

Blackmore Farm (1), Melksham, Wiltshire

Archaeological Management Plan



Report prepared for:
David Wilson Homes Ltd

CA Project: AN1045

CA Report: AN1045_01

May 2026

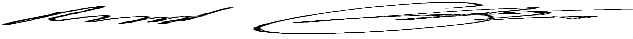


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SUMMARY

Project Name: Blackmore Farm (1), Melksham, Wiltshire

Location: As above

NGR: 392764 163937

This Archaeological Management Plan (AMP) has been created in order to address Wiltshire Council's (WC) mitigation requirement for the production of an AMP (ahead of construction) for the preservation *in situ*, within a suitably fenced off exclusion zone, of an area of archaeological activity. The remains to be preserved *in situ* are located in the southeast corner of Field 8 and are thought to be of local significance and comprise a double ditched, a further ditch and a pit all of probable Roman date. Two of the proposed archaeological features contained metal artefacts indicating that settlement was located nearby, which corresponds with previous records of archaeological remains to the south of the current development. An AMP, is required so that, although the location of the archaeological features fall within an area of landscaping (and therefore low impact), any such landscaping needs to be managed and the long term future of the remains preserved and protected against further development and potential inadvertent incorrect management of the resource.

This AMP outlines measures for the protection of the archaeological resource during the construction phase of the development and beyond completion, either through a management company or under adoption via the local authority. This will ensure the exclusion zone is appropriately managed and the archaeological resource is preserved for perpetuity. The nature of the remains to be preserved *in situ* are detailed in the trial trench archaeological evaluation report produced by Cotswold Archaeology (CA 2022 Land to the South of Blackmore Farm, Melksham, Wiltshire: Evaluation Report CR1203_01). The relevant illustration figures from that report are reproduced at the back of the AMP for ease of reference and context.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In September 2025, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) was commissioned by David Wilson Homes Ltd to produce an AMP in respect of a small area within the proposed development (hereafter, referred to here as 'the Exclusion Zone') at Blackmore Farm 1, Melksham. The Exclusion Zone will comprise a small triangle of farmland, (which is currently/until recently utilized as cow pasture, within Field 8; Figures 1 and 2). The wider development comprises, demolition of agricultural buildings and development of up to 500 dwellings; up to 5,000 square meters 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; provision of access infrastructure from Sandridge Common (A3102); and provision of all associated infrastructure necessary to facilitate the development of the site. Relevant planning references include PL/2023/11188 and PL/2026/01555.

1.2. The Assistant County Archaeologist (ACA) for Wiltshire Council (WC) has advised on the extent of the area to be preserved *in situ* and excluded from development. As part of the Outline Planning Permission reserved matters requirement, the following archaeological condition is specifically relevant:

27 No underground / ground disturbance related works shall commence on site until an Archaeological Management Plan (AMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details and agreed timetable.

REASON: In order that the development is undertaken in an acceptable manner and to enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest.

1.3. This Management Plan has been prepared in response to Condition 27 to enable preservation in situ of the Exclusion Zone for perpetuity.

1.4. David Wilson Homes understands and agrees with this requirement and this AMP sets out the management strategy and management measures that will be put in place for the construction phase and the long-term preservation and management of the Exclusion Zone. This AMP only covers those remains identified within the specified footprint.

Planning Period/ Further Relevant Details

- 1.5. **Condition 1** The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of two years from the date of this permission, or before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved, whichever is the later. **REASON:** To comply with the provisions of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Condition 2 Application(s) for the approval of all of the reserved matters (should this development be advanced on a phased manner) shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of outline permission being granted. **REASON:** To comply with the provisions of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Condition 3 No development shall commence on site until details of the following matters (in respect of which approval is expressly reserved) have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority:

- (a) The scale of the development;
- (b) The layout of the development;
- (c) The external appearance of the development;
- (d) The landscaping of the site.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: The application was made for outline planning permission and is granted to comply with the provisions of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Article 5 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

- 1.6. This AMP covers the period of construction, and post construction. It is assumed that during construction of the various phases of the development that the completed areas (in terms of maintenance) will be under the control of a management company and thereafter, either remain under the control of the said management company or become adopted by the local authority. In either circumstance the requirements of the AMP must be adhered to.

Site Location and Description

- 1.7. The wider development site is c. 30.19 hectares in extent. It lies to the south of Blackmore Farm, Sandridge Common on the western outskirts of Melksham. The

site comprised mostly pasture fields separated by hedgerows and populated by occasional trees. The topography slopes gently from the north-east to the south-west but is otherwise, relatively flat. The highest point of the site is located to the north-east corner at c. 52m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and the lowest point is in the far south-west corner at c. 41m aOD. The brook running from west to east through the site is situated at c. 40m aOD.

- 1.9. The underlying bedrock geology within the site is mapped as Oxford Clay Formation, which is a sedimentary bedrock formed 157 to 166 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. This type of geology was formed in an environment previously dominated by shallow seas (BGS, 2022).

Archaeological Background

- 1.10. An Archaeological and Heritage Baseline Desk-Based Assessment was carried out by EDP (2022) with reference to the site and the wider development. In addition, an Archaeological Evaluation Report (Nov. 2022) undertaken by CA is submitted alongside this AMP.

Known Depth of Survival

- 1.11. The evaluation trenches indicated that the archaeological horizon occurs at an average depth of 400mm below current ground level. This was one of the drivers for WC to recommend preservation *in situ* as an option, since the remains would not have much protection from any landscaping impact.

Pre-Construction Condition Assessment

- 1.12. The recent CA archaeological evaluation confirmed that that the archaeological remains are extensive and survive well, albeit slightly eroded below just 400mm of topsoil/subsoil within the Exclusion Zone. All of these features exist below ground only, with no upstanding indicators of their presence on the surface. This is due to historical ploughing which has flattened and thereby partially truncated them.

2. CONSTRUCTION PHASE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework recognizes that “These (heritage assets) are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations” (NPPF para. 202).
- 2.2. Maintaining and promoting the short and long-term preservation of the heritage assets within the Site and increasing public awareness, thus increasing wider significance, is an integral aim of the Management Plan.
- 2.3. It is intended that this section aid the development, and form the basis of a work program within the Exclusion Zone and be utilized in monitoring the progress and nature of any agreed program of works. The measures below are also set out in Appendix 1.

Construction Techniques and Protection During Construction

A) Fencing off the Exclusion Zone

- 2.4. The primary protection measure will be fencing off the Exclusion Zone for the duration of construction works so access is restricted. WC Archaeological Advisor will be provided with confirmation that the fencing off of the preservation *in situ* Exclusion Zone has been established ahead of construction commencing.

B) Construction Materials

- 2.6. No construction materials can be stored within the preservation *in situ* Exclusion Zone footprint at any time.

C) Tree and hedge planting

- 2.7. Due to the shallow nature of the archaeological remains, any new tree planting in the immediate vicinity should be avoided where possible to avoid root growth towards the Exclusion Zone. Should areas of new tree be proposed now or in the future, these areas should be fenced off prior to planting and provided with root barrier restrictions if closer than 2m to the protective fencing.
- 2.8. Planting should be undertaken in appropriate weather, avoiding periods of very wet weather to minimize any potential damage in close proximity to the Exclusion Zone.

D) Use of machines and vehicles on Site

- 2.9. No machinery will be placed on the Exclusion Zone, nor will any vehicles access it.

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- 2.10. To ensure this, prior to construction the Exclusion Zone must have been established and fencing erected to prevent access by construction vehicles and staff. The WC Archaeological Advisor will be provided with confirmation that the preservation *in situ* Exclusion Zone has been established prior to the development commencing in the area around the Exclusion Zone.

E) Root protection area fencing

- 2.11. During the installation of protective fencing for the exclusion zone, any existing trees external to the zone, but which may be in close proximity, must themselves be protected by temporary fencing to ensure there is no encroachment.

3. LONG TERM PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 3.1. It is imperative that once the proposed development is completed, a long term plan is implemented to ensure appropriate preservation and management of the archaeological resource.
- 3.2. It is imperative that the ultimate owner or party responsible for the Site are aware of:
- The archaeological significance of the Exclusion Zone
 - The nature of the archaeological resource
 - The conditions contained within this Management Plan
 - Their responsibilities with regards to the implementation of the Long-Term Preservation Management Plan
 - The potential financial implications of the implementing the Long Term Preservation Management Plan
- 3.3. The Long Term Preservation Management Plan can only remain valid if the function of the preservation footprint remain the same as currently outlined – permanent exclusion zone. To achieve this, the primary long term management measure will be the retention and maintenance of fencing around the Exclusion Zone to prevent access (except for essential maintenance) for perpetuity.
- 3.4. The long term preservation measures that will be put in place and complied with for the duration of the project are set out in Appendix 2.

Long term Site Condition Assessment

- 3.5. The introduction of a regularly repeatable Site Condition Assessment is an integral part of any long term preservation strategy for the Site. While it is possible that anticipated impacts likely incurred during the construction and operational phases can be predicted to some degree, there will always be the possibility of further unintentional or unforeseen impacts. It is imperative that any unforeseen impacts on the archaeological resource are identified, and appropriate remedial action taken. Note regarding seasonal flooding will have occurred at the site for a few thousand years ever since systematic tree clearance from the Neolithic onwards, so this is unlikely to involve much damage especially as the site is protected by a thick and well established turf and topsoil. Given that the Exclusion Zone is located at the bottom of the slope, it is also unlikely that it might be drastically re-modelled as the result of extreme flooding events.

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- 3.6. It is recommended that a Site Condition Assessment be undertaken on a six-monthly basis for the first two years of Site operation. This will enable unforeseen but immediate impacts to be noted and addressed. It would also be beneficial to ensure that the assessments are undertaken with seasonal variation, as different Site conditions throughout the year may result in a differing set of impacts. Should there be need to do so, the period of six monthly assessments may be extended for longer than two years. This would be done if there was need to continue closely monitoring any ongoing or significantly detrimental impacts to the archaeological resource. The decision as to when the shorter assessment period can be terminated must be decided by the WC ACA.
- 3.7. Subsequently, and assuming that any ongoing issues have been resolved, it is recommended that the Site Condition Assessment be undertaken at five yearly intervals. It may be necessary to undertake additional unplanned surveys following major disasters such as flooding or illegal digging.
- 3.8. It is essential that consistent assessment criteria are used at each survey. This will enable rapid comparison between datasets over time and enable the monitoring of any trends that might become apparent.
- 3.9. It is recommended that a specific Site Condition Assessment template is developed to enable consistency during each conducted survey. This should be agreeable to all parties and approved by WC's ACA. An example Site Condition Assessment Impact Form is contained within Appendix 1. A copy of the completed survey should be promptly made available for review by WC's ACA upon the completion of each survey in order that any necessary remedial action can be devised and implemented in a timely manner.

Proposed Site Condition Assessment

- 3.10. The Site Condition Assessment should be conducted in one day or less. For each noted impact a separate Impact Form (see Appendix 1) should be completed. The completed form should be accompanied by a comprehensive digital photographic record and more general photographs of the overall Site, detailing its general condition. The results of the assessment should be detailed in a Summary Report which should, along with the Impact Forms and photographs, be made available to WC's ACA within 20 days.

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- 3.11. In the event that no negative impacts are observed within the Site, a Summary Report and photographic record of the general Site conditions should be made available to WC's ACA within 20 days.

Proposed Site Condition Assessment Impact Form criteria

- 3.12. The Impact Form should be divided into a number of clear sections. An example is presented in Appendix 1. The first should deal with basic information, such as:

- Surveyor name
- Date
- Weather conditions
- General ground conditions

- 3.13 The second section should address the type of impact that has been observed, according to a list of potential impacts or any other unexpected activity which may have compromised the archaeological resource. Such impacts could include:

- Vehicle damage
- Vandalism
- Impact from travellers
- Digging – Metal detectorist or treasure hunter
- Digging – Development encroachment
- Digging – Unknown reason
- Burrowing badgers
- Burrowing rabbits
- Burrowing moles
- Burrowing animals – Unknown
- Footfall erosion – Access point
- Overgrazing by animals (if used to keep grass growth down)

-
- External Tree damage – roots from new planting
 - Tree/scrub damage – fallen tree – damaging fencing etc
 - Scrub encroachment
 - Water erosion
 - Flooding
 - Other – please specify

a. The third section should detail the location of the observed impact:

- General area of the Site (north, south-east, central, etc)
- Grid reference
- General description of the impact and sketch plan

3.14 The fourth section should record dimensions of the observed impact. Approximate measurements can be recorded for large or amorphous impacts (such as flooding or fly-tipping), but it should be noted in these cases that measurements are only approximate:

- Length (m)
- Width (m)
- Depth (m)

3.15 The fifth section should be used to detail the photographic record of the observed impact:

- Photograph (jpeg) number
- Photographic scales used - 2m, 1m, 0.5m, etc.
- Photograph direction (the direction towards which the view in the photograph is orientated)

3.16 The final section of the Impact Form should be a description of any recommended remedial action based on the Site observations, with any additional sketch plans or

photographs if necessary.

4. REVIEW

- 4.1. The primary purpose of this Management Plan is to ensure the long-term stability and protection of the archaeological resource within the Exclusion Zone, which is to be preserved *in situ*. The Management Plan sets out a series of policies in order to facilitate this.
- 4.2. In the shorter term, during the proposed construction and landscaping, it is essential that there are no negative impacts on the buried archaeological resource. Where impacts are unavoidable such as for the fencing installation, works shall be conducted with prior consultation and consent from WC's ACA and ensuring that it is possible for an archaeologist to be present on Site if it is deemed by WC's ACA to be appropriate.
- 4.3. Any damage to below ground remains will be irreversible and should be avoided in all possible circumstances.
- 4.4. Monitoring of the Exclusion Zone should be undertaken as part of its long-term management. Adherence to the Long-Term Preservation (LTP) Policies is an essential part of this long term management and is likely to have financial implications for the ultimate owner or guardian of the Site. As such, from the outset it must be made clear to any prospective owner or guardian the extent of their responsibilities regarding the implementation of the Long Term Preservation Management Plan and the LTP Policies.
- 4.5. Given that the development comprises a predominantly residential, mixed use development, with the developer DWH on completion of the construction phase (or even during) passing responsibility for maintenance of the Exclusion Zone either to a management company or the local authority, it will be incumbent on one of these three entities to assume the role of management of the preservation *in situ* Exclusion Zone for perpetuity. It will be the responsibility of the developer to confirm which entity will assume maintenance and protection of the Exclusion Zone and they must ensure that there is the necessary continuity at the point at which they divest their control etc.

APPENDIX 1

PROPOSED SITE CONDITION ASSESSMENT IMPACT FORM

Exclusion/Preservation in situ Zone with Lains Farm Solar Development - Site Condition Survey Impact Form (one sheet to be completed for each impact observed)		
<u>Surveyor Name</u>		<u>Date</u>
<u>Weather Conditions</u>		<u>Ground Conditions</u>
<u>Observed Impact (tick one)</u>		
Vehicle Damage	Footfall Erosion (footpaths)	
Vandalism	Footfall Erosion (access point)	
Impact from Travellers	Footfall Erosion (info panel)	
Digging (metal detectorist/treasure hunter)	Overgrazing by Animals	
Digging (development encroachment)	Tree Damage (new planting)	
Digging (unknown reason)	Tree/Scrub Damage (rooting)	
Fly Tipping	Tree/Scrub Damage (fallen tree)	
Burrowing Badgers	Scrub Encroachment	
Burrowing Rabbits	Water Erosion	
Burrowing Moles	Flooding	
Burrowing Animals (unknown)	Other - please specify	
<u>Location of the Observed Impact</u>		
<u>Area within Site</u>		
<u>NGR:</u>		
<u>General Description/Sketch Plan</u>		
<u>Dimensions of Observed Impact</u>		
<u>Length (m)</u>	<u>Width (m)</u>	<u>Depth (m)</u>
<u>Photographic Record</u>		
<u>Photo Number(s)</u>	<u>Scales Used</u>	<u>Photo Orientation</u>
<u>Suggested Remedial Action</u>		

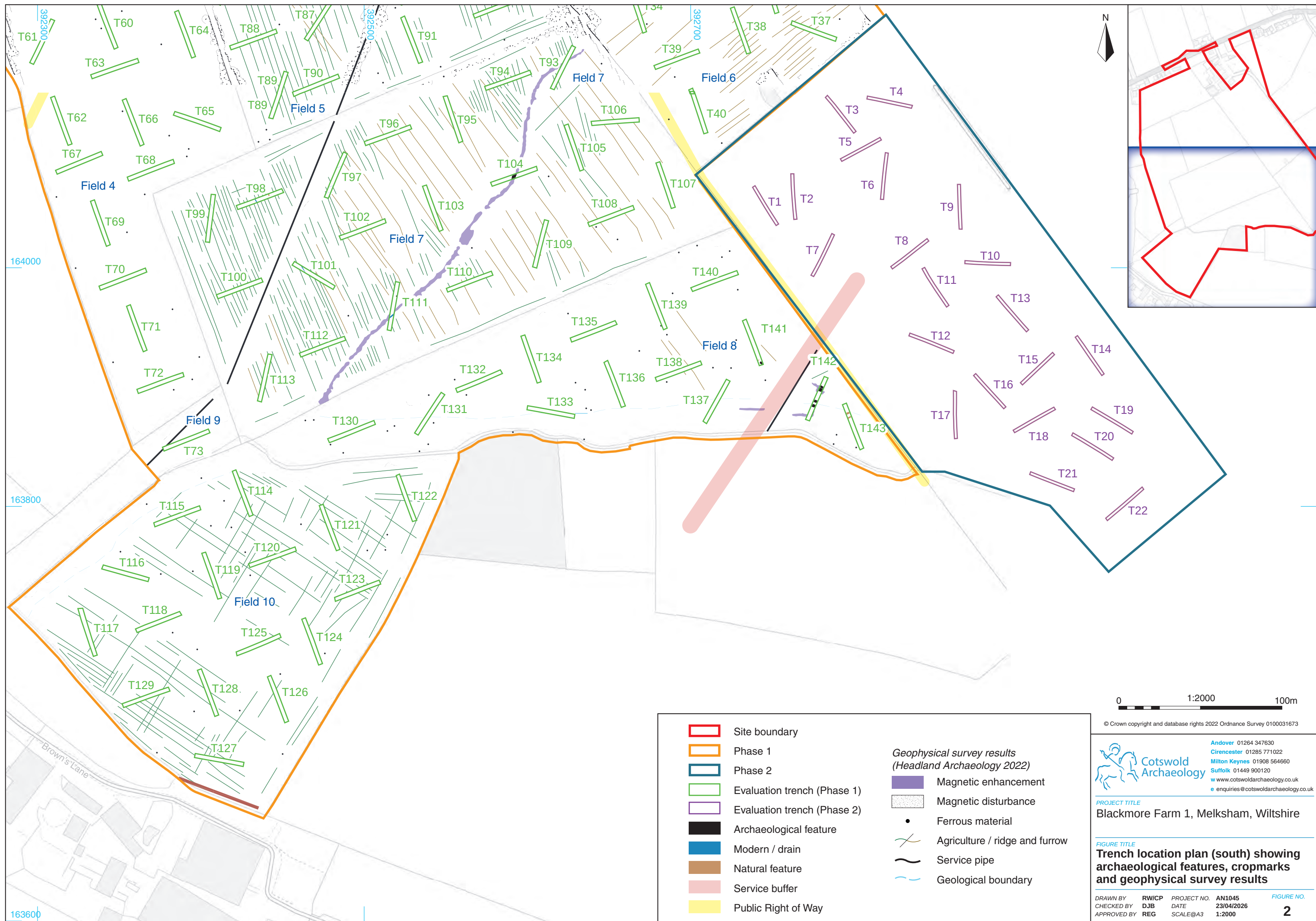
APPENDIX 2: MEASURES FOR THE LONG-TERM PROTECTION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCLUSION ZONE

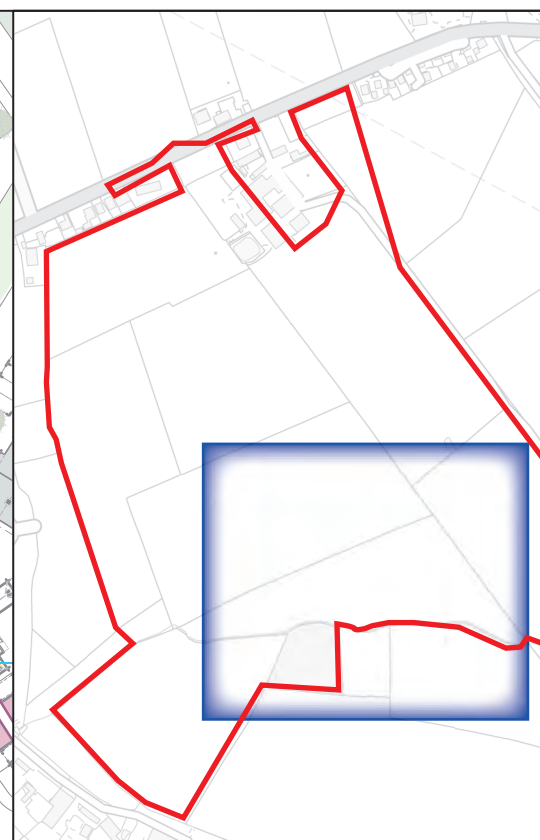
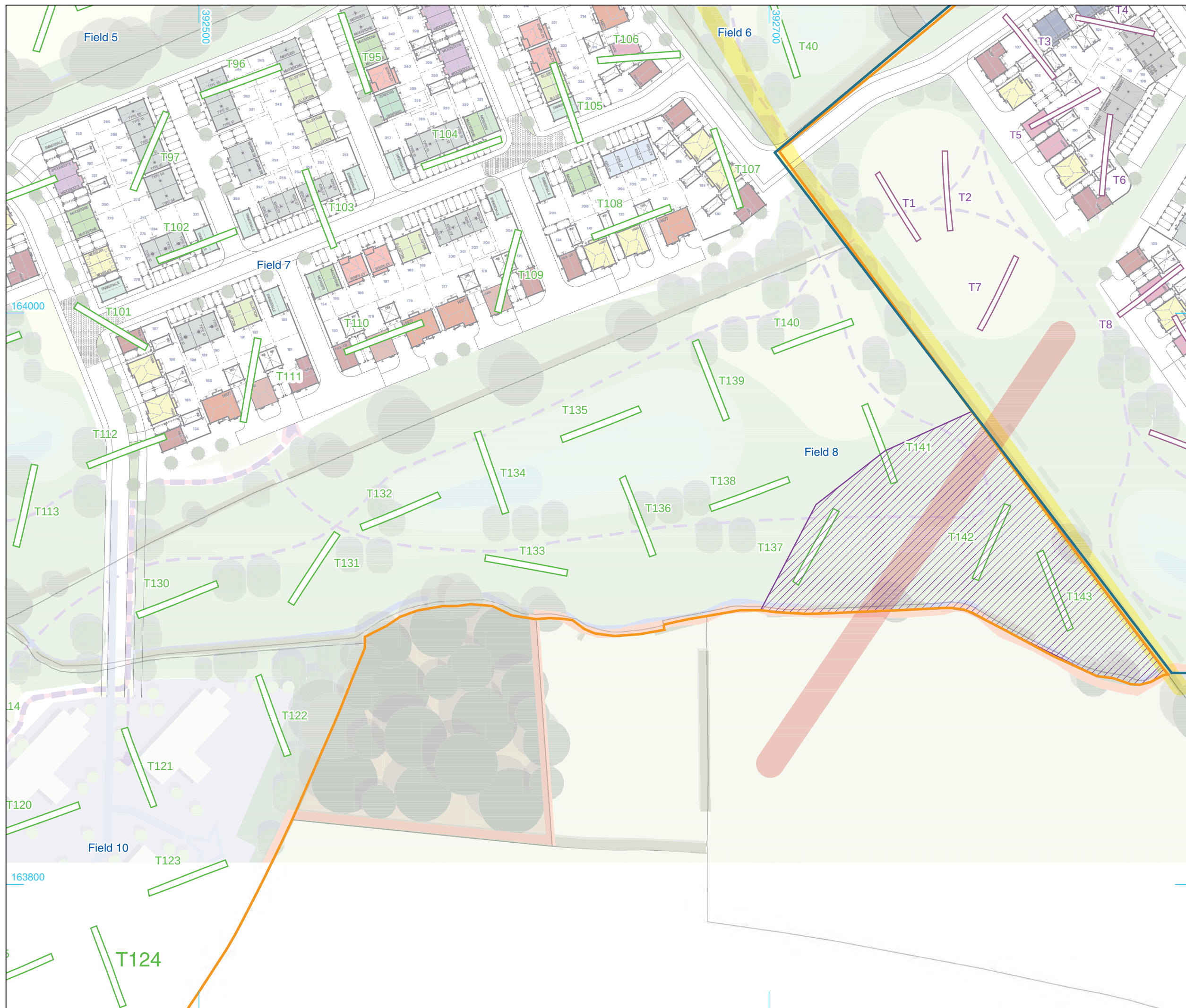
MEASURES FOR THE LONG-TERM PROTECTION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCLUSION ZONE (OPERATIONAL PHASE)

Policy Area	Management Policy	Notes
LTP Policy 1: General Approach	To protect and conserve all archaeological features within the Exclusion Zone for perpetuity The primarily long term management measure will be the retention and maintenance of fencing around the Exclusion Zone to prevent access (except for essential maintenance) for perpetuity	The archaeological remains within the Exclusion Zone are a valuable resource that once damaged or destroyed, cannot be replaced. The Exclusion Zone provides important information about the Roman settlement and farming of the area.
LTP Policy 3: Vehicular Access	Vehicular access to the Exclusion Zone must be restricted to those involved in essential management and maintenance tasks. Vehicular access must be provided to the Emergency Services at all times.	Vehicular access to the Exclusion Zone must be restricted. Vehicular access will be necessary for ongoing management and maintenance, but only vehicles directly related to these activities and the emergency services should be granted access. Given the sensitive nature of the archaeological resource, extreme care must be taken to ensure there is no damage through wheel rutting. Unless absolutely necessary there should be no vehicular access into the Exclusion Zone if the ground is soft or saturated, although access for the Emergency Services must be provided when required, regardless of ground conditions.
LTP Policy 4: Necessary Grass Cutting and Tree or Scrub Management	Grass cutting is permitted and general landscape maintenance is essential as long as there is no ground-breaking. Scrub and tree growth within the Site should be controlled. Where trees and scrub must be removed it should never be grubbed out as this will have a	Since the Exclusion Zone is to be enclosed, it is highly unlikely that it would become unnecessarily overgrown with trees and scrub, and it is accepted there will be a good level of grass maintenance required to keep the Exclusion Zone in order. Note however that overgrown areas have

Policy Area	Management Policy	Notes
	negative impact on the buried archaeological remains. Trees or scrub should instead be cut off at ground level with the roots left in situ and chemically treated, if necessary, to prevent regrowth.	the potential to attract, burrowing animals. Deep roots and animal burrows will quickly damage buried archaeology which must be avoided.
LTP Policy 5: Cultivation	The Exclusion Zone is to be protected from cultivation for perpetuity.	The Exclusion Zone is to be fenced off and will be protected from all forms of cultivation for perpetuity. Historical ploughing of the Exclusion Zone has already caused damage to the archaeological resource.
LTP Policy 6: Changes to Infrastructure	There will be no changes to the infrastructure that would require ground-breaking and approval by WC's ACA	The Exclusion Zone is to be fenced off for the lifetime of the solar farm, so there will be no changes to the infrastructure
LTP Policy 7: Metal Detecting	Metal detecting and artefact collecting within the Exclusion Zone is prohibited. Access to the wider site will also be fenced off from public access.	The unauthorized use of metal detectors can severely impact the archaeological resource due to the illicit, unrecorded removal of objects. This similarly applies to the collection of archaeological objects from disturbed deposits, through animal burrowing or similar. Such removal of objects will impede future understanding of the site.
LTP Policy 9: Burrowing Animals	The colonization of the Exclusion Zone by burrowing animals will be discouraged through regular maintenance.	Burrowing animals should be discouraged, as far as possible from colonizing the Exclusion Zone, which given the grass level will be regularly managed will be relatively straightforward. Burrowing would be likely to disturb buried archaeological features.
LTP Policy 10: Footfall Erosion	If the preservation <i>in situ</i> Excluded Zone, appears to be wearing/eroding, WC's ACA must be informed, and approved remedial action must be agreed and taken.	Access to the Exclusion Zone will be restricted to those managing the grass level etc and they will be tasked with restricting footfall to the absolute minimum.
LTP Policy 11: Water Erosion	Following persistent rain/storm conditions consider implementing an additional condition survey	This is highly unlikely, the site has comprised pasture for many years and therefore the a turf line is well established and the remains are likely to be well protected – much more so than when the land was regularly utilised for farming etc.
LTP Policy 12: Vandalism	If the preservation <i>in situ</i> exclusion zone appears to have been disturbed by metal detectorists	Whilst most vandalism occurs above ground, and the site will be locked and fenced, intrusion by metal detectorists

Policy Area	Management Policy	Notes
	entering unlawfully, WC's ACA must be informed immediately, as well as the community police team and the relevant FLO and an approved course of remedial action must be agreed and followed.	cannot be wholly discounted, and therefore, there must be a mechanism whereby any such occurrence is immediately reported to the appropriate authorities
LTP Policy 13: Adoption of a Condition Assessment	The Site must be subject to a regular (bi-annual) Site Condition Assessment designed to monitor and identify any negative impacts to the archaeological resource. If necessary, the findings of the Condition Assessment may lead to remedial works at the Site. WC's ACA must be made aware of any damage to the Site and approve any proposed remedial action.	The adoption of a regularly repeatable Condition Assessment of the Site must be part of the long term preservation and management strategy. This assessment must be undertaken by a suitably qualified archaeologist and subject to approval by WC's ACA. Note it needs to be bi-annual in order to assess the potential impacts of the opposite ends of the weather spectrum.
LTP Policy 14: Management Plan Review	The Long Term Management Plan is a dynamic document and should be subject to review, with policies added, removed or edited as necessary. Any amendments must be approved by WC's ACA.	Over time it may be necessary to amend the Management Plan to reflect changing circumstances, adding additional policies or removing those which have become redundant. The Long Term Management Plan should be a dynamic document, subject to review and amendment if necessary. This should be done with a view to best preserve the archaeological resource within the exclusion zone for perpetuity. Any alterations to the Long Term Management Plan must be subject to approval by WC's ACA.
LTP Policy 15: Financial Resourcing	N/A – as Commitment to provide ongoing maintenance is acknowledged within this document and supported by the relevant planning conditions	
LTP Policy 16: Legal Framework	N/A – as Covered by the Relevant WC planning conditions	





- Site boundary
- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- Evaluation trench (Phase 1)
- Evaluation trench (Phase 2)
- Service buffer
- Public Right of Way
- Exclusion zone

0 1:1250 50m

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PROJECT TITLE
Blackmore Farm 1, Melksham, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE
Exclusion zone

DRAWN BY	CP	PROJECT NO.	AN1045	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	23/04/2026	3
APPROVED BY	REG	SCALE	A3 1:1250	



Bow brooch of Aucissa derivative type, 1st century AD, from fill 14103 of pit 14205



Bow brooch of Aucissa derivative type, 1st century AD, from fill 14103 of pit 14205



An iron double-spike loop, fill 14206 of ditch 14205



An iron double-spike loop, fill 14206 of ditch 14205

