

The background of the page features a stylized illustration of rolling hills in various shades of green. The hills are composed of smooth, curved shapes that overlap, creating a sense of depth and movement. The colors range from a light, pale green to a darker, more saturated green.

Land East of Blackmore Farm, Melksham

Environmental Statement Volume 4: Non-Technical Summary

April 2026

Turley

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Document Version	Lead Author	Reviewed By	Approved By
V1 (Draft)	EC	EE	MM
V2 (Final)	EE	EE	MM

Applicant
Gleeson Land Ltd

Our reference
03004

1. Introduction

What is Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)?

- 1.1 EIA is a process that involves the identification, assessment and reporting of the likely significant environmental effects of a project so they can be taken into account by the determining authority, in this instance Wiltshire Council, when deciding whether to grant planning permission. Ways that these effects can be avoided, reduced, managed or offset are also identified.
- 1.2 EIA is a requirement of UK law for projects that are likely to cause significant environmental effects and the process has been undertaken in line with The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations')¹.

What is an Environmental Statement and Non-Technical Summary?

- 1.3 The findings of the EIA process are reported within an Environmental Statement (ES) that is submitted to the determining authority. The ES has the status of a 'material consideration' in determining the planning application.

¹ SI no. 571 (as amended).

² **Volume 1: Primary Report and Supporting Graphics, Volume 2: Technical Appendices to the Primary Report, Volume 3: Environmental Management Plan, and Volume 4: Non-Technical Summary.**

- 1.4 The ES, which comprises **Volumes 1 – 4**², contains the full results of the EIA (inclusive of methodologies of assessment, existing information, and the conclusions of the technical assessments). This Non-Technical Summary (NTS) is part of the ES.
- 1.5 As defined in the Planning Practice Guidance³, the NTS should be written in 'plain English' to ensure that the findings reported in **Volume 1: Primary Report and Supporting Graphics** and, where applicable **Volume 2: Technical Appendices to the Primary Report**, can be easily understood by non-experts (i.e. the general public).
- 1.6 The EIA Regulations set out what needs to be reported in the ES and summarised in the NTS. These requirements are set out in **Appendix 1**, alongside where that information is located in this document to provide clarity that regulatory requirements are met.

What does the NTS include?

- 1.7 The NTS covers the following key aspects:
 - Outline of the 'EIA process' and the approach taken for this specific project (**Section 2**);

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

- An overview of the Site and Proposed Development considered within the EIA and what these include (**Sections 3 and 4**);
- The existing relevant baseline conditions of the Site and surrounding area (**Section 4**), as EIA is focused on the ‘changes’ caused by the Proposed Development;
- A summary of the outputs of the technical assessments undertaken to determine if the ‘effects’ of the Proposed Development are ‘significant’ (**Section 5**);
- Synopsis of the ‘cumulative effects’ evaluation of the Proposed Development with other projects (**Section 6**); and
- Other relevant information (e.g. policy context, reasonable alternatives, etc.) is also provided within this document.

What Happens Next?

- 1.8 The ES has been submitted to Wiltshire Council in support of the outline planning application. The determination process from this point is outlined within **Extract 1**. The target timescale for the determination (once validated) is 16 weeks. Wiltshire Council can request an extension to this period if agreed in writing with the Applicant.
- 1.9 The ES has been submitted in digital format and is available on the Wiltshire Council planning portal website (details below).

Contact Details

Wiltshire Council

Address: County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8JN

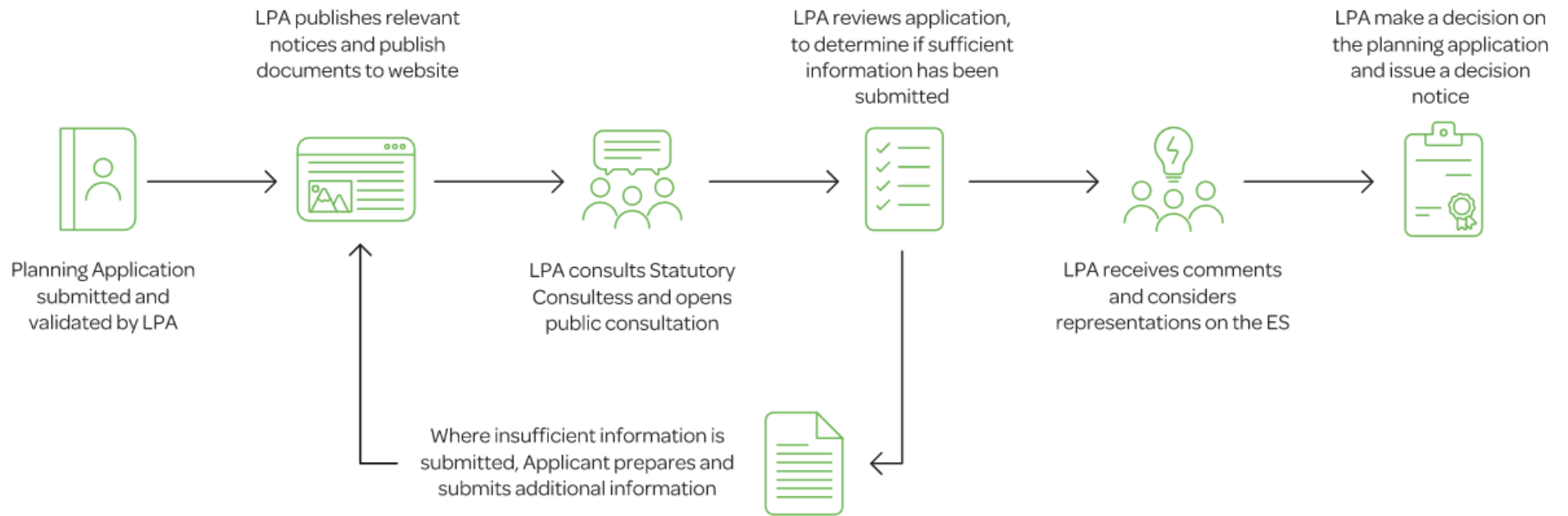
Email: developmentmanagement@wiltshire.gov.uk

Number: 0300 456 0114

Planning Portal Website:

<https://development.wiltshire.gov.uk/pr/s/>

- 1.10 During the determination period, members of the public have an opportunity to comment via the Wiltshire Council planning portal website.

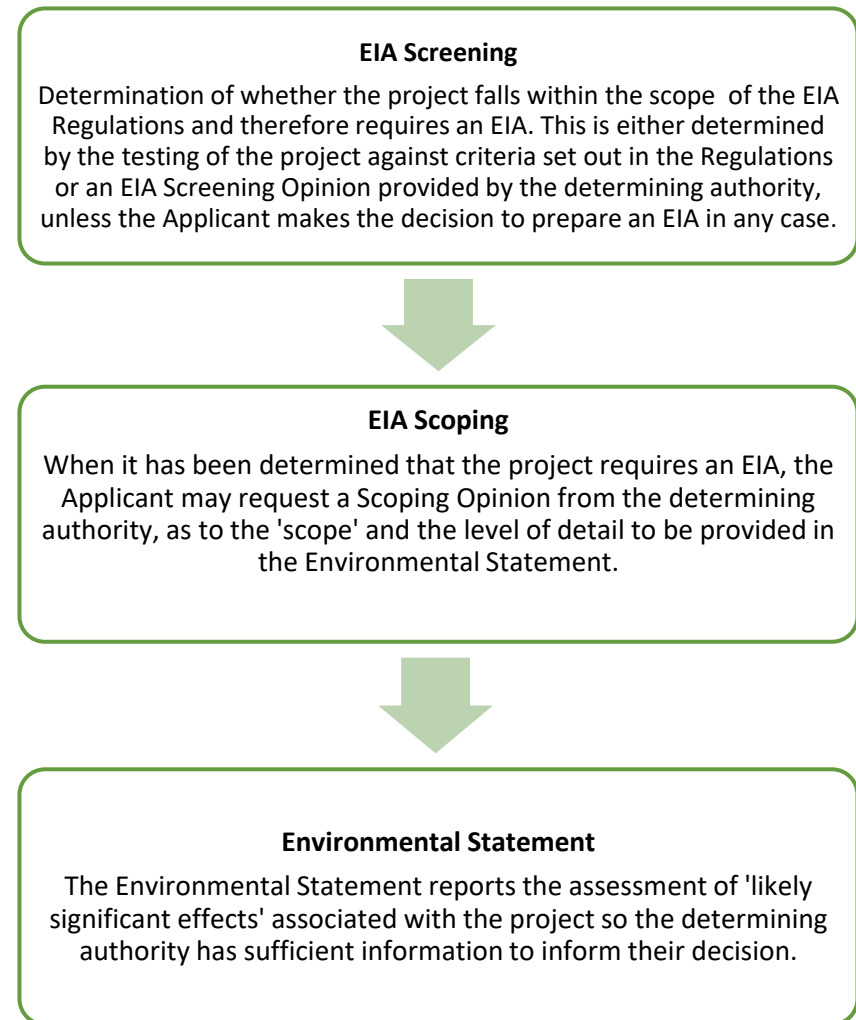


Extract 1. General Overview of the Determination Process

2. The EIA Process and Approach

What is the EIA process?

- 2.1 The aim of EIA is to protect the environment by ensuring that a determining authority when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant environmental effects of the project and takes them into account in the decision-making process. As such, EIA is a tool to identify, assess and report likely significant environmental effects.
- 2.2 The EIA process generally comprises a series of steps, which are summarised in **Extract 2**. It should be noted that the first step (Screening) can be skipped (if EIA is to be undertaken) and the second stage (Scoping) is voluntary. In this case, as there was potential for likely significant effects, the project moved forward to the EIA Scoping Stage and only the 'EIA Scoping' and 'Environmental Statement' stages of the EIA process were completed.
- 2.3 The EIA Regulations specify that an EIA must '*identify, describe and assess the direct and indirect significant effects*' of the Proposed Development on a number of 'factors'. These factors, generally broken down into specific sensitive receptors, have been considered / assessed within several environmental topics and appraised at each stage of the EIA process.



Extract 2. Steps in the EIA Process

What was involved in the EIA Scoping process?

- 2.4 The EIA Scoping process, informed by a series of baseline studies, involved a preliminary assessment to identify environmental topics and / or specific effects that were 'not significant'. This process was used to 'scope' the ES, thereby ensuring only those environmental topics and / or specific effects that were likely to be 'significant' would be subject to further assessment and reported as part of the ES.
- 2.5 The EIA Scoping process culminated in request for an EIA Scoping Opinion, accompanied by a Scoping Report⁴, submitted to Wiltshire Council on 4th November 2025. A Scoping Opinion⁵, informed by consultee responses, was adopted on 7th January 2026. Details of how the Scoping Opinion has been addressed is provided in **Chapter 2: Approach to EIA of Volume 1**.
- 2.6 The EIA Scoping Report proposed to 'scope out' the following environmental topics because no likely significant effects were anticipated:
- Water Environment and Flood Risk;
 - Cultural Heritage and Archaeology;
 - Ground Conditions;

- Socio-Economics and Human Health;
- Climate Change;
- Transport and Access;
- Lighting;
- Waste;
- Major Accidents and/or Disasters;
- Agricultural Land.

- 2.7 No significant effects from the Proposed Development were anticipated for transport and access. However, there was considered to be potential for significant effects when considered alongside identified cumulative projects (in-combination effects) (see **Section 6**).
- 2.8 Technical assessment work following the Scoping Report confirmed no significant effects for noise and vibration and air quality. Although potential impacts are reported in stand-alone reports, as they are not considered significant they are scoped out of the ES.
- 2.9 Accordingly, the ES has reported the assessment of 'likely significant effects' (see **Section 5**) associated with the following

⁴ The EIA Scoping Report has been submitted as **Appendix 2.1 of Volume 2**.

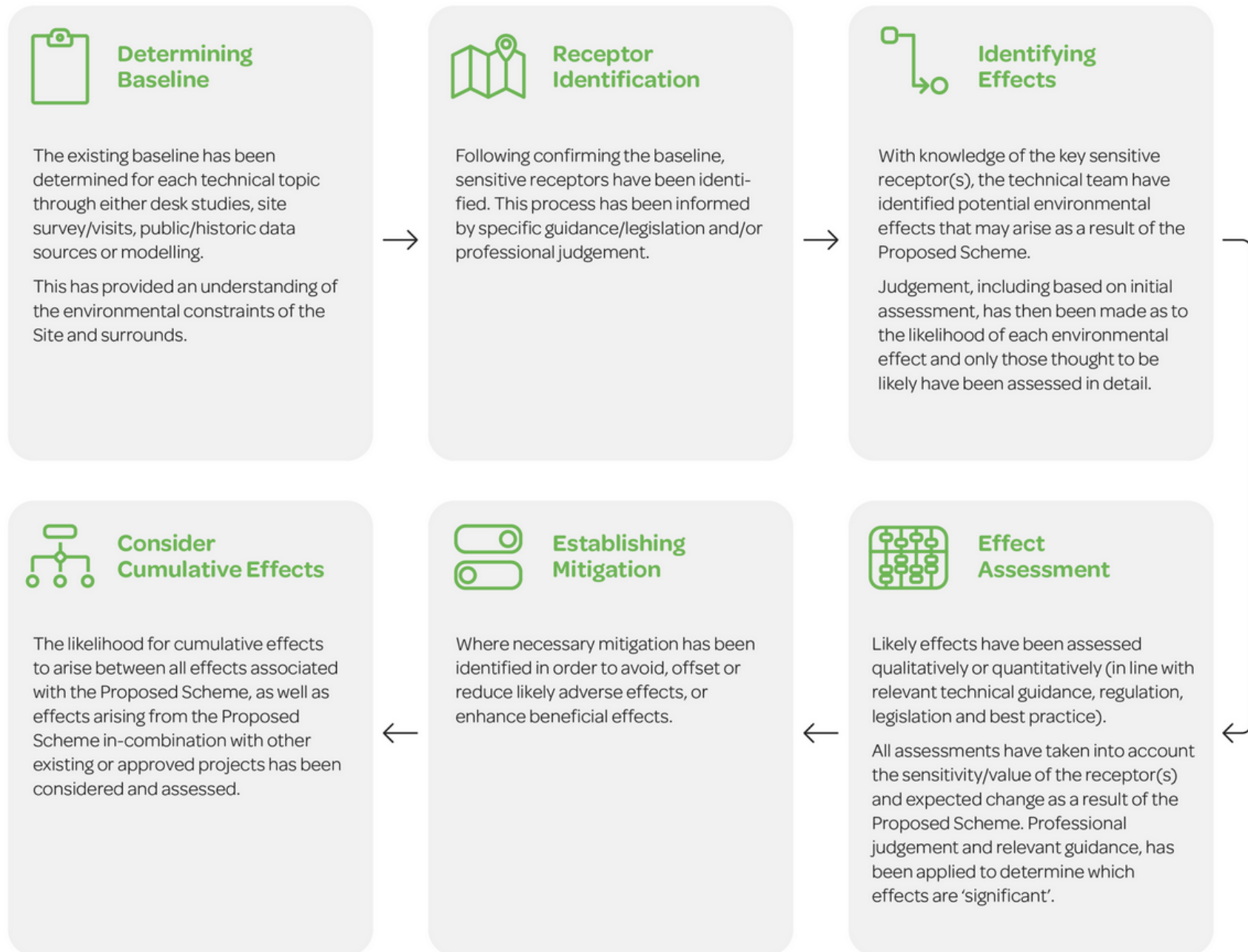
⁵ The Scoping Opinion has been submitted as **Appendix 2.2 of Volume 2**.

environmental topics, which was confirmed in Wiltshire Council's Scoping Opinion:

- Landscape and Visual;
- Biodiversity; and
- Transport and Access (in-combination with other projects only).

What was involved in preparing the ES?

- 2.10 The approach to the assessments varies between the various environmental topics and specific effects, reflecting relevant industry and technical guidance / standards and legislation. The methodologies adopted are outlined for each environmental topic within **Technical Chapters 6 and 7 of Volume 1**.
- 2.11 Nonetheless, an overarching approach required by the EIA Regulations that covers all environmental topics is set out in **Extract 3**.
- 2.12 The summary of the technical assessments presented within this NTS (**Section 5**) concludes by confirming whether an effect was considered 'significant' or 'not significant'.
- 2.13 Mitigation has been noted as part of the summary within **Section 5** both for effects which are categorised as 'significant' or 'not significant'.



Extract 3. Overview of the Assessment Approach

3. The Proposed Development

What is the Proposed Development?

- 3.1 The Applicant is seeking outline planning permission for the construction of up to 275 residential dwellings, with infrastructure and access. It will include internal roads, footways, car and cycle parking, utility services, surface water drainage, and green spaces/landscaping.

Where is the Proposed Development?

- 3.2 The Site, shown on **Extract 4**, encompasses approximately 27.41 hectares (ha) and is located to the east of the town of Melksham in Wiltshire. The Site consists of agricultural fields with trees and hedgerows, and several ditches run along field boundaries which connect to a watercourse, a tributary of Clacker's Brook, in the southern half of the Site. To the north of the Site are residential properties and the A3102 Sandridge Common; to the east is a lane / bridleway (known as Prater's Lane); to the south is agricultural land and woodlands (Eight Acre Plantation); and to the west is currently agricultural land, but which has approved outline planning consent ⁶(shown on **Extract 4**).
- 3.3 The Site is well connected to the local network of Public Rights of Way (PRoWs). PRoW MELW26 runs to the west of the Site and

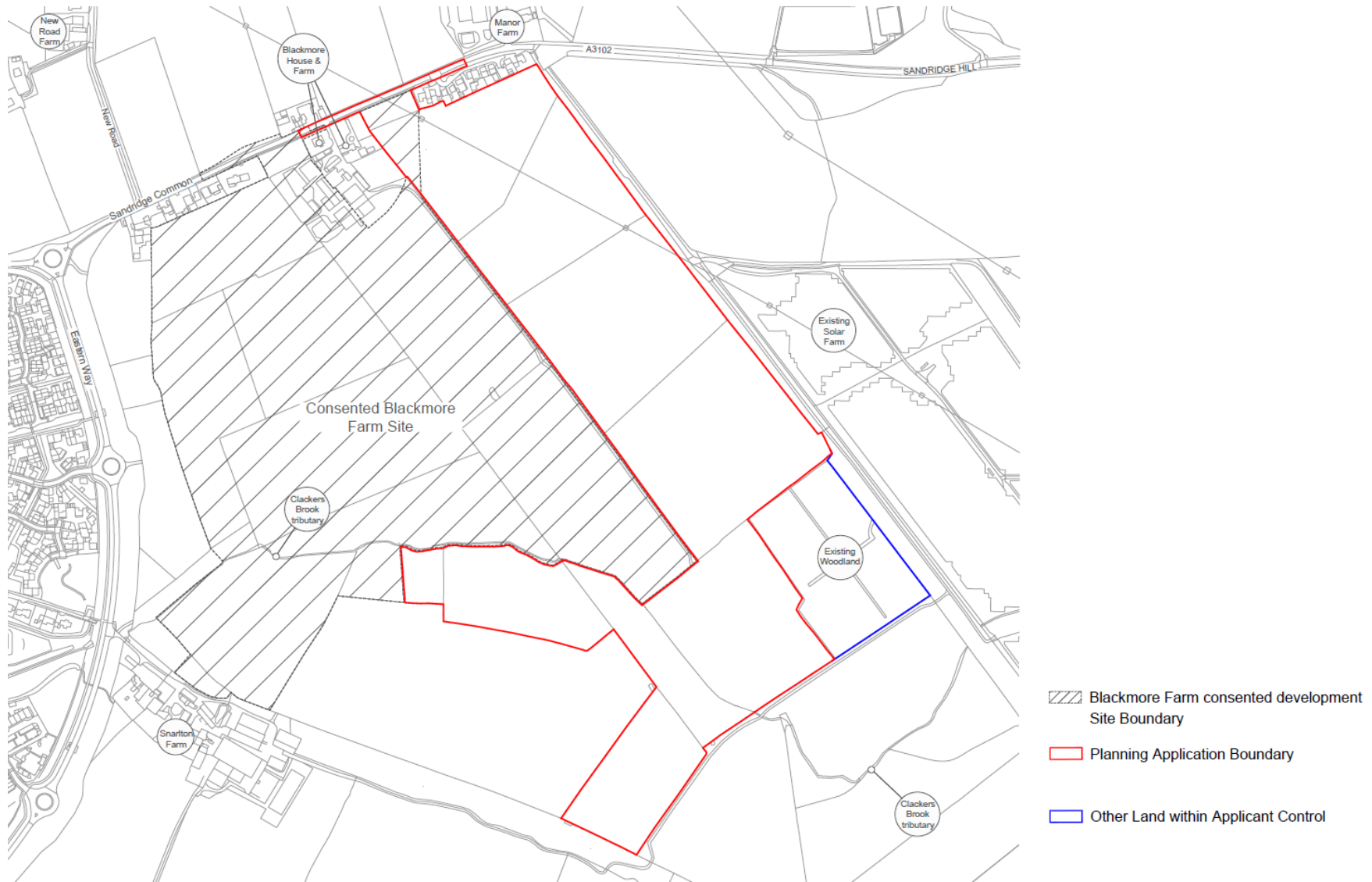
through the southwest of the Site from north to south, linking Sandridge Common Road to Bridleway MELW41. Bridleway MELW41 continues to the southwest of the Site, providing a connection to Eastern Way. Bridleway (MELW40) (Prater's Lane) runs adjacent to the eastern boundary, also from north to south, and links to several other footpaths and local routes.

- 3.4 The wider area is predominantly made up of agricultural land. To the west, is the settlement of Melksham. To the southwest lies Snarlton Farm. To the north is Manor Farm Estate, with agricultural buildings associated with Blackmore House and Farm to the northeast. The Clacker's Brook is amongst agricultural land, approximately 280m at its closest point. To the east of Prater's Lane is a solar electricity generating installation (Sandridge Solar Farm) and associated, partially constructed, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).

Parameters

- 3.5 The assessment of the Proposed Development is based on defined parameters (**Extract 5**). The Parameter Plans establish the framework for all ES technical assessments and ensure that, as the Proposed Development evolves through the planning process, all likely significant environmental effects are identified and assessed at this principal decision stage.

⁶ Planning reference: PL/2023/11188 - See **Section 6**, Cumulative Project 1.



Extract 4. Overview of Site Boundary and Consented Scheme

Land Use and Quantum and Heights

- 3.6 The Proposed Development comprises up to 275 residential dwellings, with infrastructure and access. It will include internal roads, footways and cycleways, parking, utility services, surface water drainage, and green spaces/landscaping. Homes will be a mix of flats and 1/2/3/4/5-bedroom houses.
- 3.7 The proposed homes will be up to 3 storeys in height and up to 12.9m above Finished Floor Levels (FFLs) (varying +/- 0.4m from existing levels). So, the maximum building height will be approximately 12.9m above existing ground levels. Heights of homes will vary across the Site as shown in **Extract 6**.

Transport and Access

- 3.8 Primary vehicular and pedestrian access will be via the A3102 Sandridge Common at the north of the Site, which will connect to the internal road network of secondary and tertiary roads. Internal circulation roads will provide access for residents and visitors parking.
- 3.9 New pedestrian and cycle routes will provide connections through the Site and to the surrounding area to the west, and including connection to the existing footpaths and bridleways to the south and east of the Site.
- 3.10 Car parking and secure cycle storage areas will be provided.

Surface and Foul Water Drainage

- 3.11 All development will be located within the low-risk Flood Zone 1 area and steered away from areas of surface water flooding. Mitigation measures to reduce flood risk will be incorporated which ensures the Site is safe for its lifetime and there is no increased risk from flooding to downstream or surrounding properties.
- 3.12 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be implemented which will contribute to reducing surface water run-off while delivering additional biodiversity and visual amenity benefits. The Proposed Development will be designed to accommodate extreme rainfall events and other flood events.

Landscaping and Ecology Enhancements

- 3.13 The Proposed Development will retain, protect, and enhance existing landscape features (as shown in **Extract 5**). The landscape strategy integrates several green infrastructure measures including new woodland buffers and multi-functional corridors along sensitive boundaries to provide a sensitive transition between the settlement edge and wider countryside to east and south.

KEY:

-  Application Site Boundary
-  Proposed All Modes Access from Sandridge Common
-  Proposed Vehicle Access route across consented Blackmore Farm site
-  Proposed Pedestrian and Cycle link with consented Blackmore Farm pedestrian / cyclepath
-  Proposed All Mode access into highway network of consented Blackmore Farm site
-  Proposed All Mode access into highway network of consented Blackmore Farm site
-  Proposed pedestrian connection to Bridleway MELW40
-  Proposed Residential Development Land
inc. highways and incidental spaces / GI verges / parking
-  Existing watercourse (retained)
-  Existing trees & hedgerows & associated ditches (retained)
-  Proposed breaks in hedgerows for connections (road/paths/utilities)
-  Existing breaks in hedgerows use for connections (road/paths/utilities)
-  Existing culvert locations used for new pathway links over watercourse
-  Existing deciduous woodland (off site - dashed line denotes 10m offset)
-  Consented Blackmore Farm Site
-  Existing PRoW / Bridleway remain in-situ
-  Application includes land within adopted highway at Sandridge Common for junction formation
-  GI Uses within Consented Blackmore Farm Site which fall within Application Boundary to deliver highway links
-  Green Infrastructure & Linking Highway Land - inc POS & Play Spaces, natural landscape, hedgerows, allotments / orchards, woodland, SUDS, existing watercourse & ditches, drainage infrastructure & short highway connections across GI corridors
-  Zones for Highway Infrastructure across GI corridors to connect between development areas
-  Structural Landscaping Areas (15 - 20m depth)
-  Structural Landscaping Areas (10m depth)
-  Structural landscape planting



Extract 5. Parameter Plan (Composite)

- 3.14 Large public open spaces are proposed to the northeast and south along the watercourse. The northeast area will act as a buffer to the Special Landscape Area⁷, incorporating formal planting that reflects its parkland character and helps soften the settlement edge.
- 3.15 The Proposed Development will deliver new green spaces, enhancing habitats, supporting sustainable drainage, and improving footpath connections to the wider PRow network.
- 3.16 Across the Site, a mix of public open spaces, allotments, and play areas will be provided, supported by a comprehensive landscape strategy that combines hard and soft landscaping to create a high-quality environment.

Operational Strategies

- 3.17 Several operational strategies will be implemented as part of the Proposed Development, in relation to surface water and foul drainage and flood risk (including an allowance for climate change), drinking water, lighting, sustainability and energy and waste. These strategies have all been prepared in line with relevant best practice or technical guidance / legislation / regulation.

⁷ Special Landscape Area (SLA) are designated areas of high landscape importance, recognised for their physical, environmental, visual, cultural, and recreational features.

What are the timescales for construction and when will it be complete?

- 3.18 Construction is expected to take place over a six-year period, with commencement anticipated in 2027 (subject to gaining planning permission). The first year of opening is assumed to be 2028 and the Proposed Development will be fully complete by 2033.
- 3.19 The construction stage will involve various works, including but not limited to: the creation of both permanent and temporary accesses; implementation of construction compound and welfare facilities; the protection of retained features; earthworks; utilities; drainage; construction of buildings, and the creation of public realm and landscaping.
- 3.20 The ES includes a series of environmental management best practice measures to avoid, offset, and reduce potential environmental effect associated with the construction stage. These measures will be delivered through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which will cover all aspects of construction. Derived from established best practice and technical guidance, these measures are 'tried and tested', ensuring effective mitigation of environmental impacts associated with construction activities.

KEY:



Development up to 2 storeys or lower acceptable. 2 storey: Where Ridge Height may be up to 10.0m above existing ground levels to allow for localised changes in ground levels during construction.



Development up to 2.5 storeys or lower acceptable. 2.5 storey: Where FFL to Ridge Height of 11.5m above existing ground levels to allow for localised changes in ground levels during construction



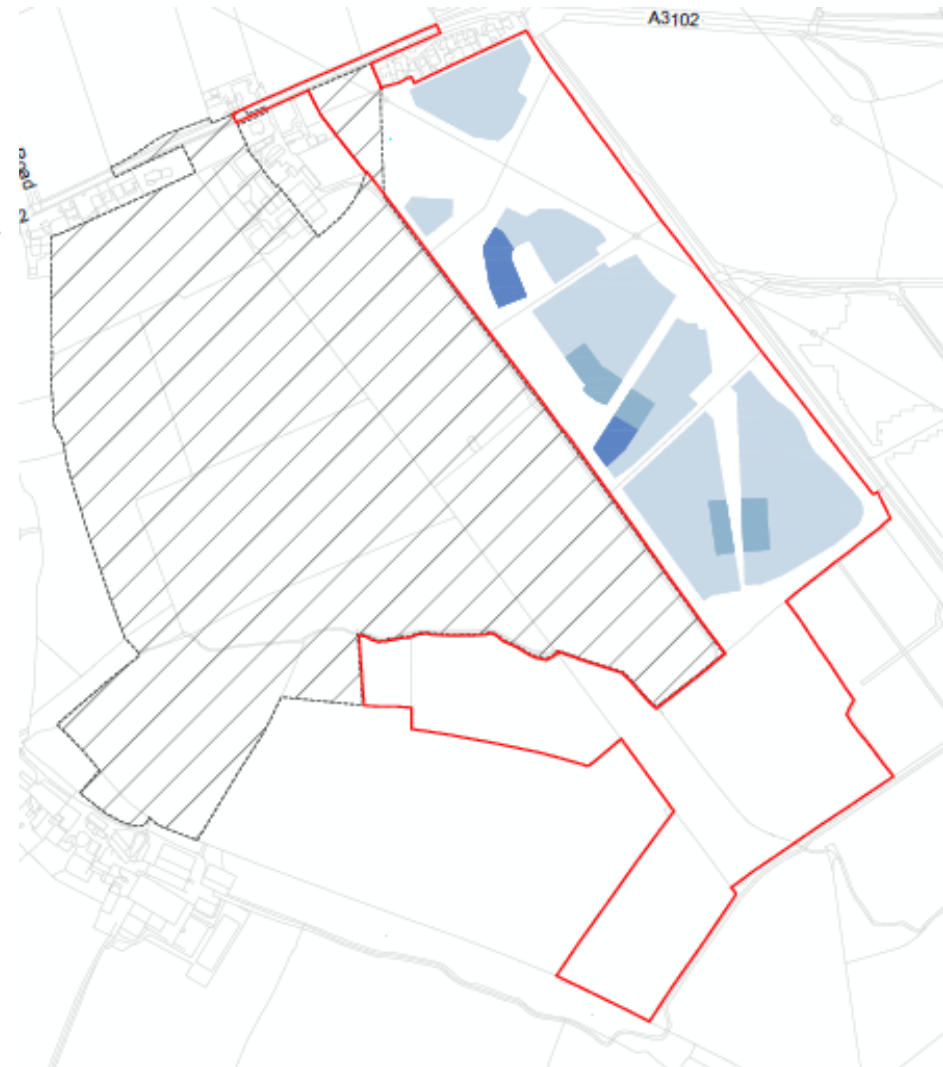
Development up to 3 storeys or lower acceptable. 3 storey: Where FFL to Ridge Height of 12.9m above existing ground levels to allow for localised changes in ground levels during construction.



Application Site Boundary



Consented Blackmore Farm Site



Extract 6. Parameter Plan (Heights)

Reasonable Alternatives

3.21 The EIA Regulations require “a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer”, including in relation to alternative sites; design; or technology. As such, in line with the EIA Regulations, if no alternatives have been studied, the EIA does not necessarily need to report or assess reasonable alternatives. This is the case for alternatives sites and technologies. With regard to the Proposed Development, alternative designs and a ‘do nothing’ scenario were considered further, and a summary is set out below.

Alternative Designs

3.22 Design, layout and landscape of the Proposed Development have been considered and refined as the project has evolved, reflecting feedback from stakeholders; findings from technical studies, and the environmental constraints and opportunities identified during the assessment process. Although no alternative detailed designs have been developed at this stage, the outline nature of the Application means that alternative design options are likely to be explored further at the reserved matters stage. The current parameters are based on consultations and the environmental considerations identified so far.

‘Do nothing’ Scenario

3.23 It is likely that in the absence of the Proposed Development coming forward, the Site would continue to be used for primarily agricultural purposes and the current management regime would

continue. The habitat types, species and landscape within the Site are unlikely to change considerably.

3.24 It is possible that there may be a change in agricultural practices from largely pastoral use to arable use which could decrease the value of the Site for invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, birds and foraging bats.

3.25 The effects of climate change may also change the types of habitats and species on the Site due to variations in temperature and rainfall patterns.

3.26 Views are also likely to change due to changes in agriculture and habitats as outlined above and implementation of committed development (including Cumulative Project 1 immediately west of the Site – see **Section 6**).

4. Baseline

- 4.1 As set out within **Extract 2**, to determine the environmental effects of the Proposed Development it was necessary to establish the existing characteristics of the Site and surrounding area (i.e. the existing baseline conditions). Therefore, a summary of the relevant baseline information for the environmental topics 'scoped into' the assessment is provided below⁸.

Landscape and Visual

- 4.2 The Site is not located in an area designated for landscape purposes i.e. the Site is not in a National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), or any international, or local landscape designations. The Site is located within an Open Clay Vale landscape, as identified in county- and district-level landscape character assessments.
- 4.3 The landscape of the UK is divided into character areas; the Site is located within National Character Area (NCA) 117: 'Avon Vales' and is described as an undulating, low-lying landscape of mixed, predominantly pastoral agriculture and small limestone-built towns, cut by the (Bristol) River Avon and its tributaries, and surrounded to the west, south and east by higher land.
- 4.4 The northern part of the Site fringes 'SLA 5: The higher land of Spye and Bowood Parklands'.
- 4.5 The Site is surrounded to the south and west by gently rolling clay vale farmland ranging from approximately 40m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to 55m AOD. Clacker's Brook winds across the landscape c.280m to the south at the closest point. Vegetation associated with the Brook helps to limit and filter views from the south. Higher ground to the northeast allows some occasional public views across the Site and its wider landscape setting.
- 4.6 Overall, the Site and its context have a rural character although the edge of settlement and associated land uses are evident. The Site itself comprises nine mixed use field parcels and is adjacent to a deciduous woodland plantation located within a gently rolling clay vale landscape, which subtly slopes within the Site from higher points along the northern and north-eastern boundaries. The field parcels are delineated by hedgerows and established hedgerow trees.
- 4.7 Overall, the Site and its context have a rural character although the edge of settlement and associated land uses are evident.

⁸ Baseline data for the environmental topics 'scoped out' have not been set out and are provided in full as part of the EIA Scoping Report (**Appendix 2.1** in **Volume 2**).

Biodiversity

4.8 There are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites of nature conservation importance within or adjacent to the Site.

4.9 The Site is located within 10km of the following designated ecological sites:

- Spye Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (approximately 2.1km northeast); and
- Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (approximately 9.5km northwest).

4.10 A further 10 non-statutory designated ecological sites, Local Wildlife Site (LWS), are located within 2km of the Site and include:

- Eighteen Acre Plantation (approximately 0.3km east);
- Morass Wood (approximately 0.8km east);
- Hanging Wood (approximately 1.0km south east);
- Prickly Sevens Meadow (approximately 1.1km south east);
- Basin Covert (approximately 1.4km north east);
- Bristol Avon River (approximately 1.9km west);
- Hack Farm Meadow (approximately 1.5km north east);
- Hill Planting (approximately 1.7km north east);

- Southview Farm Meadow 2 (1.7km north east); and
- Maple Wood (approximately 1.9km east).

4.11 Habitats present within the Site includes arable fields and poor semi-improved grassland, hedgerows and ditches, scattered broadleaved woodland trees including several mature trees of which three are veteran trees (which are considered to be irreplaceable) and a small watercourse (tributary of Clackers Brook) flowing east to west.

4.12 'Rivers and streams' are a UK Priority Habitat, and 'Rivers, Streams and Associated Habitats' are a Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Habitat. All hedgerows on Site qualify as 'Important' under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 and are a Priority Habitat and Wiltshire BAP Habitat.

4.13 Ecological survey work has confirmed the presence of several protected and notable species, including reptiles (a low population of grass snakes), amphibians, invertebrates, breeding birds, hazel dormouse, bats, otter and badger. Habitats also have potential to support other species such as brown hare, hedgehog, harvest mouse, and water shrew.

4.14 No other protected species (including water voles and beavers), were recorded during the surveys.

What would happen to the Site in the absence of the Proposed Development (i.e. due to natural evolution)?

- 4.15 The EIA Regulations require the provision of, as far as reasonably possible, an estimation of the future natural evolution of the EIA Boundary if the Proposed Development does not go ahead.
- 4.16 It was determined that the future baseline would likely be the same as the existing baseline if no development was to occur, and the Site would remain in its current use, albeit the existing trees and boundary vegetation would continue to grow.
- 4.17 Potential changes due to climate change and associated variations in rainfall patterns and temperature may affect populations of terrestrial and freshwater habitats and associated species.

5. Effects of the Proposed Development

- 5.1 A summary of the findings and conclusions of the technical assessments undertaken as part of the EIA and reported in this ES are provided below.
- 5.2 A summary of the environmental topics is provided in the table below, where:
- No significant effects were identified after mitigation – denoted by ✖.
 - Significant adverse effects were identified after mitigation – denoted by ✓.
 - Significant beneficial effects were identified after mitigation – denoted by ✓.

Environmental topic	Significant effects during the construction stage?	Significant effects during the operational stage?
Landscape and Visual	✓	✓
Biodiversity	✓	✖

Landscape and Visual

What effects were considered?

- 5.3 The following effects were considered for both the construction and operational stages in the assessment of **Landscape and Visual**:
- Changes to landscape character; and
 - Changes to Visual Amenity of Visual Receptors within 1km of the Site.
- 5.4 A Landscape Strategy forms part of the Proposed Development and it will take time for new planting to mature and develop to provide the full level of screening. Therefore, the assessment identified effects at the first year of the Proposed Development being occupied (Year 1) as a worst-case scenario, and the 15th year (Year 15), the long-term effects.

What receptors were considered?

Landscape character receptors:

- 5.5 Landscape character receptors, i.e. components of the landscape that may be affected as a result of the Proposed Development, have been identified as follows:
- The Site Landscape Character;
 - Host LCA C1 Melksham Open Clay Vales;
 - Host Area 3: Open Clay Vales;

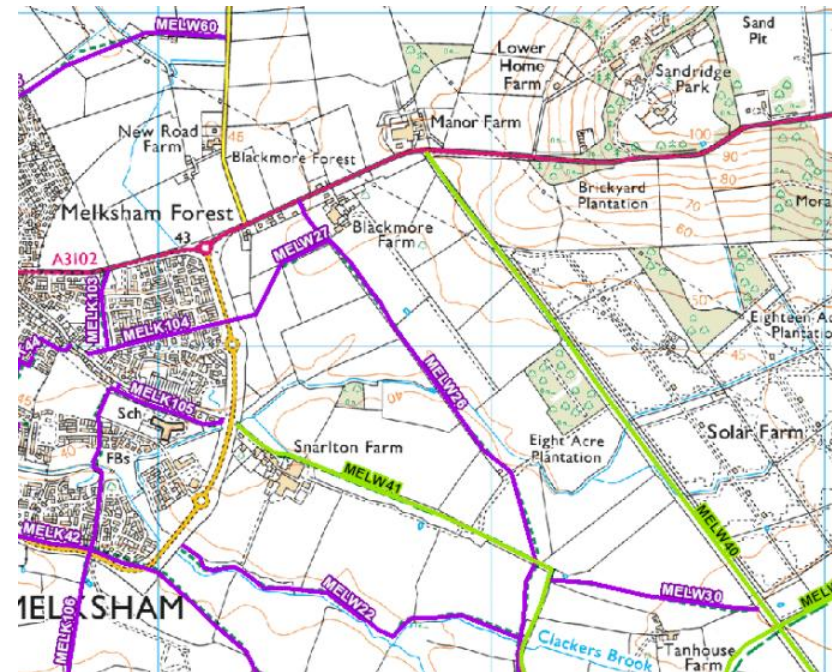
- Residential Group 3: 1-12 Lopes Close;
- Residential Group 4: 254 and 256 Sandridge Common;
- Residential Group 5: Little Snarlton Farm/ Snarlton Farm;
and
- Manor Farm, Sandridge Common.

5.6 Visual receptors, i.e. those individuals who would see the Site and may experience a change in their view as a result of the Proposed Development. Visual receptors have been identified as users of:

- Bridleway MELW40/ Prater's Lane;
- Footpath MELW26;
- Bridleway MELW41/ Browns Lane;
- Footpath MELW27; and
- Footpath MELW22.

- A3102/Sandridge Common Road.

- Residential Group 1: 288, 289, 289A, 290, 290A, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, Sandridge Common Road;
- Residential Group 2: Blackmore Farm and Blackmore House;



Extract 7. PROW Network

What mitigation commitments have been made?

- 5.7 Construction will be carefully controlled by the CEMP including a Construction Logistics Plan and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). Protection measures will be implemented for the retained trees and hedgerows to ensure that the root areas of trees and hedgerows are not damaged by the construction process.
- 5.8 During operation, comprehensive site-wide landscape proposals have been prepared to reduce visual and landscape impacts including:
- Retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows, trees, and veteran trees;
 - Creation of woodland and tree belts, particularly along the southern, northern, and western Site boundaries;
 - Green corridors and open spaces to filter views and provide ecological connectivity;
 - Set-back of development from PRoW, including MELW26 and MELW40, to retain the character of these routes;
 - Multi-functional public open space to provide a sensitive transition to the wider countryside; and

- Management through a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)⁹ secured by condition.

What did the assessment identify?

- 5.9 During construction, there will be noticeable changes to the landscape character of the Site and its immediate surroundings. These changes will result from construction activities including vehicle movements, temporary lighting, construction-related noise and the construction of buildings. Changes to views will be greatest for receptors closest to the Site, including nearby residents and users of footpaths and bridleways, and will reduce with distance. The use of screens/hoarding and protection of retained vegetation will be put in place through the CEMP; however, it is considered that construction will be adverse and Significant on all receptors.
- 5.10 During operation, the Proposed Development would result in a permanent change of use from agricultural land to a residential development. The retention of hedgerows and trees and implementation of a LEMP to create new habitat and landscaped areas will integrate the development to the surroundings and filter views from the surrounding areas. This is considered to be adverse but Not Significant for the majority of receptors but with the exception of receptors: Site landscape character; users of PROW MELW40; MELW26; MELW41; MELW22; residential group

⁹ Details how habitats and other ecological enhancements will be managed and maintained in the long-term.

1, residential group 2 and residential group 3, which were considered to be adverse and Significant.

Biodiversity

What effects were considered?

Construction

- Direct loss and fragmentation of existing habitats and creation of new habitats;
- Damage and degradation of habitats on Site and adjacent to the Site;
- Killing/injury associated with Site clearance; and
- Disturbance associated with noise, lighting and other visual stimuli.

Operation

- Disturbance associated with habitat fragmentation, noise, lighting and other visual stimuli;
- Recreation effects; and
- Killing/injury associated with the Proposed Development, vehicle collisions and cat predation.

What receptors were considered?

5.11 The following receptors were considered, both within the Site and within the local area:

- Habitats: including trees and woodland, hedgerows, watercourses and other habitats and plants;
- Invertebrates;
- Amphibians;
- Reptiles;
- Birds;
- Hazel dormouse;
- Badgers;
- Bats;
- Otter;
- Other mammals; and
- LWSs within 2 km of the Site (see **Section 4**).

What did the assessment identify?

5.12 Construction will result in the loss of some habitats within the Site, including areas of modified grassland and sections of hedgerow. No trees will be removed, and key features such as retained hedgerows, ditches and the tributary of Clacker's Brook will be protected. The loss of habitats during construction is considered to be temporary, adverse and Not Significant.

- 5.13 In the longer term, the creation of new habitats as part of the Site's Green Infrastructure including woodland, hedgerows, SuDS features and open space, will increase biodiversity across the Site. Once established, these new habitats are considered to be beneficial in the long-term, which are considered Significant.
- 5.14 For protected and notable species (including invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, birds, hazel dormouse, badger, bats, otter and other mammals), construction activities may result in adverse temporary disturbance, habitat loss or fragmentation, and a low risk of injury during site clearance however effects are considered to be Not Significant. This conclusion is based on the retention of the ditches/watercourses, trees and hedgerows within the Site, the widespread nature of affected species and the availability of suitable habitat in the surrounding area.
- 5.15 Similarly for habitats, all species will benefit (with the exception of badger and other mammals) in the long term from habitat creation, improved habitat connectivity across the Site, access to additional foraging and nesting opportunities, although still considered Not Significant.
- 5.16 Once operational provision of open space on the Site would provide considerable opportunity for informal recreation by new residents including dog walking, and therefore recreational impacts on LWSs within the vicinity are considered to be Not Significant.

- 5.17 The operation of the Proposed Development may give rise to long-term but generally low-level disturbance to habitats and wildlife on the Site as a result of increased human activity, lighting and noise and injury/killing from traffic and cat predation. Existing and new habitats will be managed through the LEMP and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans (HMMP)¹⁰ (and other mitigation as above). Overall, it is considered that the operation of the Proposed Development will be adverse but Not Significant.

What was committed to (i.e. mitigation)?

Construction

- 5.18 During construction, a range of standard best practice measures will be implemented to protect habitats and species, secured through a CEMP and a Construction Ecological Management Plan (CECoMP). Key measures include controls to prevent pollution of soil, water and air; protection of retained trees, woodland and hedgerows through buffer zones and fencing; and careful management of construction lighting to minimise disturbance to wildlife. Construction activities will be largely limited to daytime hours, with lighting directed away from sensitive habitats and switched off where possible during key ecological periods.
- 5.19 Cutting of grassland and hedgerow removal will be undertaken to minimise injury to amphibians, reptiles and hazel dormouse. Vegetation clearance will be timed to avoid bird breeding season.

¹⁰ A HMMP is a detailed plan that outlines how to create, enhance, manage and monitor habitats.

If works are required during the bird breeding season, checks for nesting birds will be undertaken and appropriate buffer zones applied. An Ecological Clerk of Works will oversee sensitive activities, ensure compliance with mitigation measures, and provide on-site ecological advice.

- 5.20 The CEcoMP will also set out measures to protect amphibians, reptiles, bats, dormice, badgers, otter and other wildlife, including the timing of works, licensing requirements where necessary, and ongoing monitoring during construction.
- 5.21 Habitat for species will be integrated into the development through provision of insect/bee bricks, reptile/amphibian hibernacula, bird boxes, dormouse nest boxes, bat boxes and provision of hedgehog passes.
- 5.22 The Proposed Development has been designed in line with the ecological mitigation hierarchy, seeking to avoid impacts where possible and reduce or offset unavoidable effects. Key measures include the retention of existing hedgerows, trees (including veteran trees), watercourses and associated corridors. Existing access points and culverts will be used where possible to reduce habitat fragmentation. A minimum buffer will be maintained between the Proposed Development and retained woodland adjacent to the south east of the Site (see **Extract 5**).
- 5.23 Extensive Green Infrastructure will be delivered across the Site, including landscaped open spaces, woodland planting, hedgerows, sustainable drainage features, allotments and habitat buffers. These areas will help to maintain habitat

connectivity, provide wildlife refuges, and integrate the development into the surrounding landscape. Proposed new habitats will be managed in accordance with the HMMP.

- 5.24 A detailed lighting design will seek to minimise adverse effects on bats and maintain suitable roosting, foraging and commuting habitat for the range of bats identified within the Site, including provision of dark corridors within the Site.

6. Cumulative Effects

What are cumulative effects?

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

Effect Interactions

Approach

- 6.4 The evaluation of effect interactions first looks to combine all of the effects assessed within all technical chapters and 'categorise' them into 'receptor groups'. By sorting all effects into receptor groups, the potential for an effect interaction to occur can be identified.
- 6.5 The receptors groups are based on the list of 'factors' that are specified within the EIA Regulations - Population, human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, air, climate, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape.
- 6.6 Once collated, it is clear that where a receptor group is will experience multiple effects associated with the Proposed Development and thus there is then considered the 'potential' for an effect interaction. Following this initial sorting process, the specific effects are examined in greater detail and the specific individual receptors assessed to confirm a common receptor.

Evaluation Results

- 6.7 During construction, there is one effect interaction which are considered to be Not Significant.
- **Biodiversity (birds)** – associated with the interaction of permanent minor beneficial effects from long term changes due to habitat creation and temporary minor

adverse effects associated with noise, lighting and visual stimuli from construction activities.

6.8 During the operational stage, there is also one effect interaction which are considered to be Not Significant.

- **Biodiversity (habitats, bats and hazel dormouse)** – associated with adverse effects on with habitats (from increased recreation), bats (due to noise and lighting) and hazel dormouse (due to increased vehicles and cat predation).

In-Combination Effects

Approach

6.9 The first stage for this assessment was to identify other existing or approved projects that should be considered in cumulation with the Proposed Development, the 'Cumulative Projects'. The Cumulative Projects identified for the in-combination assessment are set out in the table below and are shown on **Extract 8**.

ID Planning application reference and name / address

- 1 PL/2023/11188
Land at Blackmore Farm, Sandridge Common, Melksham
Demolition of agricultural buildings and development of up to 500 dwellings; up to 5,000 square metres of employment (class E(g)(i)) & class E(g)(ii)); land for primary school (class F1); land for mixed-use hub (class E / class F); open space;

ID Planning application reference and name / address

- provision of access infrastructure from Sandridge Common (A3102); and provision of all associated infrastructure necessary to facilitate the development of the site (Outline application relating to access.
- 2 PL/2023/09968
Snarlton Farm, Snarlton Lane, Melksham
Change of use of land from agricultural to commercial. Extension to commercial building (Ref: PL/2023/04036), extension specifically falling under use class B2/B8, associated works and associated parking.
- 3 PL/2022/08504
Land South of Western Way, Melksham, Wiltshire
Outline application (with all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of up to 210 residential dwellings (Class C3) and a 70-bed care home (Class C2) with associated access, landscaping and open space (Resubmission of 20/08400/OUT).
- 4 PL/2022/06221
Land at Upside, Melksham, Wiltshire
Demolition of existing buildings and structures, retention of alloy repair centre and development of 112 dwellings, 675 sqm of flexible employment/commercial space (Use Class E(g) ii, iii / B2 / B8), formation of public open space, foot and cycle links and associated works.

ID Planning application reference and name / address

- 5 20/07334/OUT
Land west of Semington Road, Melksham
Outline planning permission for up to 50 dwellings and formation of access and associated works (Outline application to consider access with all other matters reserved).
-
- 6 PL/2022/08155
Land to the West of Semington Road, Melksham
Outline planning permission for up to 53 dwellings including formation of access and associated works, with all other matters reserved.
-
- 7 20/01938/OUT
Unit 3 Priory Court, Poulton / Land at Semington Road, Melksham
Outline planning permission for up to 144 dwellings with informal and formal open space, associated landscaping and vehicular and pedestrian accesses off Semington Road. All matters reserved except for principal means of access.
-
- 8 PL/2024/10345
Land north of the A3102, Melksham
The construction of 295 homes; public open space including formal play space and allotments; sustainable drainage systems; and associated infrastructure, with 0.4 ha of land safeguarded for a nursery. Access to be provided from a new northern arm on the existing Eastern Way/A3102 roundabout junction, with a secondary access onto the

ID Planning application reference and name / address

- A3102. Additional pedestrian and cycle access points proposed.
-
- 9 PL/2025/06749
Land North of Bath Road (A365), Melksham
Outline planning application (with all matters except access reserved) for mixed-use development comprising residential development (up to 205 dwellings), land reserved for expansion of secondary school, public open space, landscaping and associated engineering works.
-
- 10 PL/2024/11426
Land to the South of A365 Bath Road and West of Turnpike Garage, Melksham
Construction of warehouse with office space, parking and associated landscaping including site access.
-
- 11 PL/2025/06105
Land at Bowerhill Lane, Bowerhill, Melksham
Erection of up to 50 dwellings and associated works.
-
- 12 PL/2025/00626
Land North of Berryfield Lane, Melksham
Outline planning application for up to 68 dwellings and formation of new access and associated works (all matters reserved other than access).
-
- 13 PL/2024/07097
Appeal Ref: 3373278
Land South of Snarlton Farm, Snarlton Lane, Melksham,

ID Planning application reference and name / address

Wiltshire

Erection of up to 300 dwellings (Class C3); land for local community use or building (incorporating Classes E(b), E(g) and F2(b) and (c)); open space and dedicated play space; service infrastructure and associated works. Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for two pedestrian and vehicular accesses (excluding internal estate roads) from Eastern Way.

- 6.10 The evaluation is informed by technical reports submitted in support of the Cumulative Projects, or where this is not available professional judgement is applied.
- 6.11 A summary of the evaluation of in-combination effects with those Cumulative Projects was undertaken on an environmental topic by topic basis, considering the following four key points:
- a) Is there a common receptor with the Proposed Development?
 - b) Is there an in-combination effect?
 - c) Is the in-combination effect adverse or beneficial?

¹¹ i.e. the in-combination effect is no better or worse than that reported at the project level.

- d) Does the combined effect give rise to an effect that is greater than that reported for the Proposed Development alone?

- 6.12 The evaluation of in-combination effects was largely qualitative, but some environmental topics have used quantitative modelling work that accounts for other relevant Cumulative Projects.

Evaluation Results

- 6.13 A summary of the in-combination effects assessment for the Cumulative Projects is presented in the table below, where:
- Whether in-combination effects were less than that identified at the project-level¹¹ – denoted by <;
 - Whether in-combination effects were the same as that identified at the project-level – denoted by =; and
 - Whether in-combination effects were greater than that identified at the project-level – denoted by >.
- 6.14 An overarching commentary is provided alongside the above symbols. The in-combination effects are summarised below:

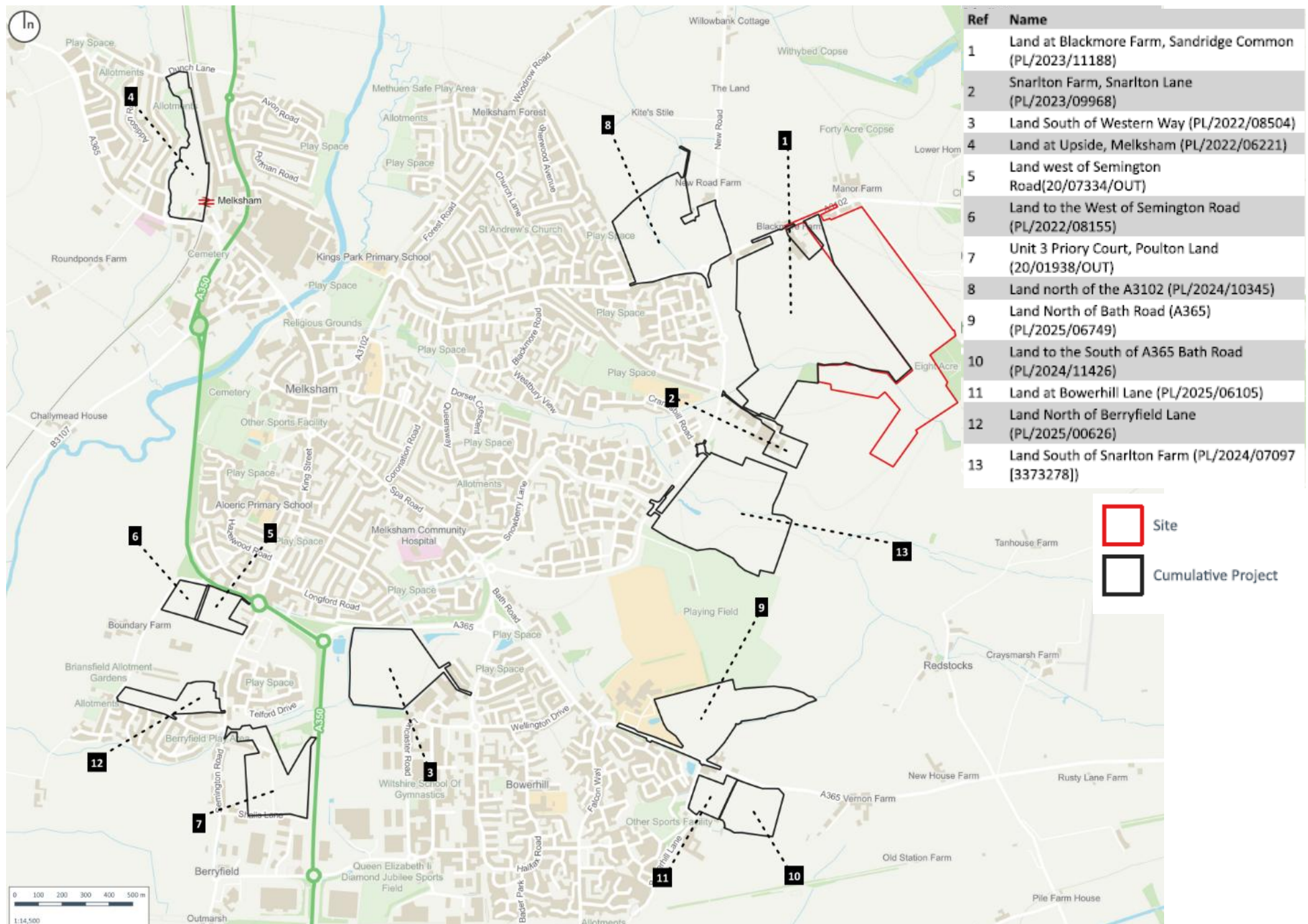
Environmental In-combination effects
topic

Landscape and Views	> During construction in-combination landscape effects remain as assessed at the project level (Significant). During operation the magnitude of change on two landscape receptors (LCA 1 Melksham Open Clay Vale and Host Area 3 Open Clay Vales) is considered to increase. The effect at the Project level is considered to be Not Significant but Significant in combination. Similarly three visual receptors (Footpath MELW30, Eastern Way and Users of the PRoW network on elevated ridges to the south including Bridleway/- Footpaths on ridge to the south including SEEN6) assessed as Not Significant in relation to the Proposed Development were considered to be Significant in-combination with one or more Cumulative Project during the construction stage. During operation no further effects were assessed to be Significant .
Biodiversity	> In-combination effects were the same as that identified at the project-level with the exception of Cumulative Project 1. During construction a temporary in-combination effect on habitat loss is greater than that assessed at the Project Level. The

effect at the Project level is considered is be Not Significant but Significant in combination.

Similarly, there would be medium-term in-combination effects on reptiles and amphibians, birds, hazel dormouse, bats and other mammals. However, these effects would still be **Not Significant**.

Transport and Access	> The effects of the Proposed Development in isolation are considered to be Not Significant. The in-combination effects of the Proposed Development and Cumulative Project 1 would be greater than that for the Proposed Development. In-combination effects which are considered Significant include effects of severance on Eastern Way only and non-motorised user amenity on Sandridge Common west of proposed site access and Eastern Way.
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Extract 8: Cumulative Projects

Appendix 1: Regulatory Compliance Checklist

Regulation 18, Paragraph 3 (e) of the EIA Regulations requires ‘a non-technical summary of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d)’ to be provided. Schedule 4, Paragraph 9 of the EIA Regulations requires ‘A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 8’ to be provided. To provide clarity on compliance with the EIA Regulations, the schedule below identifies where the information from paragraphs a to d of Regulation 18a and paragraphs 1 to 8 of Schedule 4 is located in this NTS.

Regulation 18. Environmental Statements	Schedule 4. Information for Inclusion in Environmental Statements	Location of Information in this NTS
(a) a description of the proposed development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the development	1. A description of the development, including in particular: (a) a description of the location of the development; (b) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases; (c) a description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the development (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used; (d) an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases.	Section 3: The Proposed Development, and Section 4: Baseline
(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	2. A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.	Section 3: The Proposed Development (Reasonable Alternatives)

Regulation 18. Environmental Statements	Schedule 4. Information for Inclusion in Environmental Statements	Location of Information in this NTS
the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment		
-	3. A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.	Section 4: Baseline
-	4. A description of the factors specified in regulation 4(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.	Section 4: Baseline, and Section 5: Effects of the Proposed Development
(b) a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment	5. A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from, inter alia: (a) the construction and existence of the development, including, where relevant, demolition works; (b) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources; (c) the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste; (d) the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters);	Section 5: Effects of the Proposed Development, and Section 6: Cumulative Effects

Regulation 18. Environmental Statements	Schedule 4. Information for Inclusion in Environmental Statements	Location of Information in this NTS
	(e) 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 resources; (f) the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change; (g) the technologies and the substances used. The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in regulation 4(2) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development.	
-	6. A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.	Section 5: Effects of the Proposed Development
(c) a description of any features of the proposed development, or measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment	7. A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.	Section 5: Effects of the Proposed Development
-	8. A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments pursuant to EU legislation	Section 2: The EIA Process and Approach, and Section 5: Effects of

Regulation 18. Environmental Statements	Schedule 4. Information for Inclusion in Environmental Statements	Location of Information in this NTS
	such as Directive 2012/18/EU(3) of the European Parliament and of the Council or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom(4) or UK environmental assessments may be used for this purpose provided that the requirements of this Directive are met. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.	the Proposed Development

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