

Land East of Showell Farm, Chippenham

Environmental Impact Assessment: Non-Technical Summary

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF HALLAM LAND

BY DAVID LOCK ASSOCIATES
IN ASSOCIATION WITH BROOKBANKS, EDP, JUBB, LRA & ORION

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document summarises the findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") for residential development (the "Proposed Development") on land east of Showell Farm, Chippenham (the "Application Site" or "Site").
- 1.2 The purpose of an EIA is to assess the likely significant environmental effects of a development proposal. These effects have been assessed as "adverse" or "beneficial"; and of "major", "moderate", "minor" or "negligible" significance, in accordance with recognised EIA methodology and applying professional judgement.
- 1.3 The "significance" of each effect takes into account both its "magnitude" and the "sensitivity" of the receptor affected. For example, a change of "large" magnitude affecting a receptor of "high" sensitivity would generally result in an effect of "major" significance. Conversely, a change of "small" magnitude affecting a receptor of "low" sensitivity would generally result in an effect of "minor" significance.
- 1.4 The full findings of this EIA are reported in an Environmental Statement (ES). The ES is available on Wiltshire Council's (WC) website. A digital copy of the ES can be made available on request from:

David Lock Associates Ltd.
50 North Thirteenth Street
Central Milton Keynes
Bucks.
MK9 3BP
Email: mail@davidlock.com
Tel: 01908 666276

- 1.5 This concise document summarises the main findings of the ES in non-technical language, for a wide readership.
- 1.6 The ES supports an Outline Planning Application (OPA) to WC for the Proposed Development. Comments on it should therefore be directed to WC, as part of its consideration of the OPA.

2 THE SITE AND THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The site is located east of Showell Farm and the Patterdown Road (B4528) and west of the river Avon and north of the Lackham Roundabout. The site sits adjacent to land subject to significant change through the consenting of new mixed-use residential-led development at Rowden Park for 1,000 dwellings, allocated within the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan (2017). Further development has been approved immediately north of the site at the former Showell Nurseries, for some 120 dwellings. The site location is shown at Figure 2.1.

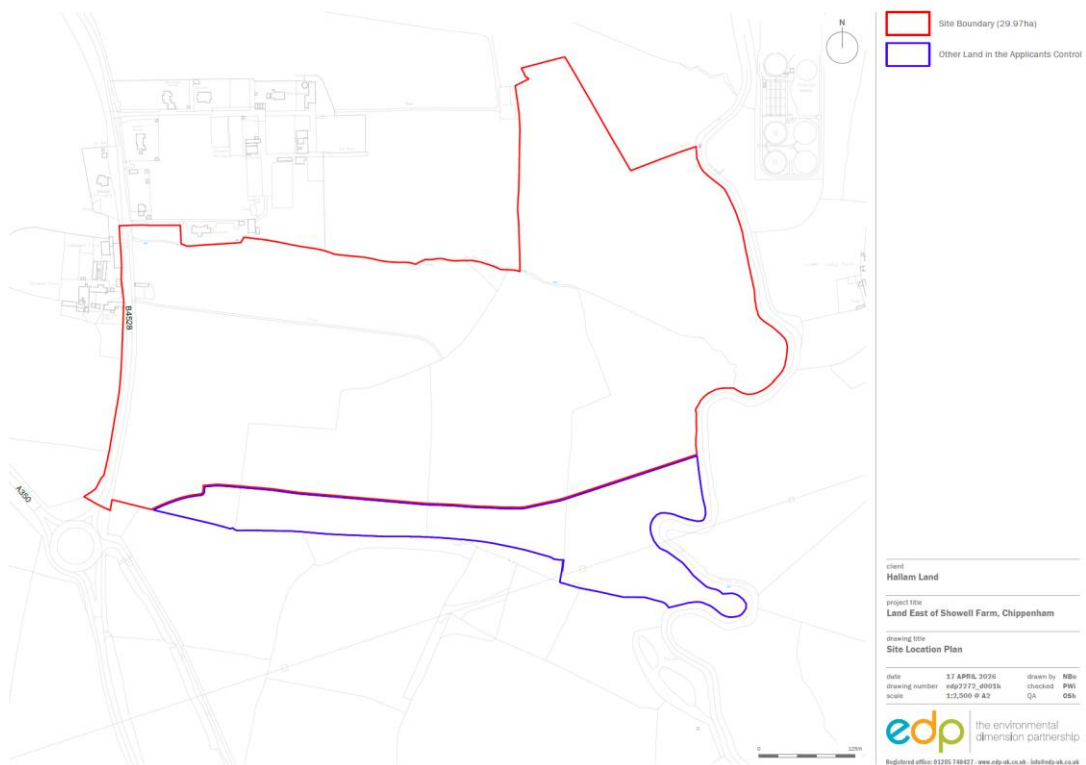


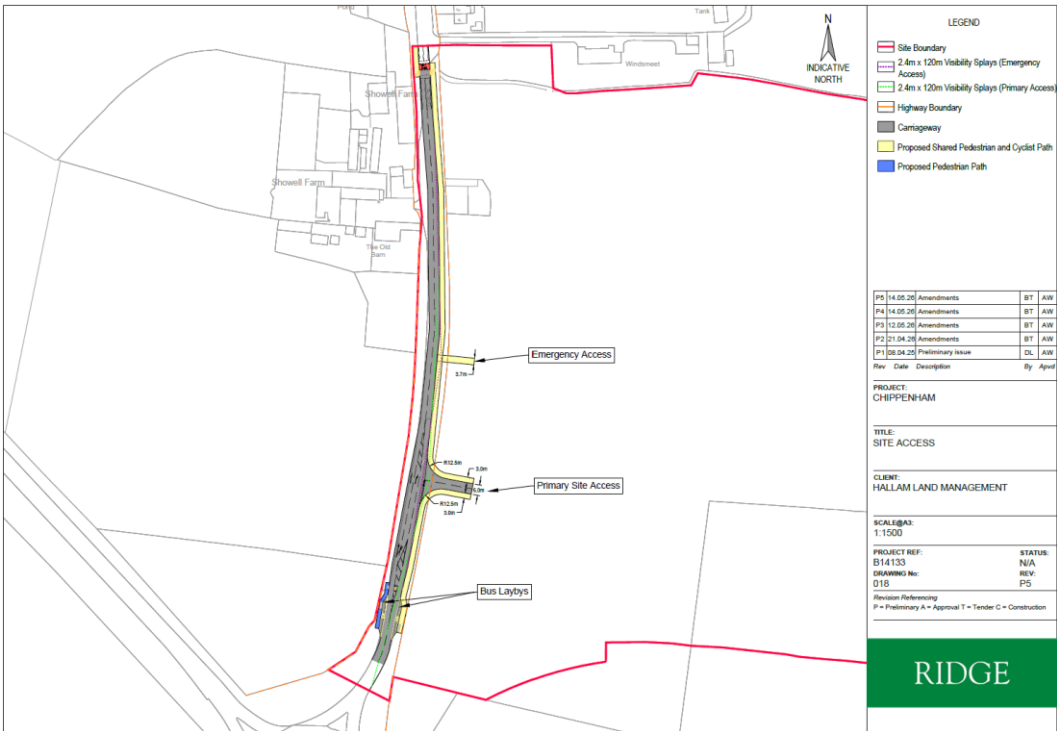
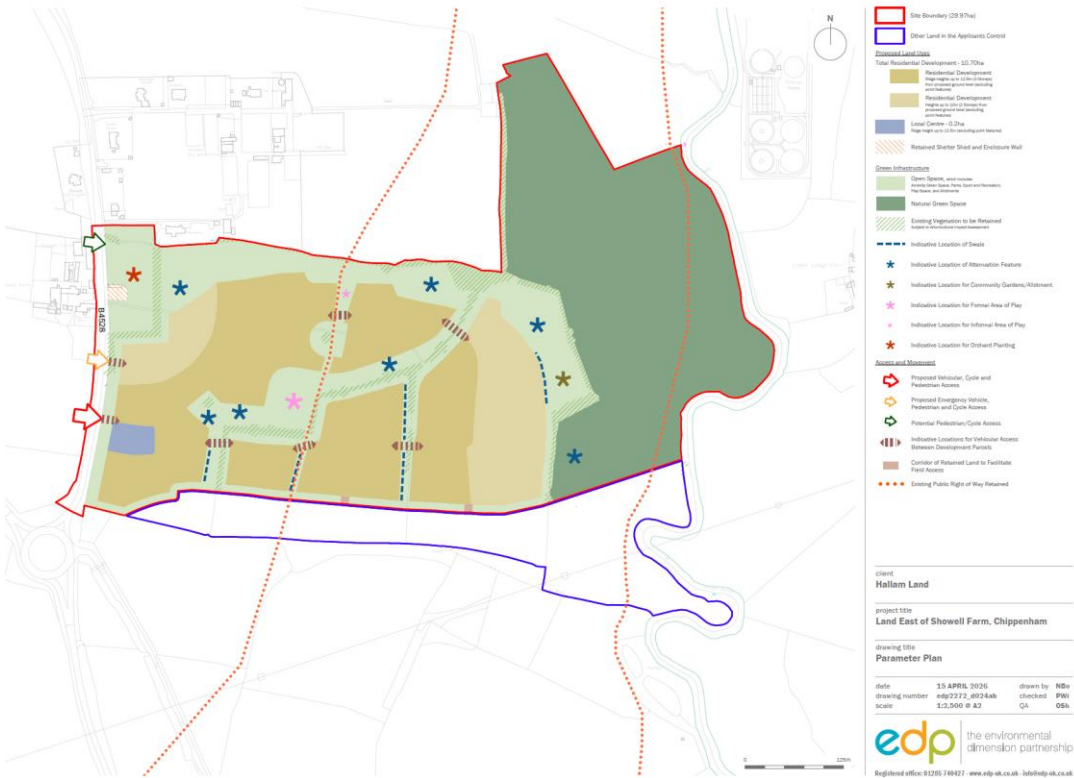
Figure 2.1 Site Location Plan

- 2.2 West of the site, adjacent to the A350 is Southpoint Business Park. Construction of some 50,000 sqm of employment space was completed in December 2025 for occupation by Siemens.
- 2.3 The site comprises 5 fields of some 30 hectares of semi-improved grassland and arable land, with hedgerows and trees defining the field boundaries within the site.
- 2.4 Several mature hedgerows with trees form a linear feature running southwest to northeast through the site, culminating in a small copse on the northern boundary. The two eastern fields sit adjacent to the River Avon, the eastern most parts of which fall within the floodplain, which is proposed to form an extension of the new riverside park being delivered as a feature of the Rowden Park development.

- 2.5 To the west, the site is bound by Patterdown Road (B4528), with Grade II Listed Showell Farm complex located on the opposite side of this road to the north-west of the site.
- 2.6 The site includes a small agricultural shelter shed and boundary wall along the western boundary, adjacent to a farm access. The site is generally flat, due to its relationship with the Avon valley. The highest point of the site is in the southwestern corner, sloping down in a broadly north eastern direction towards the river Avon.
- 2.7 There are two public rights of way that cross through the site, centrally and along the River Avon. To the south of the site, Footpath LACO9 terminates at the A350 whilst Footpath LACO39 connects to Lackham College and the wider PRoW network providing access to Lacock village and rural Wiltshire. To the north the footpaths connect with Footpath CHIP1 providing access to Chippenham town centre.
- 2.8 There are two overhead electricity lines that cross the site. A 33kV line that crosses from the southwest corner to the top of the site, and a 132kV line that crosses over the southeast corner.
- 2.9 The Proposed Development comprises:

Outline Planning Application for up to 400 dwellings (Class C3 use), land for a Local Centre, accommodating commercial, business and service uses (Class E use), drinking establishment and hot food takeaway (Sui Generis); and local community uses (Class F2); open space and landscaping to include natural green space, amenity green space, area of formal play, allotments and community orchard, sustainable drainage infrastructure and ground remodelling. All matters reserved except for the formation of a new vehicular access and cycle and pedestrian access including emergency access onto the B4528

- 2.10 Plans showing the Proposed Development are included in appendix 2.1 to this document. These plans are the Parameter Plan (see Figure 2.2 below) and Site Access Plan (see figure 2.3 below) and have formed the basis for the EIA. The detailed design of the Proposed Development will be in broad accordance with these plans and will be secured by conditions attached to any grant of planning permission.



2.11 The EIA assumes that the construction stage of the Proposed Development could start in 2027 and complete in 2032/33. A Construction Environmental Management

Plan (CEMP), which would be agreed with Wiltshire Council through the discharge of a planning condition, would minimise environmental impacts during this period.

- 2.12 The EIA Regulations require any alternatives to the Proposed Development that have been studied by the Applicant to be outlined and the reasons for their rejection set out. The Proposed Development has been planned on an iterative basis taking account of the site information, identified constraints, input from technical stakeholders and engagement with the community.
- 2.13 The EIA includes an assessment of the likely environmental effects of the Proposed Development in combination with other nearby reasonably foreseeable development proposals, as committed in the Core Strategy or planning applications. A Plan of the sites considered as part of the cumulative assessment is included at appendix 2.2 of this ES and reproduced below at Figure 2.4.

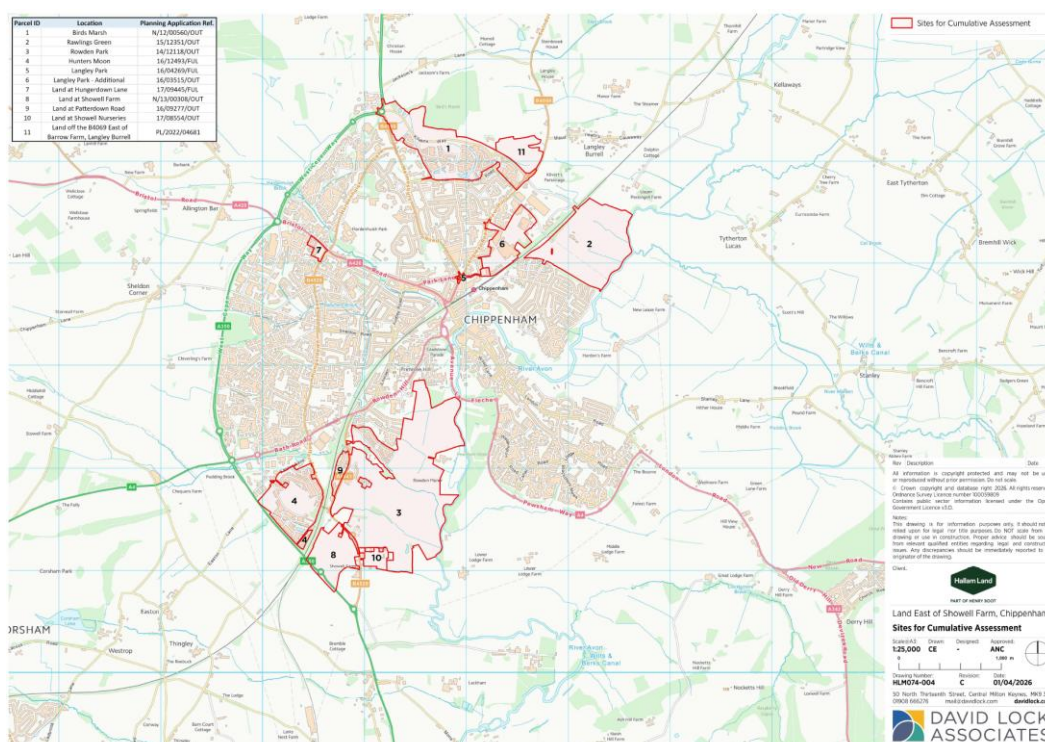


Figure 2.4: Site for Cumulative Assessment

- 2.14 As set out in the Design Evolution section of the Design and Access Statement submitted with the application, the form, amount and land uses of the Proposed Development have evolved through scheme iteration supported by technical assessment.
- 2.15 Outline Planning Permission is sought at this stage with details for access points off Patterdown Road (main and Emergency) sought for approval. Other detailed design matters are reserved for later agreement with Wiltshire Council.

3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The OPA is submitted in the context of the Government's commitment to growth and development, contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF,) and Planning Practice Guidance. The development plan comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015), the strategic housing policies became five years old in January 2020.
- 3.2 The Council progressed a new Local Plan, Wiltshire Local Plan 2020-2038, which was submitted for Examination on 28 November 2024. Following Stage 1 and 2 hearings the Inspectors have identified significant soundness concerns with the Plan and Wiltshire are withdrawing the Plan from examination and intend to recommence plan preparation soonest.
- 3.3 Further to this, this application is contextualised by the once submitted version of the Local Plan which identifies the southern and eastern growth of Chippenham as a sustainable and suitable development strategy, and the application site is included within that evidence base as part of a broader area for the expansion of the town.

4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC

- 4.1 The assessment of the environmental effects of the Proposed Development has considered the effects on the population, housing, economy, retail, social and community infrastructure and open space and physical activity.
- 4.2 Construction of the development will support around 120 direct construction-based jobs over a 4-to-5-year period with an estimated construction cost of £58.4 million further supporting the economy. Post construction, the proposed local centre could support circa 36 new jobs to further enhance the local economy.
- 4.3 The development will be home to 926 residents, helping to mitigate an ageing population trend with improved affordability through the provision of 400 new market and affordable homes. The provision and variety of open spaces proposed will provide opportunities to encourage physical activities, social interaction, health benefits and access to nature.
- 4.4 Minor adverse effects arising from the demand for school spaces will be mitigated by the potential for financial contributions to support existing education provision.
- 4.5 The overall socio-economic effects of the Proposed Development are considered to be beneficial, as it will:
- provide a wide choice of housing of a broad range of types and tenures;
 - provide short and long-term employment opportunities;
 - increase expenditure in new and existing businesses and shops; and
 - increase informal green space provision.

5 TRANSPORT

5.1 The effects of the Proposed Development in respect of transport has covered the following specific matters:

- Temporary generation of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) during the construction works. It is anticipated that most construction materials will arrive directly via the A350 Lackham Roundabout.;
- Effects of the development on accessibility by sustainable modes; and
- Effects of the development on traffic flows and capacities of the local highway network.

5.2 A comprehensive Transport Assessment has been undertaken and a Framework Travel Plan prepared for the Proposed Development, setting out a framework for managing the demand for travel arising from the Proposed Development and encouraging movement by modes other than the private car.

5.3 Taking into account the future Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which would regulate the routing of construction traffic, minor, temporary negligible effects are predicted to arise during the construction of the Proposed Development. The inherent design of the development and Framework Travel Plan measures will promote more sustainable modes of travel.

5.4 Active travel improvements are proposed along the Patterdown Road, with the delivery of a 3m shared active travel route on the eastern side of Patterdown Road along the Site's frontage. The shared use path will extend south along the eastern side of Patterdown Road to provide access to the proposed bus laybys where a refuge will be provided for crossing to the western bus layby. The path will be extended north along the eastern side of Patterdown Road where a parallel crossing facility (south of the existing bus layby) is proposed which will connect with an extension of the shared use path that will continue on the western side of Patterdown Road to connect with the paths already provided at the Rowden Gate roundabout.

5.5 A scheme of mitigation is identified for the western arm of the A4 Chequers roundabout to manage additional traffic arising from the development on this junction. The mitigation scheme relates to an increase in the flare length, so the approach to the roundabout is widened over a longer distance.

6 AIR QUALITY

- 6.1 Potential effects of dust emissions during construction on residential properties, and ecological receptors and soil have been assessed.
- 6.2 Best practice guidance for dust control will be implemented during the construction phase through the adoption of a Construction Environmental Management Plan including site management measures, control of vehicles and monitoring. The mitigation measures will result in negligible effects. Once construction is complete, the effect on air quality will be negligible.

7 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

- 7.1 Landscape effects would be experienced within the site area, through the change of land use from open agricultural land to residential development. The most elevated visual effects would be experienced on public footpaths within the site and would be at worst major/moderate adverse and significant. Whilst the Proposed Development will result in some indirect change to the perception of the surrounding context, the extent of change, both in terms of the perceived effects and the extent of the area indirectly affected, and the overall magnitude of change is considered to be medium and will be experienced within the context of a changing and urbanising environment due to the delivery of the already committed development to the north and west of the site.
- 7.2 The effect on existing residences is restricted to those with views directly over the Site. At Beaumont and Showell Farm in the short-term built form will be noticeable in views, although the planting of new hedgerows, hedgerow trees and other associated landscaping will provide softening to the view. With maturation of the landscape, the proposals will appear partially assimilated into the landscape. The magnitude of change is likely to reduce to medium for Beaumont resulting in a moderate adverse level of effect which is significant. For Showell Farm (as a residential receptor) the magnitude of change is likely to reduce to low, resulting in a moderate/minor adverse level of effect which is not significant.
- 7.3 A mitigation strategy has been identified to offset or reduce impacts through proactive management (during the construction stage by way of a Construction Environmental Management Plan), the application of best national practice and inherent mitigation by design of housing layout, open space provision, retained and proposed vegetation. It is often the case that initial short-term effects will be greater than those at medium-term due to the limited initial effect of the strategic landscape proposals incorporated into the Proposed Development which take time to mature.

8 ECOLOGY

8.1 The Ecological Impact Assessment has considered the effects of the Proposed Development, on important ecological features on and off site. Habitat survey work has supplemented desk study. During the design evolution for the Proposed Development, the initial findings of the ecology work were carefully considered and the mitigation hierarchy of avoid, mitigate and compensate has been used to minimise impacts with mitigation measures further reducing effects.

8.2 Effects with mitigation are considered to be negligible. Habitat creation, restoration and long-term management will result in a beneficial effect. Measures to avoid or mitigate ecological impacts, and to restore and enhance the site's ecological interest to achieve a net gain in biodiversity, will be secured through the following mechanisms and include:

- Inherent mitigation embedded in the site layout;
- Ecological Protection Zones;
- Ecological Construction Method Statement (ECMS);
- Wildlife sensitive lighting strategy;
- Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP);
- Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) that supports provision of at least 10% biodiversity net gain; and
- Detailed soft landscaping proposals.

9 BUILT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

- 9.1 The assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development on built and cultural heritage has included an analysis of setting impacts to designated built heritage assets (Showell farmhouse, granary and barn); a non-designated shelter shed located within the western part of the site; and the Rowden Conservation Area which is located some 45m north of the site's north-eastern corner.
- 9.2 The Proposed Development would result in a general change in character in part of the setting of the Showell Farm listed buildings, from open agricultural land to residential development. This would lead to a degree of harm to the setting of the listed buildings, as the historic spatial relationship between the farmstead and the Site would be altered and the wider rural context within which the listed buildings are experienced would be reduced. However, the wider setting of Showell Farm has already been compromised by the consented SouthPoint Business Park development to the west, which introduces large-scale commercial built form into key views.
- 9.3 The masterplan includes embedded design responses that reduce setting impacts to designated built heritage assets (Showell farmhouse, granary and barn) to minor adverse. Design-led mitigation including a generous building setback, stepping massing away from the listed buildings. Proposed orchard planting and landscape buffering would soften the transition between the historic farmstead and new development, further screening the SouthPoint Business Park development and creating a more focused and coherent setting for Showell Farm.
- 9.4 No effects are reported on the non-designated shelter shed, which is being retained by the proposals within an element of open space to include orchard and structural hedgerow planting.
- 9.5 Minor beneficial effects on the Rowden Conservation Area are reported. The masterplan includes the retention of natural green space in the site's north-eastern corner which provides a degree of separation between the site and the asset's southern boundary delivering a long-term management of open green space, and siting of built development away from the conservation area.

10 ARCHAEOLOGY

- 10.1 Geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation have shown that there are prehistoric and Roman archaeological remains present in various areas across the site.
- 10.2 A programme of archaeological evaluation and potential subsequent mitigation is recommended in advance of construction and will be secured as a condition of planning. Following the implementation of the proposed evaluation and potential subsequent mitigation, minor to moderate residual effects on non-designated archaeological heritage assets are reported.

11 WATER RESOURCES

- 11.1 Application of measures within a Construction Environmental Management Plan will mitigate the potential adverse effects identified in relation to flood risk, surface water drainage and surface water quality during the construction of the Proposed Development.
- 11.2 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment sets out the drainage strategy for the scheme. A surface water drainage system will attenuate the discharge of surface water run-off from the Application Site, managing flows outfalling to a tributary of the River Avon. In addition, water quality treatment through implementation of SuDS (Sustainable urban Drainage Systems) based mitigation methods will result in high levels of water treatment improving quality at discharge.
- 11.4 A foul water drainage system will provide for the discharge of foul water from the Application Site to the existing foul water sewer system.
- 11.5 Based on the mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures identified within the FRA, the Proposed Development is anticipated to result in negligible effects for all assessed factors, with minor beneficial effects on flood risk due to the robust drainage strategy and water quality.

12 CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The EIA has assessed the effects of the proposed development having regard to the existing baseline conditions.
- 12.2 It sets out the mitigation measures incorporated in or proposed as part of the application proposals including extensive green infrastructure provision, measures to enhance biodiversity to deliver at least a 10% net gain, a sustainable urban drainage system designed to reduce surface water run-off from the site, a Framework Travel Plan to promote sustainable transport choices, and appropriate on-site and off-site highway and active measures.
- 12.3 The Assessment has found that the proposed development would have few residual effects that are not capable of being appropriately mitigated and few effects of more than minor adverse significance following appropriate mitigation. Major /moderate, significant adverse effects are limited to landscape and visual impacts in relation to the landscape character of the site (an undesignated landscape, and before maturation of mitigation planting) and its transition of the Site from an agricultural landscape to a predominantly urban context. Significant effects are also reported on users of Public Footpath LAC09 as users pass through the Site, with effects lessening as the route continues north and south.
- 12.4 The effect on existing residences would be very localised, restricted to those with views directly over the Site. At Beaumont and Showell Farm in the short-term built form will be noticeable in views, although the planting of new hedgerows, hedgerow trees and other associated landscaping will provide softening to the view. With maturation of the landscape, the proposals will appear partially assimilated into the landscape. The magnitude of change is likely to reduce to major/moderate adverse level of effect for Beaumont which is significant. For Showell Farm the magnitude of change is likely to reduce over time and resulting in a moderate adverse level of effect (as a visual receptor) which is not significant.
- 12.5 Minor to moderate residual effects on non-designated archaeological heritage assets are reported, a programme of archaeological evaluation and potential subsequent mitigation will be secured as a condition of any planning consent.
- 12.6 The EIA has considered the potential for cumulative impacts arising as a result of the Proposed Development in combination with other developments in the immediate areas. No significant adverse cumulative effects are anticipated
- 12.7 There are no significant interactive effects predicted. The outcome of the EIA is that significant adverse effects are limited, and beneficial effects outweigh adverse effects.

