Anglican Parish Church and the Burnett Monument in the Churchyard (Grade II) are situated a further 100m away to the east. All three buildings are set back from the A303 road with dense vegetation surrounding them. They have no visibility of the site, and their settings will not be adversely impacted by the proposals.

Visual Baseline

- 8.47. The LVIA considers the effect of development on identified visual receptors within the ZTV. The assessment makes judgements on the effect of the proposed development on these receptors based on their sensitivity and the likely magnitude of effect. Several receptors are located outside of the ZTV, close to long distance footpaths or historic assets, in order to confirm lack of visibility between them and the site.
- 8.48. Key receptor groups identified are:
- Users of main road A303 south of the site (Viewpoints, VPs 1, 2, 10);
 - Users of minor road, south east of the site (VP3);
 - Users of Public Right of Way (PROWs) and Restricted Byway south of the site (VPs 4, 5, 6, 7, 8);
 - Users of PROW bridleway on the western site boundary (VP 11);
 - Users of PROW bridleway north of the site (VP 12);
 - Users of PROW bridleways north east of the site (VPs 13, 14, 15, 16);
 - Users of PROW Monarch's Way long distance path (VPs 17, 20);
 - Users of PROW Wessex Ridgeway long distance path (VP 18); and
 - Users of PROW bridleway south of the site (VP19).
- 8.49. Photographs from representative viewpoints were recorded on 11th December 2025 and 9th January 2026.
- 8.50. The site is located on gently sloping farmland, on the side of a valley containing the busy A303 transport corridor. The boundaries feature gappy and varying quality hedges, many of which have been observed to be recently reinforced with new planting. There are agricultural, commercial and residential buildings nearby, and the A303 has associated telecommunications poles and wires and signage, leading to a sense of clutter and activity. Above the site, on rising slopes, arable fields give way to wooded areas and a greater sense of tranquillity and quiet. The small village of Chicklade is located east of the site and there are several public rights of way nearby, mostly public bridleways, with many appearing to have low or no use, and are difficult to use due to extremely busy road crossings, a lack of joined-up-ness and overgrown vegetation. The Monarch's Way and Wessex Ridgeway long distance footpaths pass through the local area.
- 8.51. The site's visibility is constrained by its location on low valley slopes, with wider views constrained by nearby ridges and clumps of woodland. The majority of the proposed development's visibility is situated well within 3km of the site, apart from longer views out towards the east along the transport corridor.

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

- 8.52. The methodology used in the preparation of this LVIA is in accordance with the published Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd. Ed.2013 GLVIA) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment.
- 8.53. The assessment approach first examines the baseline conditions, considering the national and local policy framework, site-specific factors, and relevant published landscape character assessments.

- 8.54. Landscape and visual impact assessment is undertaken by combining judgements on the sensitivity of the receiving landscape or visual receptors with those on the magnitude of the change proposed.
- 8.55. For the purposes of this study, discussions of landscape sensitivity have included consideration of landscape value, landscape condition and the susceptibility of the receiving landscape to the type and scale of the change proposed. Sensitivity is recorded on a scale of high, medium or low, with gradations between where necessary.
- 8.56. Visual sensitivity is assessed through consideration of the value of a particular view and the susceptibility to change of people experiencing the view. For example, a popular viewpoint experienced by people out walking in the countryside will be more sensitive to change than a view glimpsed through a gap in the hedgerow experienced by people travelling on a major trunk road.
- 8.57. Judgements on the scale of the change proposed, the duration of the effect and the geographical influence (extent) of the change are combined to assess the magnitude of landscape or visual effect. Magnitude of change is related to a scale of high to negligible. Effects are considered beneficial where they strengthen baseline characteristics or contribute to landscape strategies and policies and adverse where they result in the dilution of positive baseline characteristics or work against strategies. Neutral effects have neither positive nor negative effects on character and no impact on landscape strategies.
- 8.58. Viewpoint photographs have been presented in line with the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 6/19 “Visual Representation of Development Proposals”. The guidance proposes a proportionate approach to the complexity of visualisation presented, based upon factors such as the scale and complexity of development proposal, the sensitivity of the receptor and the context for the proposal. The proposal assessed here is for a solar farm approximately 3.01ha in size, within a red line boundary of 12.29ha, including associated infrastructure plus proposed landscape features. In this case, type 1 visualisations have been considered appropriate (annotated photographs presented at 100% scaling).

Study Area

- 8.59. A 5km radius was used to establish the study area for the LVIA. Solar arrays with a height of approximately 2.5m from existing ground levels were used to test the potential Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), shown on Figure 2. This was produced using Digital Surface Modelling (DSM) information which includes trees, hedges, buildings and other structures to produce an estimate for the potential visual effects of the development. As can be seen the expected visibility is constrained due to the enclosed valley location, with the majority of predicted visibility located within a few kilometres of the site. Therefore, a revised study area radius of 3km has been used which shows the local topography constraining potential visibility close to the site, with a single outlying visual receptor located approximately 4.2km to the east. This visual receptor has been included within the study.
- 8.60. The proposals and entire study area lie within National Character Area (NCA) 132 – Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs. The NCA description notes that Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs to the south is designated as a National Landscape (formally Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB) for its rich chalk down, whaleback ridges, wooded valleys and deeply rural, agricultural character and rich archaeological resource. It is noted for a sense of remoteness and generally dark skies.

- 8.61. The site sits within local landscape character area 2A West Wiltshire Downs Open Chalk Downland. The Heritage Lottery funded Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership scheme has supported a more detailed Landscape Assessment (Sept 2024) of this part of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. This contains fourteen local landscape character areas, which nest within the broader character areas of the earlier assessment. The site, and entire ZTV, lies within the landscape character type 'Wooded Downland'.

Landscape Effects

- 8.62. A combination of fieldwork and photography has been used to assess the scale of effect that the proposals are likely to have upon the important attributes of the existing landscape fabric and character within the site surroundings and study area and an assessment of whether the proposals accord with the main objectives of the affected landscape character areas and types.
- 8.63. The duration of change and extent of effect have been considered in order to assess the magnitude of the effect on landscape qualities, characteristics and designations. This in turn has informed the assessment of the effects, and judgements against these individual criteria used to reach an overall conclusion on the significance of these, and whether they have an adverse, beneficial, or neutral effect.

Assessment of Effects

Site and Immediate Surroundings

- 8.64. The proposed development will introduce new boundary fencing, solar PV modules an associated transformer, CCTV posts, a new site entrance track and new native hedge and woodland planting which will significantly alter the current intensively farmed arable use.
- 8.65. The site is located within a rural setting, however one that is significantly impacted by the busy A303 transport corridor which has been observed with almost constant traffic flow, including many HGV vehicles, resulting in a significant level of noise and disturbance in the landscape. As it passes the site, the A303 runs along a valley with rising land to the north and the south. A commercial business, agricultural buildings and a couple of houses are situated next to the road and south west of the site. Chicklade Service Station is situated next to the road to the south of the site. This is currently undergoing redevelopment, and it is proposed that the solar access track will share the service station access. The small village of Chicklade is located approximately 600m east of the site, with most houses and a church located to the north of the road, the majority surrounded by trees, although some homes do have west facing views towards the site.
- 8.66. The farmed valley slopes, leading away from the transport corridor is characterised rolling pastoral and arable fields with some small clumps of woodland and a few isolated trees dotted across the landscape. Field boundaries are generally low in height, and many are incomplete or have frequent gaps, leading to a sense of openness. Ridges to the north and south of the A303, form a barrier to long distance views, as is illustrated on the ZTV diagrams.
- 8.67. Existing hedge boundaries around the site will be retained, apart from a gap in the southern hedge to create vehicular access to the development. Additional planting is proposed to reinforce the existing hedges, helping to create a continuous vegetated boundary. New hedge planting will connect existing hedges, and the proposed area of woodland planting will reflect the local landscape characteristics and help to visually enclose the site from views from the east.

- 8.68. The following features of the proposed development reflect the landscape character of the local area and will help with mitigation:
- New native hedges which connect to existing hedgerows and the northern hedge to include hedgerow trees;
 - Proposed solar PV modules are offset from existing retained hedges to maintain the legibility of field patterns and assist with hedgerow management;
 - Areas of wildflower meadow grass will enhance species diversity;
 - Existing field boundaries are enhanced with new hedge planting and tree planting; and
 - An area of new woodland will enhance ecology and reflects local landscape character.
- 8.69. The proposals will result in a change of land use, however the ecological and landscape assets within the site are to be enhanced. The nature of the proposed development will retain the current levels of landscape tranquillity once constructed. The existing quality of the site and immediate surroundings has been assessed as medium to low. There are few landscape elements intact and in good repair and there are many detracting elements evident.
- 8.70. The landscape value is concerned with the relative value that is attached to different landscapes. The site and immediate surrounding landscape value is assessed as high. The site is located within a Nationally recognised landscape, despite its location close to the transport corridor and associated detracting elements from this. The site is in use for intensive arable farming with low quality hedgerows, offering potential for improvement.
- 8.71. The proposed development involves low impact construction meaning that landscape elements will overall not be lost and there is a moderate level of containment due to topography and vegetation, plus the character is noticeably influenced by some detracting features. The site and immediate surroundings is therefore judged to have a medium level of ability to accept the type of development proposed and there are opportunities for mitigation. Combining assessments of quality, value and susceptibility to change, results in a landscape sensitivity of medium. This is the degree to which this particular landscape area can accommodate change without unacceptable detrimental effects on its character.
- 8.72. The scale of landscape effect on the site and immediate surroundings resulting from the proposed development is judged as large, due to the proposals describing a fundamental change to the baseline situation. The field boundaries will remain, with enhancements, however the introduction of solar panels and new fencing will change the site considerably. The duration of effect is long term and the extent of effect is localised (limited to the site and surroundings up to approximately 2km). The magnitude of effect is determined as high.
- 8.73. Some of the changes resulting from the development will have an adverse effect on the landscape character of the site due to new fencing, solar modules, a new site entrance track and transformers on a site currently without any structures. Mitigation design measures include new hedgerows, enhancement of existing hedgerows, new woodland planting, and wildflower meadow seeding. Combining the magnitude of effect with existing quality and sensitivity, results in an overall significance of landscape effect upon the site and immediate surroundings of major to moderate adverse.

Landscape Character Areas

- 8.74. The site is located within National Character Area (NCA) 132 – Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs. The main characteristics of this NCA are a sparsely settled landscape with a strong sense of remoteness and gently rolling chalk downland. The area has a strong sense of historical continuity with many prehistoric monuments. Noted opportunities within the NCA

include protection and enhancement of chalk grassland, conservation of the rich historic resource and protection of the agricultural interest in harmony with the character and natural beauty of the landscape.

- 8.75. The proposals include the retention of existing hedgerows which will be strengthened with new native planting. The solar array will be a physically low impact, temporary intervention within the landscape, albeit long term. There would be loss of part of an arable field, however new hedges and woodland planting forms part of the mitigation and integration. The location of the site, close to existing busy road infrastructure and nearby buildings, forms part of the mitigating factors for the site, avoiding more tranquil and popular and picturesque rural landscapes within this NCA (and National Landscape).
- 8.76. The proposed development alters the site, but within the NCA the scale of change would be small, much of it positive, offering landscape enhancement to improve existing assets, and without adversely impacting the opportunities and objectives set out for the NCA.
- 8.77. The quality of the NCA is assessed as medium to high as the much of the character demonstrating landscape elements appear intact and good repair. The value is national scale, therefore rated high, and the receptor has a medium level of ability to accept the type of development proposed, with some good opportunities for mitigation.
- 8.78. The scale of change on the NCA is small, long term and the effect would be seen and experienced within an intermediate (approx. 2-4km) area. The magnitude of effect is determined by combining the scale, duration and extent of effect, in this case providing a result of low. The significance of effect upon the NCA (magnitude combined with sensitivity) is overall slight to moderate adverse.

Cranborne Chase National Landscape and associated Local Landscape Character Area

- 8.79. The site is located within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The National Landscape Character Assessment defines the local area as the West Wiltshire Downs Open Chalk Downland which covers much of the same area as the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Wooded Downland in the Wiltshire Landscape Assessment (2005), so these will be treated as one.
- 8.80. Key characteristics listed in the Cranborne Chase National Landscape Assessment include 'large-scale landscape of broad, rolling hills and undulating land, divided by dry river valleys.' It is 'predominantly an agricultural landscape, characterised by open skies and long-distance views.' 'The settlement pattern consists of small villages located where the landform provides natural shelter, while copses and clumps of woodland are a feature on hilltops. Fast-moving transport corridors also run through the landscape, adversely influencing its character.'
- 8.81. The sensitivity of this landscape receptor is classified as high, due to its national designation. The scale of change due to the proposals is small, in scale with its landscape setting and does not threaten the setting of important archaeological earthwork features. Field boundaries to be retained and enhanced with proposed landscape enhancements accord with the LCAs management objectives of 'creating a wildlife rich habitat – including management of hedgerows. The duration of change is long term and the extent over which the proposals will have effect is intermediate. The magnitude of change is therefore low with an overall significance of effect as moderate adverse.

Visual Effects

- 8.82. Approximate theoretical visibility was calculated within the study area using LiDAR data and based on the maximum height of the proposed solar PV modules. Viewpoint locations were selected within the ZTV to provide an understanding about the potential visibility of the proposals and these are assessed. Publicly accessible land with predicted visibility was visited in order to complete the photography.
- 8.83. Judgements about the likely residual impact upon visual receptors is provided in this section. The visibility, scale and massing of the proposals is assessed taking account of the mitigation measures and landscape proposals.
- 8.84. The assessment of visual effects has been consolidated into the following visual receptor groups:
- Users of main road A303 south of the site (Viewpoints, VPs 1, 2, 10);
 - Users of minor road, south east of the site (VP3);
 - Users of Public Right of Way (PROWs) and Restricted Byway, south of the site (VPs 4, 5, 6, 7, 8);
 - Users of PROW bridleway on the western site boundary (VP 11);
 - Users of PROW bridleway north of the site (VP 12);
 - Users of PROW bridleways north east of the site (VPs 13, 14, 15, 16);
 - Users of PROW Monarch's Way long distance path (VPs 17, 20);
 - Users of PROW Wessex Ridgeway long distance path (VP 18); and
 - Users of PROW bridleway south of the site (VP19).

Users of main road A303 south of the site (VPs 1, 2, 10)

- 8.85. Viewpoint 1 shows the view from the pavement on the south side of the main A303 road passing through Chicklade, just east of the junction for Hindon Village. This busy road corridor is bordered by mature deciduous trees, road signs and telecommunications wires. Looking along the road corridor towards the site, fields prior to the site are visible, with the site itself forming a very small part of the view beyond.
- 8.86. Viewpoint 2 shows the view from the A303 near Chicklade Service Station, looking west. Road activity and associated infrastructure along the valley road corridor is a very large part of the view with constant traffic movement and telecommunications posts and wires. Views out to the surrounding landscape are constrained by landform, existing vegetation and existing development. The site is located behind a gappy hedge at a higher elevation than the road and the proposed reinforced boundary hedges will help to limit visibility of the proposals for road users further.
- 8.87. Viewpoint 10 shows the view from the southern side of the A303 road looking west opposite a commercial garage 'Classic Vehicle Restorers'. The view shows the road with trees and hedgerows to both sides and telecommunications posts and cables running along the north edge of the road. The garage buildings are located to the left of the view, with a vehicle access directly from the A303. Other houses and agricultural buildings to the rear of the vehicle repair building are not visible, nor is the site.
- 8.88. The sensitivity to visual change for users of roads south of the site is valued as medium.

- 8.89. The scale of the effect on these visual receptors resulting from the proposals is judged to be negligible (very hard to discern) to none. This stretch of road has constrained views out into the landscape, due to the local landform, plus activity and distracting elements. There are not extensive views across the landscape and the high level of activity at the roadside level, the proposed height of the development is relatively low and located behind hedgerows. The magnitude of change found by combining assessments of scale, duration and extent, is assessed to be negligible. This results in an overall significance of effect of minimal adverse.

Users of minor road to the south east of the site (VP3)

- 8.90. Viewpoint 3 is taken from a farm gate providing a view across fields towards the site, approximately 800m away. Much of the site is behind a clump of mature woodland with filtered views through the trees (especially during winter) into the site. The proposed development extends to the right of the trees allowing a direct view from this field gate. The majority of this stretch of road is bounded by tall hedgebanks, with many large trees within, meaning this field gateway is the sole location providing a view for road users.
- 8.91. Proposed mitigation measures include strengthening the field boundaries around the site to create continuous hedges and some hedgerow trees. Once established, this mitigation planting will help to soften the view of the development from this viewpoint. Views of the site from road users will be transient by nature and almost imperceptible by most road users. The scale of change due to the proposals, considering the lack of views from anywhere else along the road apart from this sole field gate is a small to minor alteration to features of the view, but with some discernible differences. Duration is long term and the extent of effect is limited. This results in magnitude of effect as negligible. The overall significance of effect is minimal adverse.

Users of Public Rights of Way (PROWs) and Restricted Byway south of the site (VPs 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

- 8.92. Viewpoints 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 represent users of the public bridleway and Ox Drove restricted byway on a ridge to the south of the site and the A303 road. The majority of this track is bounded to both sides by dense hedgerow and trees, which offers little or no views though it, even during winter months, when site visits were undertaken. Despite this, there are several gaps at field entrances and a few gaps in the otherwise dense planting. Several photographs taken along this route are included to illustrate differing views along it.
- 8.93. Viewpoint 4 shows one such gap at a field entrance, looking towards the site. The view includes the existing Chicklade Service Station on the A303 road. The remainder of the view shows rolling fields with clumps of woodland dotted across the landscape. As well as the service station, there are several houses and farm buildings visible, and telecommunications posts and wires running across the landscape. Despite this viewpoint being on an elevated position and approximately 600m away from the road, constant traffic noise was audible, significantly reducing feelings of tranquillity.
- 8.94. Viewpoints 5 and 6 demonstrate glimpsed views towards the site at gaps in the otherwise dense vegetation bounding the track. The site can be seen from these viewpoints. The proposals would introduce a built element into this landscape, however only effecting a small part of the view. This track is not a named long-distance path (of which there are two nearby) nor does this section offer the best local views of the rural countryside nearby.
- 8.95. Viewpoints 7 and 8 demonstrate views at a field entrance and a large gap in a field boundary hedgerow from the public bridleway connecting to Ox Drove track. Both photographs include

a clear view of the site, set amongst rolling fields and low hills with wooded summits. The traffic noise is evident from these locations reducing the tranquillity slightly.

- 8.96. The views from this public right of way are not identified as viewpoints of importance and there are many locations with countryside views nearby, offering greater tranquillity (the further away from the transport corridor they are). The sensitivity of users of PROW and restricted byway south of the site is classed as high. The scale of effect is judged to be medium as the views will be noticeably changed with new features introduced. The long-term duration and localised extent of this effect give rise to a medium magnitude of effect. Combining assessment of the sensitivity of the receptor with the magnitude of effect, provides an overall significance of effect as major-moderate adverse.

Users of PROW bridleway on the site boundary (VP 11)

- 8.97. Viewpoint 11 is taken from a bridleway adjacent to western boundary of the site, looking south east across the site. The site is separated from the bridleway by an existing native hedgerow which is dense in places, but with large gaps. New saplings have been recently planted to strengthen this field boundary and create a continuous hedgerow. The view is dominated by the existing arable field, planted with crops, which slopes gently downwards to the A303 road corridor. Beyond this point, the terrain rises as a succession of fields interspersed with small woodland clusters. Constant traffic noise reduces the tranquillity from here significantly, with large vehicles visible on the road. Small groups of farm buildings and houses on the edge of Chicklade village, can be seen on the left of the view.
- 8.98. The proposals have concentrated the solar panels development to the south-eastern part of the field. Mitigation includes a new mixed native hedgerow across the north or the solar panel area and across the south west part of the field. There would be a large change experienced by this receptor due to the proposals, although the mitigation planting and site layout would help to minimise the impact of this, especially once new hedge planting has established.
- 8.99. The sensitivity of this receptor is high and the scale of effect is assessed as large, due to the fundamental change post development. The scale of development and mitigation measures would see this reduce to medium once planting has fully established. The changes are long term in duration and localised in extent, providing a magnitude of change of high, becoming medium in time. The significance of effect for this receptor is major adverse, becoming major to moderate adverse once hedge planting has established.

Users of PROW bridleway north of the site (VP 12)

- 8.100. Viewpoint 12 is taken from a public bridleway north of the site. The ZTV suggested that proposals may be visible from here, however woodland on the intervening ridge between this location and the site completely blocks any views. Therefore, the significance of visual effect on this receptor is none.

Users of PROW bridleways north east of the site (VPs 13, 14, 15, 16)

- 8.101. Users of public bridleways on the hillside to the north east of the site have been grouped together. Four photographs represent these users. Viewpoint 13 is taken from a bridleway which ascends Cratt Hill, looking south west towards the site, approximately 840m away. The view across the landscape is extensive with a wide expanse of rolling landscape leading to wooded hilltops stretching into the distance. A sloping arable field in the foreground leads to views of pastoral fields bounded by hedges on valley slopes. Vehicles on the A303 road (particularly HGVs or coaches) can be seen, although traffic noise is quiet from this distance.

The existing Chicklade Service Station can be seen, as can agricultural buildings located adjacent to the site. The site is visible from here, seen as a large hedge bounded field, although the hedge boundary on the eastern site edge can be seen with many gaps. The area of the site proposed to contain solar PV panels is seen as a very small part of the field from this location.

- 8.102. Viewpoint 14 is taken further south on the bridleway, closer to Chicklade village, and approximately 650m away from the site. The view again consists of rolling fields which are a combination of arable and pastoral. Nearby hedgerow field boundaries are low, or gappy, becoming more substantial around distance fields. Blocks of woodland are visible, mainly on the top of hills, however small clumps are present along the valley corridor. Large vehicles, signage and telecommunications infrastructure can be seen along the road corridor and the background noise of passing vehicles has increased compared to VP13. Chicklade Service Station roof is visible in the distance and the site is visible, however the southern portion of the site which is to be altered with the addition of solar panels, landscaping and associated infrastructure, forms a very narrow part of the view. Proposed reinforcement to boundary hedges, woodland planting and a new hedge along the northern edge of the fenced solar array will further enclose and screen the proposals once planting has established.
- 8.103. Viewpoint 15 is taken from another bridleway approximately 1.47km away from the site on the hillside leading to Great Ridge and large areas of woodland. The view consists of sloped arable fields with some hedgerow planting leading towards the valley's transport corridor containing glimpses of vehicles travelling along the A303. Beyond the road the landscape rises as pastoral fields and in the far distance wooded hilltops can be seen. The transport corridor forms a distinctive part of the view, due to travelling vehicles and associated infrastructure and noise. Agricultural barns beyond the site can be seen, although the site itself forms a very small strip of land from here and is difficult to determine. Proposed reinforced hedge boundaries as part of the proposals will hinder views of the site from here further. Once woodland and hedgerow planting has established, it is expected that the proposals would be hard to see from here.
- 8.104. Viewpoint 16 is taken from a public bridleway above Chicklade Dairy and approximately 1.29km away from the site. Much of the view is of pastoral rolling fields with gappy hedgerow boundaries leading to areas of woodland on hilltops. The A303 road corridor is visibly prominent and audible, with continual traffic observed passing thorough. Chicklade Service Station can be seen, as can agricultural buildings and houses located next to the site. The site is clearly visible from here, and the northern half is quite prominent seen as rolling fields in the middle distance. The bottom section of the field, proposed to contain the solar arrays and associated landscaping, forms a small section of the view. With proposed planting on the northern and eastern boundaries, the solar development will be screened from here to some extent, however still visible.
- 8.105. The overall scale of change experienced by users of bridleways north east of the site, is assessed as small, due to a minor alteration to key elements within the view and discernible differences against the baseline situation, although the character of views will be largely unchanged. Higher up the hillside the solar arrays would be less visible, even very difficult to see once mitigation planting has established, however lower slopes would have clearer views. These, however, coincide with an increase in traffic noise, visual clutter along the road corridor and less tranquillity due to the closer proximity of the busy A-road. The duration of effect due to the proposals is long term, with a limited extent of effect. The magnitude of effect is negligible, resulting in an overall significance of effect of minimal adverse.

Users of PROW Monarch's Way long distance path (VPs 17, 20)

- 8.106. Viewpoints 17 and 20 have been taken at points on the Monarch's Way long distance footpath. The Way is based on the route taken by King Charles II during his escape after defeat by Cromwell in the final battle of the Civil Wars at Worcester in 1651. Viewpoint 17 is located on elevated ground, approximately 4.52km east of the site and offers a panoramic view of the open countryside. There are several detracting factors including the nearby presence of the busy A303 road with associated signage and noise which significantly reduces tranquillity at this point of the path. Looking west across the landscape, along the valley corridor and nestled amongst clumps of woodland, characteristic of this locality, the site can be seen above the snaking A-road.
- 8.107. Viewpoint 20 is from further west along the Monarch's Way, approximately 2.47km away from the site. The wider landscape is hidden from users of the footpath due to dense hedgerow vegetation to both sides of the path along this stretch, although a small gap near the A350 road allowed views across the landscape towards the site. The character of the view is farmed landscape of arable and pastoral fields and some hedged boundaries with associated farm buildings and homes. In the distance wooded hilltops can be seen, however the site is not visible from here due to landform.
- 8.108. The proposed solar development, with associated landscaping and fencing covering the lower part of the existing field, would be visible in the distance from Viewpoint 17. The scale of the visual effect experienced by users of the path will result in a very minor alteration to features and characteristics, such that the post development baseline will have barely perceptible differences. This is due to the substantial distance from the site, comparative to the scale of the proposed changes, and due to mitigation planting, hedgerow management and the tiny portion of the view effected. The overall character of the view will remain the same - a vast panoramic rural landscape with only a minor change occurring within an already developed transport corridor.
- 8.109. The duration of the effect will be long term and the extent will be intermediate. The resulting magnitude of the effect is low and the overall significance of effect on this receptor is moderate to slight-adverse.

Users of PROW Wessex Ridgeway long distance path (VP 18)

Viewpoint 18 is taken from the Wessex Ridgeway, a historic, 138-mile long-distance path linking Marlborough in Wiltshire, to Lyme Regis in Dorset, offering ancient history, varied landscapes, and connecting to the Greater Ridgeway for a much longer journey to Norfolk. The ZTV predicts no views of the site which has been confirmed by a field visit. The view looks up an arable field towards its wooded top with Hawking Down house located amongst the trees. The site is approximately 1.50km away in the north, however there is no visibility of the site.

Users of PROW bridleway south of the site (VP19)

- 8.110. Viewpoint 19 is taken from a public bridleway approximately 1.52km away from the site to the south. There is no predicted visibility of the site, which was confirmed during field studies, as its visibility is constrained by a ridge which blocks views any further south than around half a kilometre.

Mitigation and Monitoring

- 8.111. The site proposals seek the delivery of a new solar PV farm upon an arable field, with associated deer proof stock fencing, access track and transformers. The landscape framework plan (DWG: 25138-LHC-00-XX-DR-L-9401) shows the proposed layout which includes new landscape features which will help to mitigate visual impact resulting from the changes and enhance ecological habitat.
- 8.112. The existing field currently has gappy hedge boundaries which will be planted with new native hedge planting to strengthen them. The solar PV panels will sit approximately 2.5m in height at their highest point, surrounded by a 2m high stock proof fence. The panels are located in the lower portion of the site, close to the A303 traffic corridor, Chicklade Service Station and several agricultural buildings adjacent to the south west corner of the site. Two new mixed native hedgerows will be planted along the north and south of the fenced off solar arrays, with the northern hedge line, to include hedgerow trees.
- 8.113. An area of native woodland will be planted to the east of the solar arrays which will create new habitat and help to mitigate views of the panels from public rights of way located on higher ground in the north east. Proposed wildflower grass will be sown in southern areas of the field, outside the fenced solar panel area.

Residual Effects

- 8.114. The LVIA identifies major to moderate adverse landscape effect (for the duration of the solar array operation), slight to moderate adverse effect on the NCA and moderate adverse effect on the National Landscape. The identified landscape impacts are predicted for the operational lifetime of the solar array and are reversible thereafter.

Conclusions

- 8.115. The LVIA report shows that 'landscape features of cultural, historic and heritage value' (Core Policy 51) will not be adversely impacted. The site layout, location and mitigation measures have sought to protect important views and visual amenity and maintain the tranquillity (Core Policy 51) of the National Landscape though the proposed development's location within a busy transport corridor with limited visibility into the wider countryside.
- 8.116. The Wiltshire Renewable Energy Landscape Sensitivity Assessment identifies broad areas for renewable energy development, without specific sites analysed. The site is within an area classed as having greater landscape impact for solar on the proposed scale, however this designation includes the entirety of Landscape Character Area 2A (Open Chalk Downland) and does not distinguish between the A303 trunk road corridor, with nearby associated commercial and residential development and a distinct lack of tranquillity, and the wider National Landscape countryside. This is crossed with PROWs and offering many panoramic long distance views across rolling landscape and a great sense of tranquillity, where landscape and visual impact may be much greater than the proposals here.

Landscape Effects

- 8.117. The assessment evaluates the landscape effects of the proposed solar development using fieldwork and photography, considering the scale, duration, extent and magnitude of change. The scheme will introduce solar PV modules, fencing, access tracks, transformers and associated infrastructure, replacing intensively farmed arable land. While the proposed development represents a fundamental long-term change at the site level, existing field

boundaries will be retained and enhanced through new native hedgerow planting and an area of woodland planting and wildflower meadow will be created. The surrounding landscape is heavily influenced by the A303 transport corridor and nearby development, with moderate containment from landform and vegetation. Overall, the site and immediate surroundings are assessed as having medium landscape sensitivity, a high magnitude of change, and a resulting major to moderate adverse landscape effect.

- 8.118. At a wider scale, the site lies within National Character Area 132 (Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs). Although the NCA has high value and medium to high quality, the development would result in only a small-scale change within the broader landscape context. The solar array is considered a low-impact, temporary (albeit long-term) intervention, located close to existing infrastructure and away from more tranquil parts of the NCA. Proposed mitigation aligns with the NCA's objectives by strengthening hedgerows and enhancing landscape and ecological assets. The magnitude of effect on the NCA is assessed as low, with an overall significance of slight to moderate adverse.
- 8.119. The site is also within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (AONB), and the West Wiltshire Downs Open Chalk Downland character area. Much of this covers the same area as shown in the older Wiltshire Landscape Assessment (2005), so they are treated as one. This nationally designated landscape has high sensitivity, although the site location is already influenced by fast-moving transport corridors. The proposals are small in scale relative to the wider landscape, they retain and enhance field boundaries, and do not affect key archaeological features. The changes are long term and experienced over an intermediate area resulting in an overall moderate adverse effect on the National Landscape.

Visual Effects

- 8.120. The visual effects assessment used ZTV modelling, fieldwork and photography to evaluate potential visibility of the proposed solar development from roads, public rights of way and long-distance trails. Overall visibility is constrained by landform, existing vegetation and the presence of the A303 corridor, with views often intermittent or distant. For users of the A303 and nearby minor roads, visibility is negligible to very limited due to hedgerows, roadside activity and transient views, resulting in minimal to minor adverse effects.
- 8.121. The greatest visual effects occur for users of public rights of way closest to the site, particularly the bridleway along the western site boundary and the bridleway/restricted byway south of the site. Here, the development would introduce noticeable new built elements into currently open farmland, leading to major to moderate adverse effects, reducing over time as mitigation planting establishes. Users of bridleways further north and north-east experience small to negligible changes, as the solar array occupies a minor part of wider views already influenced by road infrastructure and traffic.
- 8.122. At a wider scale, effects on long-distance routes such as the Monarch's Way are limited, with the development visible only as a very small and distant element within expansive panoramic views, resulting in slight to moderate adverse effects. No visual effects are predicted for the Wessex Ridgeway or bridleways further south, where landform and woodland block any views of the site.

9. Cumulative Impact

Introduction

- 9.1. This chapter looks at the potential for cumulative effects which may occur as a result of both the Proposed Development and the potential effects of any 'committed developments'. These effects could act together to create an effect that is more (or less) significant overall than the effect of individual developments alone.
- 9.2. Cumulative impacts can be split into two categories:
- 9.3. **Inter-project effects:** the combined effect of the proposed development together with other reasonably foreseeable or committed developments (taking into consideration effects at both the construction and operational phases):

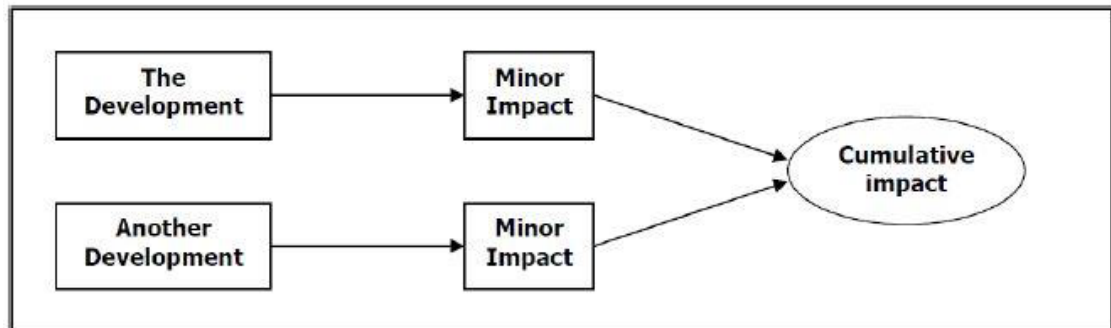


Figure 16 - Inter-project effects

- 9.4. **Intra-project effects:** The combined effects caused by the combination of a number of impacts on a particular receptor (taking into consideration impacts at both the construction and operational phases), which may collectively cause a more significant effect than individually. For example, the combination of noise and air quality impacts.

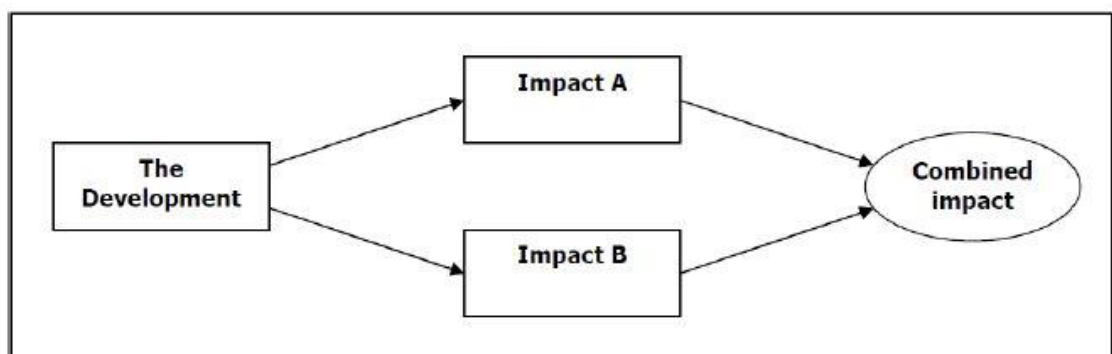


Figure 17 - Intra-project effects

Planning Policy and Legislative Context

- The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017; and
- Natural England's approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitats Regulations (June 2018).

- 9.5. The requirement for cumulative impact assessment is clearly stated in the EIA Regulations, as detailed in Schedule 4 Part 5 (e) of the EIA Regulations, which requires "the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resource".

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

Inter-project effect

- 9.6. There is no established EIA methodology for assessing and quantifying the combined effects of individual effects on sensitive receptors. It should, however, be noted that cumulative effects of individual effects can generally only be broadly identified and assessed qualitatively and where possible, quantified.
- 9.7. Where cumulative effects are anticipated, they are assessed as being negligible, minor, moderate or major. Only those that are predicted to be moderate or major are considered to be significant.
- 9.8. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the following stages:
- Identification of sensitive receptors;
 - A review of the residual effects reported in **Chapters 6 to 8** to identify the potential for effects and interactions and, therefore, combined cumulative effects; and
 - Identification of appropriate mitigation of the identified effects, as required.
- 9.9. The criteria for identifying those receptors that are considered to be potentially sensitive include the nature of the receptor, proximity to the works, and extent of exposure to impacts. It should also be noted that different stages of construction works will result in different effect magnitudes. It may be that for some environmental topics, there are no interactions with other individual effects and, therefore, there are no combined cumulative effects.

Intra-Project Effects

- 9.10. NE guidance³² identifies the following sources of information that project proposers or competent authorities can use to identify plans or projects that might act in-combination:
- **Planning Portals** to locate applications awaiting permissions;
 - **Environmental Permits** Register of Applications and Register of Issued Permits; and

³² Natural England's approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitats Regulations – NEA001

- **Local Plans** (including brownfield registers with permission in principle) and any allocations not yet permitted.

- 9.11. An initial search exercise was undertaken to identify potential major developments within the vicinity of the Proposed Development for consideration within the cumulative impact assessment. A review of the Renewable Energy Planning Database³³ and Wiltshire Planning Explorer³⁴ confirms there are no cumulative solar developments within the study area.
- 9.12. The closest solar array is the land at East Farm / East Codford Solar Farm some 12km to the north east of the Site.

Baseline Conditions

- 9.13. There are no constructed, approved or otherwise committed field-mounted solar arrays within the Study Area.
- 9.14. The closest solar arrays are some 12km to the north east of the Site. The LVIA includes the existing baseline, inclusive of the EV charging service station.

Assessment of Effects

- 9.15. The study area for the Landscape and Visual which forms the basis for assessment has been defined by the LVIA authors as 5km; there are no constructed, approved or otherwise committed field-mounted solar arrays within the Study Area.

Mitigation and Monitoring

- 9.16. No mitigation is required to address any cumulative/ in-combination impacts resulting from the development proposals in EIA terms.

Residual Effects

- 9.17. No significant residual effects because no cumulative/ in-combination harm was predicted, in EIA terms, resulting from the development.

Conclusions

- 9.18. The combined effects of the different types of residual impacts from the Proposed Development have been considered, and it is concluded that there are no significant cumulative effects that are attributable to the development.
- 9.19. In summary, when taking into account the impacts of the Proposed Development in combination with all the other schemes, it is not considered that the cumulation of projects will significantly alter the assessment of the Proposed Development or its conclusions or result in substantially greater impacts.

³³ [Renewable Energy Planning Database | DESNZ & Barbour ABI](#)

³⁴ [Wiltshire Planning Explorer](#)

10. Summary and Conclusions

- 10.1. The planning application to which this ES relates, seeks planning permission for a 3MW solar array and ancillary development on land north of the A303, Chicklade, Wiltshire.
- 10.2. The EIA has assessed the likely significant environmental effects which are to arise from the Proposed Development, based upon the plans and drawings and project information provided and detailed earlier in this ES.
- 10.3. The EIA Regulations require that these planning applications are subject to an EIA. In considering the Proposed Development, the ES also documents the considerations given by the Applicant to other alternative layouts and designs in this location.
- 10.4. In order to determine the scope of the EIA, a formal scoping process was undertaken, and has continued informally, as required, with the LPA throughout the development of the proposals and as the technical work has progressed.
- 10.5. The resultant assessments has been presented in line with the Scoping exercise undertaken to date within the following environmental topics:
- Alternatives;
 - Biodiversity;
 - Climate Change;
 - Landscape; and
 - Cumulative impact
- 10.6. Each chapter sets out the baseline information for the environmental topic, assesses the potential impacts, recommends mitigation measures (if required) and makes a judgement on the significance of the impact, both at the construction phase and the operational phase of the Proposed Development, and in some cases, during demolition. Each chapter concludes by summarising the results of the assessment in a summary of impacts table. The concluding remarks of each assessment chapter are as detailed below.

Alternatives

- 10.7. It has been demonstrated in this chapter that there are no suitable alternative sites for the proposed development, that are preferential to supply renewable energy to the Chicklade (EV) service station. The Applicant and appointed consultants consider this to be the most appropriate solution to meet the EV hub's annual demand. Having regard to the assessments undertaken and engagement with stakeholders, the siting of the 3MW solar array and ancillary development, provides the best quality development solution.

Biodiversity

- 10.8. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment (BMA) results in an 150.18% gain for area habitats and a 91.11% gain for hedgerow habitats, with mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures provided for protected species. Consequently, the development is considered to demonstrate a positive biodiversity impact at the site level.

Climate Change

- 10.9. The Proposed Development will result in a significant beneficial effect in relation to climate change mitigation by generating renewable electricity and supporting the adjacent EV hub, thereby contributing to transport decarbonisation objectives.
- 10.10. The carbon displacement information indicates that the combined annual benefit of renewable generation and EV transition is approximately 1,385 tonnes CO₂e/year, assisting the LPA with their carbon neutral ambitions.

Landscape

- 10.11. The LVIA identifies major to moderate adverse landscape effect (for the duration of the solar array operation), slight to moderate adverse effect on the NCA and moderate adverse effect on the National Landscape. The identified landscape impacts are predicted for the operational lifetime of the solar array and are reversible thereafter.

Cumulative impact

- 10.12. The combined effects of the different types of residual impacts from the Proposed Development have been considered, and it is concluded that there are no significant cumulative effects that are attributable to the development.
- 10.13. In summary, when taking into account the impacts of the Proposed Development in combination with all the other schemes, it is not considered that the cumulation of projects will significantly alter the assessment of the Proposed Development or its conclusions or result in substantially greater impacts.

Avoidance and Mitigation and Residual Impacts Summary

- 10.14. A summary of avoidance and mitigation and residual impacts is included at **Table 6** below:

Chapter	Avoidance and Mitigation	Residual Impacts
5. Alternatives	No mitigation required.	Residual effects from carbon offset and the combatting of climate change are predicted and considered as assessed at Chapter 7 .
6. Biodiversity	Mitigation is proposed in respect of retained habitats, vegetation management, hedgerow removal, timing of construction works and excavations. Enhancement measures include bird and bat boxes, orchard	The residual effects of the scheme resulting from the BNG measures is considered to be moderate to major beneficial at a local scale for the lifetime of the development.

Chapter	Avoidance and Mitigation	Residual Impacts
	planting, woodland planting, creation of neutral grassland and hedgerow creation / enhancement. BNG for habitats of +150.18% (38.87 units) and a +91.11% gain (5.40 units) for hedgerows.	
7. Climate Change	No mitigation required.	Residual effects arising from carbon offset and the combatting of climate change are predicted. The magnitude of the mitigation effect is considered to be beneficial and, given the estimated scale of annual emissions savings, is assessed as moderate beneficial (significant) at a local level.
8. Landscape	The existing field currently has gappy hedge boundaries which will be planted with new native hedge planting to strengthen them. The panels are located in the lower portion of the site, close to the A303 traffic corridor, Chicklade Service Station and several agricultural buildings adjacent to the south west corner of the site. Two new mixed native hedgerows will be planted along the north and south of the fenced off solar arrays, with the northern hedge line, to include hedgerow trees. An area of native woodland will be planted to the east of the solar arrays which will create new habitat and help to mitigate views of the panels from public rights of	The site and immediate surroundings are assessed as having medium landscape sensitivity, a high magnitude of change, and a resulting major to moderate adverse landscape effect (for the duration of the solar array operation). The magnitude of effect on the NCA is assessed as low, with an overall significance of slight to moderate adverse. The changes are long term and experienced over an intermediate area resulting in an overall moderate adverse effect

Chapter	Avoidance and Mitigation	Residual Impacts
	way located on higher ground in the north east.	on the National Landscape. For users of the A303 and nearby minor roads, visibility is negligible to very limited due to hedgerows, roadside activity and transient views, resulting in minimal to minor adverse effects.
9. Cumulative Impact	No mitigation is required to address any cumulative/ in-combination impacts resulting from the development proposals in EIA terms.	No significant residual effects because no cumulative/ in-combination harm was predicted, in EIA terms, resulting from the development.

Table 6 - Avoidance and Mitigation and Residual Impacts Summary

Overall Conclusion

- 10.15. In the process of the Environmental Impact Assessment for the 3MW solar array and ancillary development a wide range of potential impacts have been considered, utilising the skills and expertise of individual independent specialists to assess the proposals.
- 10.16. The LVIA identifies major to moderate adverse landscape effect (for the duration of the solar array operation), slight to moderate adverse effect on the NCA and moderate adverse effect on the National Landscape. The identified landscape impacts are predicted for the operational lifetime of the solar array and are reversible thereafter.
- 10.17. The proposed BNG measures is considered to be moderate to major beneficial at a local scale for the lifetime of the development.
- 10.18. Similarly, the generation of renewable energy and offsetting of fossil fuel produced carbon is considered to be moderate beneficial, at a local scale for the lifetime of the development.



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