

Environmental Statement Addendum

Environmental Statement additional information: Part 5 Regulation 25 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

3MW solar array and ancillary development

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

Date: June 2026 | DKR Ref: 02482

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. DKR Rural Planning (DKR) have been instructed by Enviromena (the Applicant) to prepare this Environmental Statement Addendum (ESA) as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), undertaken in support of a planning application submitted to Wiltshire Council, as Local Planning Authority (LPA), for a 3MW solar array and ancillary development (Proposed Development) on land north of the A303, Chicklade, Wiltshire, England, SP3 5SS (the Site).
- 1.2. This ESA should be read in conjunction with the three volume ES prepared by DKR, dated February 2026 as submitted with the planning application for the Proposed Development, LPA reference PL/2026/00795.
- 1.3. This ESA replaces the previously prepared ES following amendments to the proposed access route as detailed at **Section 4** which follows.
- 1.4. The proposal comprises the construction of a temporary (for a period of 40 years) solar farm to include the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels to generate electricity, comprising:
- PV Array;
 - Perimeter Fence;
 - Transformer Station;
 - 3m wide vehicular access;
 - 2m wide permissive (pedestrian) route;
 - Hedgerow planting; and
 - Ancillary works.
- 1.5. The purpose of this ESA is to update the ES in respect of the amendments to the access route for the Proposed Development and to provide the LPA with sufficient information with respect to the potential significant environmental effects arising from the Proposed Development, in order to aid the decision-making process.
- 1.1. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC) Planning Practice Guidance¹ states that the purpose of EIA is:
- “... to protect the environment by ensuring that a local planning authority when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project, which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects, and takes this into account in the decision-making process. The regulations set out a procedure for identifying those projects which should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, and for assessing, consulting and coming to a decision on those projects which are likely to have significant environmental effects”. Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 4-002-20140306.

¹ [Environmental Impact Assessment – GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment)

- 1.2. Planning Practice Guidance states² (Paragraph: 035 Reference ID: 4-035-20170728):
- “The Environmental Statement should be proportionate and not be any longer than is necessary to assess properly those effects”.
- 1.3. To this end, as with the ES, this ESA is concise and focusses on the potentially significant effects.
- 1.4. The following reports form part of the ESA and are submitted, in full, for the attention of the LPA and relevant consultees:
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Metric Assessment – EcoLogic May 2026 report reference 251123 rev01B; and
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – LHC Design January 2026 Revision P4 dated 15th May 2026 report reference 25138-rt01.

This ESA should be read in conjunction with the corresponding ES, planning application and documents that comprise planning application PL/2026/00795.

Statement of EIA Competence

- 1.5. This ESA has been compiled and co-ordinated by DKR Rural Planning and has included input from relevant technical experts.
- 1.6. Regulation 18, Part 5 18 (5)(b) (The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017) (EIA Regs) requires; the environmental statement must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts. **Table 1** below constitutes the competency statement and summarises the experience of the ES contributors:

² [Environmental Impact Assessment – GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60092/Environmental_Impact_Assessment_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

Consultant	Contribution	Relevant Expertise
DKR Rural Planning	ES collation and Chapters 1 – 4 and 9 - 10	Jonny Rankin BA (Hons) Urban Studies and Planning, Dip TP, MRTPI, PISEP 20 years of experience in both the private and public sector, including the preparing environmental impact assessments for major planning applications. Holds Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment – Practitioner Membership Standard.
EcoLogic	Chapter 6	Rebeka Pajor-Papai Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Biodiversity Metric Assessment author: 3 years' experience delivering protected species surveys and Preliminary Ecological Assessments.
Enviromena	Chapter 5 and 7	Steven Bainbridge BSc first class Hons Environmental Studies, UEA, MSc Town Planning, MRTPI. Steven has 22 years of planning experience and is head of planning at Enviromena, an independent power producer operating across the UK and Europe, with nearly 400MWp under management.
LHC Design	Chapter 8	Mr. David Entrican BEng PGDip Landscape Architecture David is a Senior Landscape Architect with 11 years of experience in the industry, delivering Landscape Visual Impact Assessments and Landscape Design for multi-disciplinary projects.

Table 1 - Competency of ES contributors

Where to Find and Consult on the Environmental Statement Addendum

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

2. Environmental Impact Assessment

- 2.1. This chapter sets out the general approach to the EIA process and is unchanged from the original ES. It describes the process of identifying the environmental issues to be addressed in this ES and ESA and used to identify potential effects and assess their significance.
- 2.2. The key objectives of this EIA process are to:
- Set out baseline information for the study area to identify those features which may be impacted upon by the development;
 - Identify and assesses predicted environmental impacts;
 - Identify where environmental impacts can be avoided, and environmental benefits achieved, through mitigation inherent within the site design; and
 - Taking any mitigation measures into account, assesses the residual impacts of the development proposal.
- 2.3. This ESA has been prepared on a voluntary basis, following amendments to the access route for the Proposed Development. Whilst the Applicant is not in receipt of a formal Regulation 25³, of the EIA Regs, request from the LPA the provision of additional environmental information will follow the Regulation 25 format, inclusive of consultation.

Determining Scoping the Environmental Impact Assessment

- 2.4. Determining the scope of the component technical assessments is a key part of the EIA process. The scoping process identifies the potential for significant environmental effects to occur (prior to mitigation) as a result of the proposed development and the methods that will be used to assess the environmental effects. It also identifies the aspects of the environment (the ‘topics’) that should be scoped out from the assessment where it is unlikely there would be significant effects on the environment.
- 2.5. As per Regulation 15 – (1)⁴ of the EIA Regs reflected at Paragraph: 036 of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)⁵ EIA scoping is not a formal requirement, but it is good practice for:
- “A person who is minded to make an EIA application may ask the relevant planning authority to state in writing their opinion as to the scope and level of detail of the information to be provided in the environmental statement (a “scoping opinion”)”.
- 2.6. While scoping is not a statutory requirement under the 2017 EIA Regulations, the preparation of a scoping report is considered best practice as it identifies, at an early stage, the key issues to be addressed in the ES.
- 2.7. A Scoping Request was submitted to the LPA on 03rd December 2025. The LPA requested various extensions of time, and the third iteration of the Scoping Opinion was received on 10th April 2026 and is included, in full, at **Appendix 1** to this ESA.

³ The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/571/regulation/15>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment>

Scope of the ESA

- 2.8. Following receipt of the updated Scoping Opinion on the 10th April 2026 and subsequent, a summary of the scope of the EIA is presented at **Table 2** below:

Scoping Opinion Topics	Scoped Out Reasoning	Scoped In Topic
Designated Heritage Assets and Built Heritage	Given the lack of potential for direct effects on the fabric of heritage assets or their immediate setting, it is determined that no significant adverse effects in relation to heritage are expected.	
Archaeology	While geophysical survey cannot authoritatively prove a negative, the archaeologist is satisfied, based on this information, that the buried archaeological heritage can be scoped out of any environmental impact assessment.	
Landscape, the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and visual impact:		The EIA should assess the potential effects of the development on the character and quality of the landscape and views including the Cranbourne Chase National Landscape.
Lighting	Scoped out by the Applicant as no substantive lighting is proposed.	
Ecology and Biodiversity		Pending assessment and the results of the BNG assessment, significant benefits in relation to biodiversity cannot be scoped out at this time and Biodiversity will form a 'scoped in' topic of the ES.

Scoping Opinion Topics	Scoped Out Reasoning	Scoped In Topic
Climate Change		Significant beneficial effects in relation to climate change adaption, cannot be scoped out at this time and Climate Change will form a 'scoped in' topic of the ES.
Agricultural Land	Loss to agriculture from this development is not considered significant in EIA terms to warrant scoping into any future EIA.	
Flood Risk	Given the nature of development, which does not require large extents of non-permeable development or dug foundations, flood risk has been 'scoped out' of the ES.	
Contamination and the Water Environment	As the site is in agricultural use, it is unlikely that any activities to have occurred on the site or immediate surrounds which could have led to significant ground contamination.	
Daylight, Sunlight Overshadowing and Solar Glint and Glare	The Solar Photovoltaic Glint and Glare Study (Pager Power April 2026) concludes: No significant impacts are predicted upon road safety, residential amenity and aviation activity. Mitigation is not recommended.	

Scoping Opinion Topics	Scoped Out Reasoning	Scoped In Topic
Major Accidents and Disasters	The local authority agrees with the view that major accidents and disasters associated with the development can be appropriately scoped out of the EIA.	
Socio-economics, Health and Population	Whilst it is anticipated that there will be positive effects associated with the proposal in relation to socio-economics, health and population, these are not considered significant and the LPA agrees that this can be scoped out from the ES.	
Traffic and Transport	The local planning authority accepts that the impact of traffic from this development is unlikely to create significant effects and may be scoped out of the EIA. The relocated access joins the same road network, just at an altered location, east of the EV Service Station.	
Pollution and Nuisance	It is not considered that the effects of these matters on human health are of such significance that they need to be scoped into the EIA and as such can be excluded from it as a specific topic.	

Table 2 - Scope of the EIA

Study Area

- 2.9. The study area for this ESA remains as per the ES, the principal assessment which informs the establishment of the study area is landscape. Informed by ZTV intervisibility mapping, fieldwork observations and viewpoint appraisal, it was the professional opinion of the landscape architect, that a 5km radius study area would ensure adequate assessment of potentially significant effects. The approximately 5km study area is shown at **Figure 1** below:

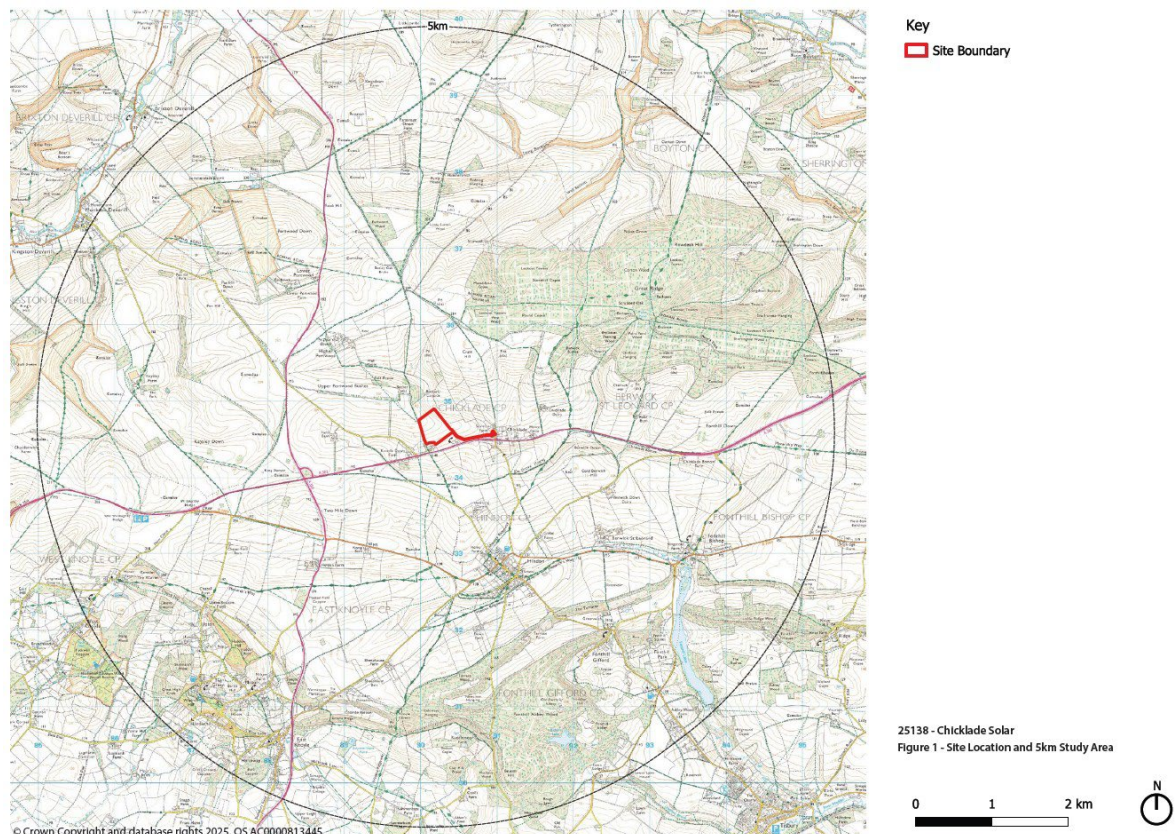


Figure 1 - Study Area

Significance Criteria

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Difficulties and Limitations

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

Existing Environmental Conditions

- 3.4. Kernon Countryside Consultants have undertaken an Agricultural Land Classification of the Site, as shown at **Figure 3** below, the Site is classified Grade 3a, with a portion of 3b in the north – east corner. The Natural England published Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region⁶ confirms that Grade 3 Agricultural Land is considered 'Good to Moderate' and as can be seen at **Figure 4** (which follows), Grade 3 is the most abundant Grade of Agricultural Land in the South West Region:

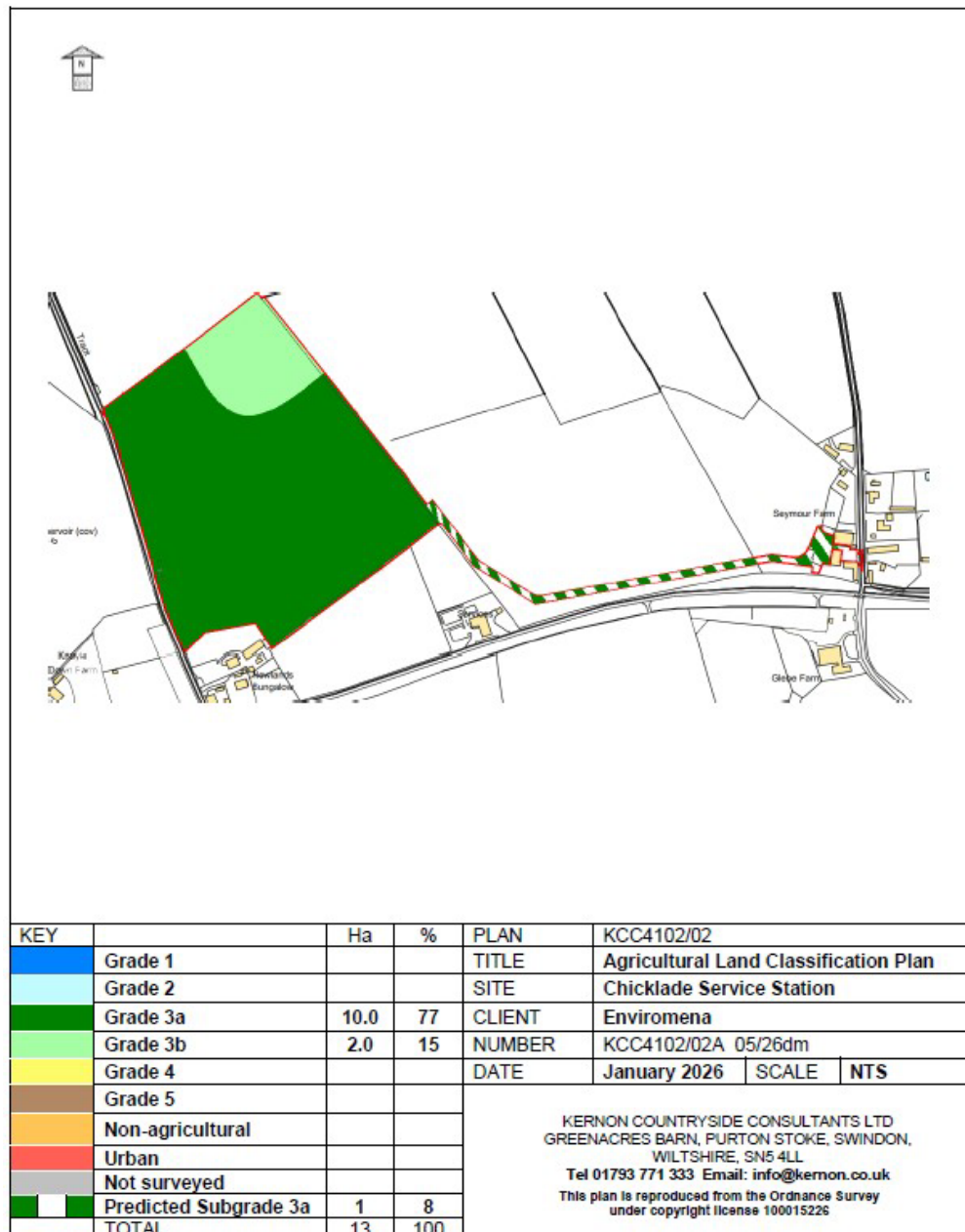


Figure 3 - Agricultural Land Classification (Site circled red)

⁶ Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region - ALC006

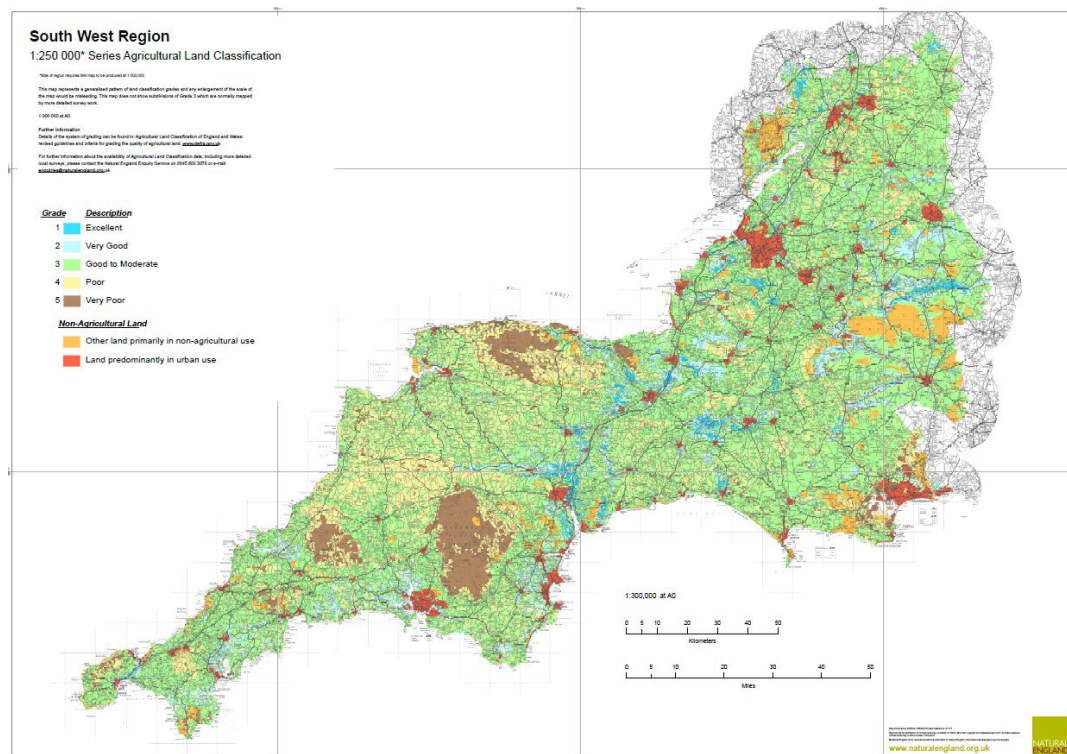


Figure 4 - Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region

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

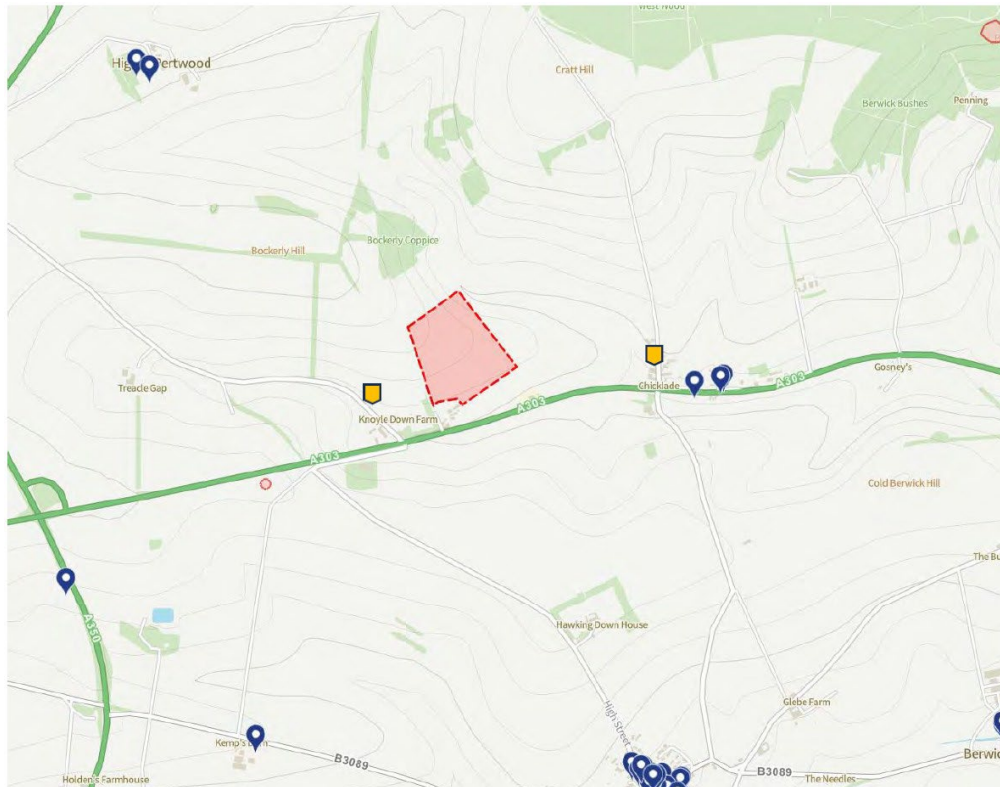


Figure 5 - Proximate Heritage Assets

- 3.8. The site is outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3, within Flood Zone 1, at the lowest risk of flooding and is not in an area subject to surface water flooding according to the Government Flood map for planning⁷, which is replicated at **Figure 6** below:

⁷ <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

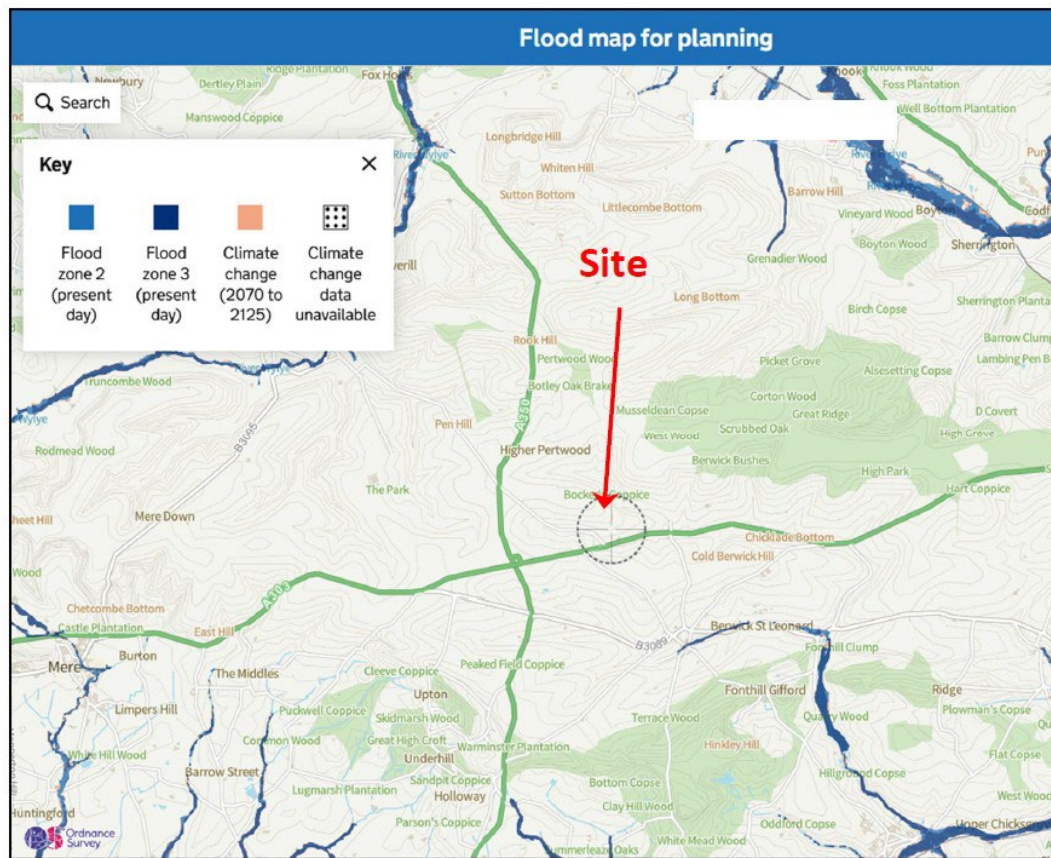


Figure 6 - Flood Map for Planning

- 3.9. The Site is not located within or proximate to any ecological designations. The Site is within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the Fonthill Grottoes SSSI, situated some 4.6km to the south – east, which can be seen on the below extract from the Government's Magic Map⁸:

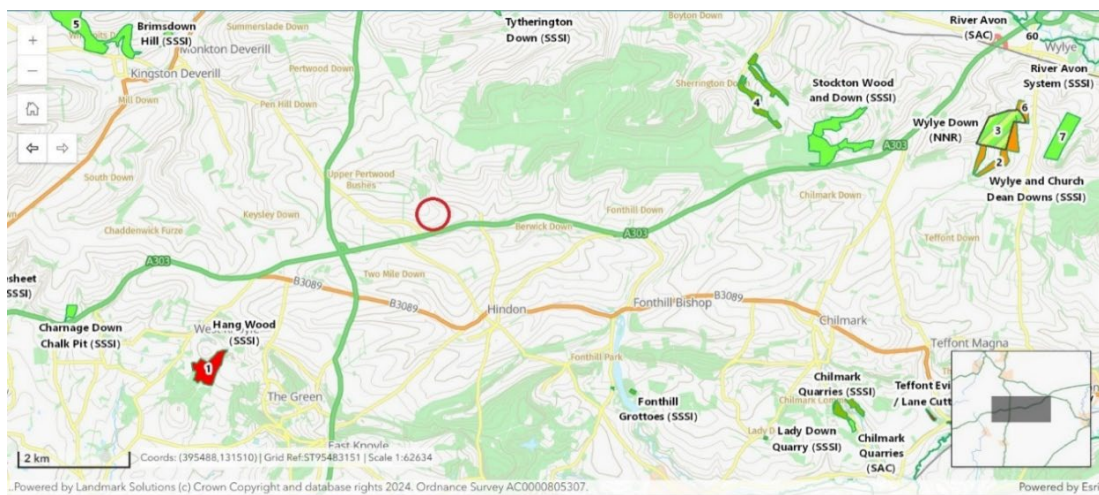


Figure 7 - Ecological Designations (site circled red)

⁸ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.html>

4. Description of the Development

- 4.1. This Chapter is updated from the original ES to reflect the amended access route and revised red line application boundary.

Proposed Development

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

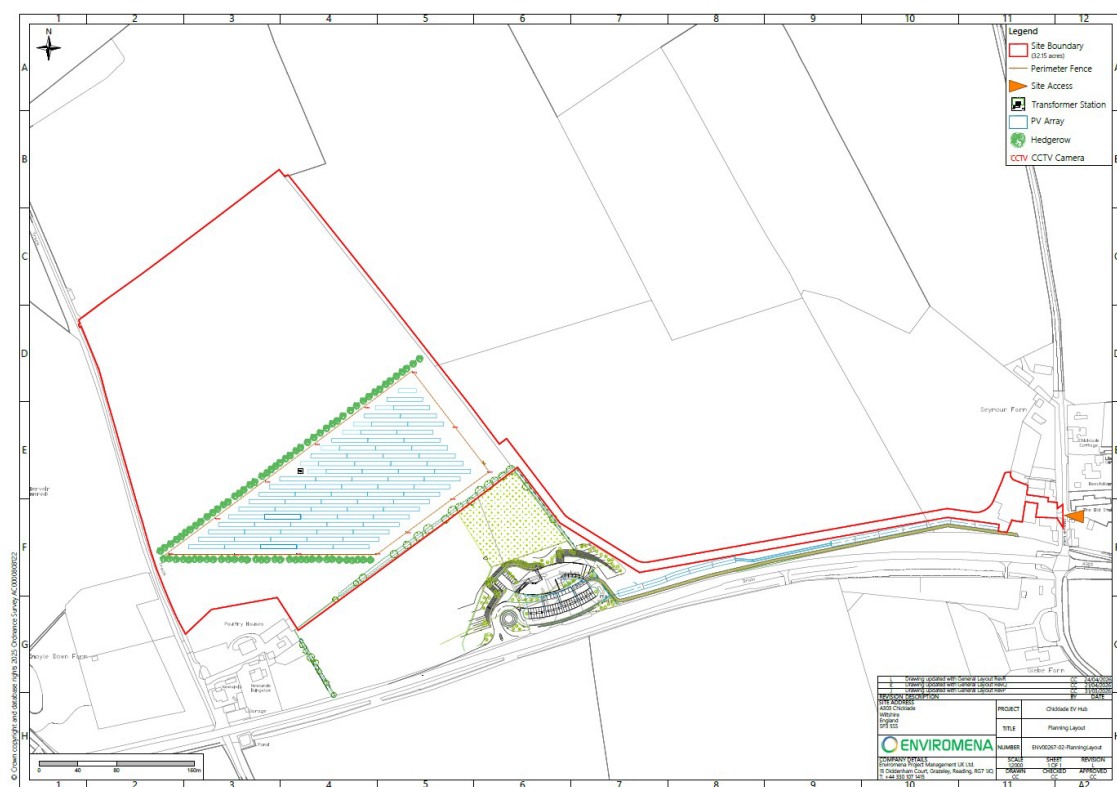


Figure 8 - Proposed Site Layout

- 4.5. As can be seen, the access route has been amended since submission of the planning application, providing an alternate vehicular access from the east, instead of the south and through the EV charging service station.
- 4.6. In addition to the 3m wide vehicular access, a 2m wide permissive pedestrian route is proposed, connecting the village of Chicklade to the public rights of way network to the west of the solar array. The amended access route and permissive path are proposed with the support of the LPA's Planning and Countryside Access Development Officers and in response

to local resident requests. The siting of both the vehicle (marked in orange) and permissive access (marked in blue) routes are shown at **Figure 9** below:

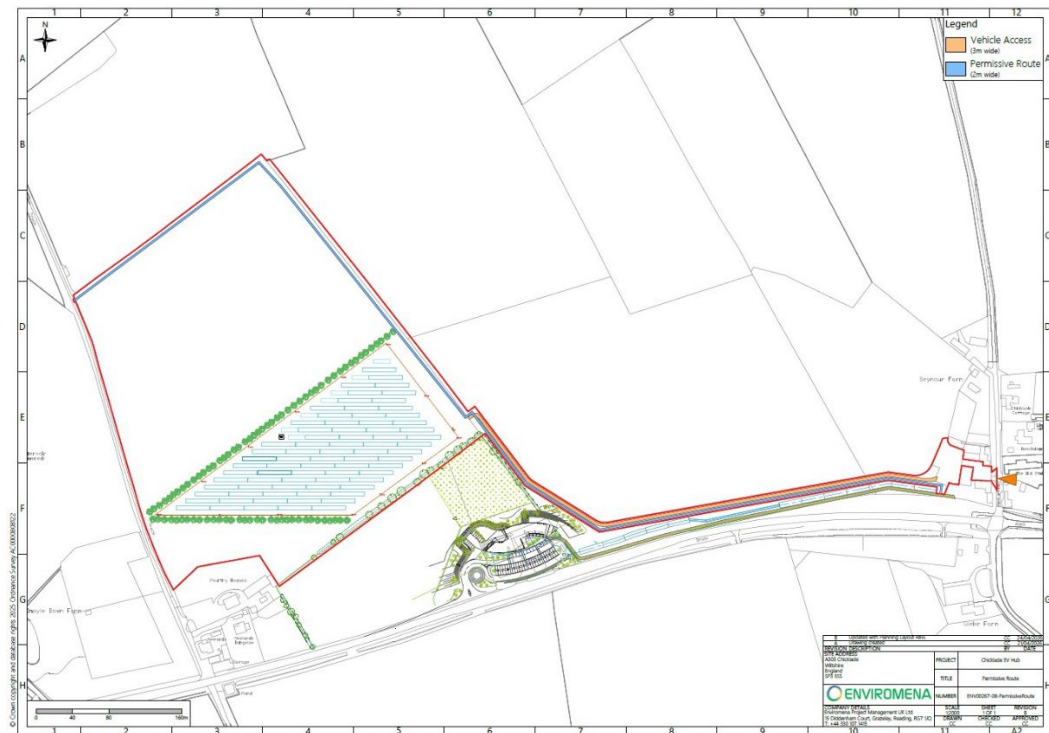


Figure 9 - Permissive Route

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

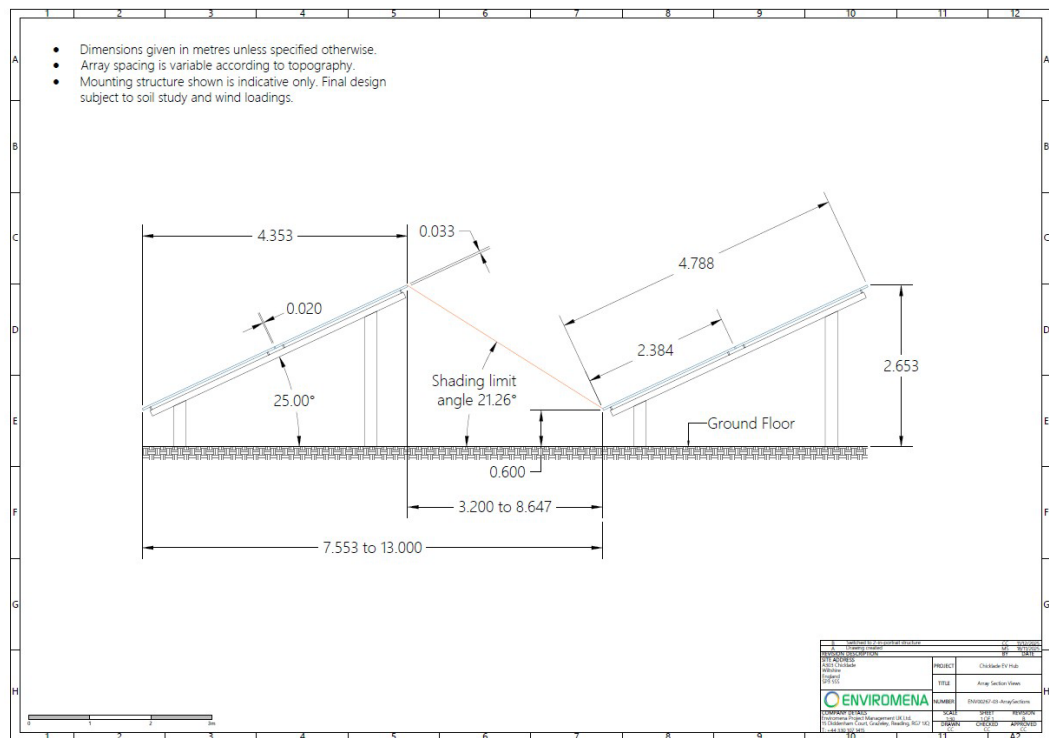


Figure 10 - Solar Array Section

Need for Development

International

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

Global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least mid-century under all emissions scenarios considered. Global warming of 1.5 °C and 2 °C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades⁹.

- 4.9. And:

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

The United Nations confirms “Every fraction of a degree of warming matters. With every additional increment of global warming, changes in extremes and risks become larger¹⁰” and:

Exceeding 1.5 °C could also trigger multiple climate tipping points — such as breakdowns of major ocean circulation systems, abrupt thawing of boreal permafrost, and collapse of tropical coral reef systems — with abrupt, irreversible, and dangerous impacts for humanity¹¹.

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

Many climate impacts, especially sea-level rise from ice sheets, disappearance of mountain glaciers, and ocean acidification, are essentially permanent for many generations to come and will take centuries to thousands of years to restore to even today’s conditions. To minimize losses and damages, it is crucial to minimize the magnitude and duration of temporarily exceeding 1.5 °C by urgently and significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions and phasing out fossil fuels¹².

⁹ [IPCC AR6 Working Group 1: Summary for Policymakers | Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis](#)

¹⁰ [1.5°C: what it means and why it matters | United Nations](#)

¹¹ [Exceeding 1.5°C global warming could trigger multiple climate tipping points | Science](#)

¹² [Overshooting 1.5°C is fast becoming inevitable. Minimising the magnitude and duration of overshoot is essential – 10insightsclimate](#)

National

- 4.10. Renewable energy projects such as this proposed solar array support the green economy, contributing some 3.8%¹³ to the UK economy, the low carbon and renewable energy economy generating £41.2 billion in the UK, during the year 2020 alone¹⁴.
- 4.11. It also supports agricultural diversification, helping UK farmers to balance the ever-complex issues of food production, international price competition, increasing animal welfare & environmental standards and workforce shortages at all levels.
- 4.12. The proposed solar array will have an approximate capacity of 3MW, creating enough clean, renewable energy to power approximately 2,000 homes per annum.
- 4.13. The solar array would avoid 1,200 tonnes of CO₂ being generated per annum from fossil-fuel based energy generation, the equivalent of taking 800 cars off the road each year.
- 4.14. The British Energy Security Strategy (BESS)¹⁵ published in April 2022 sets out how the UK intends to secure clean and affordable energy for the 'long-term'. Realising the strategy requires 70GW of solar generation capacity by 2035. This is a significant increase from the 13.7GW of solar as of February 2022.
- 4.15. Over the five-year period up to the publishing of the BESS, the UK increased its solar capacity by only 1.8GW, highlighting the extraordinary need for a significant increase in the deployment of decentralised solar energy schemes of the proposed Development's scale if the BESS targets are to be met. The BESS offers clear support for solar development that is co-located with other functions to maximise the efficiency of land use – this includes dual solar and agricultural land use.
- 4.16. The Energy Security Bill now known as the 'Energy Bill', published in July 2022, builds upon the British Energy Security Strategy to invest in homegrown energy and maintain the diversity and resilience of the UK's energy supply. The Bill establishes the need to accelerate the growth of low-carbon technologies.
- 4.17. As part of 'Energy Security Day', in March 2023 the Government released a suite of documents mapping out their proposals to strengthen energy security and independence as part of the UK's mission to achieve net zero by 2050 entitled Powering Up Britain: Net Zero Growth Plan (updated 04th April 2023)¹⁶.
- 4.18. The plans strongly recognise the importance of solar deployment at all scales in decarbonising the power sector, achieving UK energy security and delivering net zero more widely. The Government's commitment to quintuple solar generation to 70GW by 2035 is re-stated and supported through a 'solar taskforce', designed to further enable the delivery of the solar target and publish a solar roadmap in 2024.

¹³ [Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit | The UK's net zero economy](#)

¹⁴ [Low carbon and renewable energy economy, UK – Office for National Statistics](#)

¹⁵ [British energy security strategy – GOV.UK](#)

¹⁶ [Powering Up Britain: Net Zero Growth Plan – GOV.UK](#)

- 4.19. Following earlier Governments, the current Government have made Net Zero and renewable energy a stated priority since coming into office. With the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, stating on 17th September 2024¹⁷:

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

- 4.20. The Labour Party Manifesto (2024) includes the stated aim to ‘triple solar power’ by 2030 making ‘Britain a Clean Energy Superpower’¹⁸.

- 4.21. The Government have set out how they will create the Clean Energy Superpower in the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan: A new era of clean electricity (UK Government December 2024)¹⁹ including delivery of 45-47 GW of solar power.

- 4.22. The Solar Roadmap: United Kingdom Powered by Solar (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero June 2025)²⁰ details how Government will triple solar power on the way to making Britain a Clean Energy Superpower. The Solar Roadmap includes the following points:

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

And:

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

Local

- 4.23. At its meeting held on 26 February 2019 Full Council resolved to acknowledge that 'there is a climate emergency and to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030'. Cabinet subsequently committed to make the council carbon neutral by 2030²¹.
- 4.24. The pledge relates to the council's carbon emissions (or 'carbon footprint') that are within its direct control, i.e. those from its operations and buildings²². As well as support for private enterprise supporting de-carbonisation, such as the Applicant.

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/energy-uk-conference-2024-keynote-speech-by-by-ed-miliband>

¹⁸ <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Labour-Party-manifesto-2024.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-power-2030-action-plan>

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/solar-roadmap>

²¹ [Council continues commitment to tackling the climate emergency – Wiltshire Council](#)

²² [Towards carbon neutral: Our overall challenge – Wiltshire Council](#)

5. Alternatives

- 5.1. This Chapter is updated from the original ES to reflect the amended access route and revised red line application boundary.

Introduction

- 5.2. The EIA regulations at Schedule 4 paragraph 2. requires; A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects²³.

Planning Policy and Legislative Context

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

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

- 5.3. The EIA regulations at Part 5 Regulation 18 (2) and (3) state²⁴:

A subsequent application is to be taken to be accompanied by an environmental statement for the purpose of paragraph (1) where the application for planning permission to which it relates was accompanied by a statement referred to by the applicant as an environmental statement for the purposes of these Regulations, but this is subject to regulation 9²⁵.

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

[...]

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

Baseline Conditions

- 5.4. Planning application PL/2022/06298 approved the demolition of the existing service station (comprising petrol filling station, shop, cafe, outbuilding and associated infrastructure) and the erection of a new service station (comprising electrical vehicle charging points, shop, restaurant / cafe, toilets and associated infrastructure) together with landscaping, revised vehicular access and formation of a new pedestrian link, some 160m to the south east of the proposed solar array.

²³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/schedule/4>

²⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/regulation/18>

²⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/regulation/9>

- 5.5. The EV service station has annual electricity demands which will need to be met via electricity supplied via the national grid, roof mounted solar panels or onsite renewable generation.

Assessment of Effects

Technology

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

Layout Evolution

- 5.11. As can be seen by comparing the Scoping Layout at **Figure 11**, with planning submission layout **Figure 12** below and **Figure 8** above, the layout has evolved considerably since the initial design, amends include:
- Amended vehicular access from the south, instead of utilising the bridleway and existing field entrance in the south – west corner of the Site;
 - Moving the solar panels to the north east, increasing the stand-off to the cluster of buildings at Newlands;
 - The increase in proposed hedgerow planting on the southern boundary of the array; and
 - Alternate, eastern vehicular access and inclusion of a permissive pedestrian path.

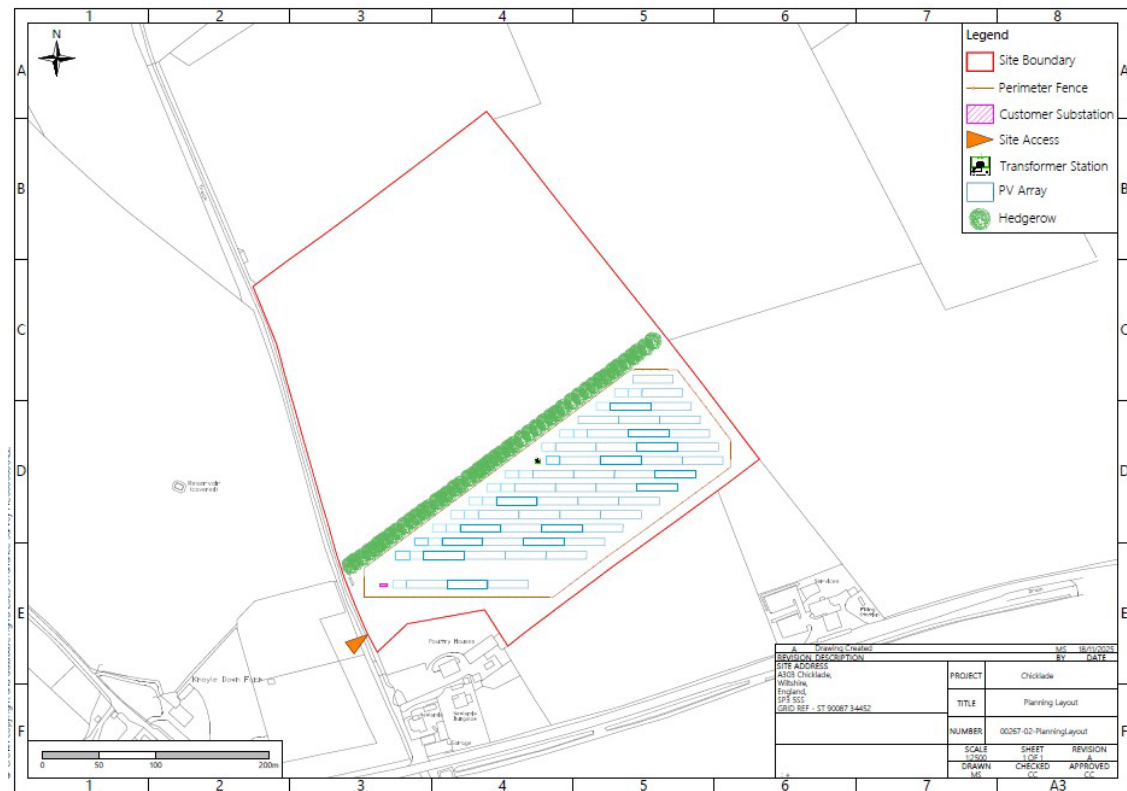


Figure 11 - Scoping Layout

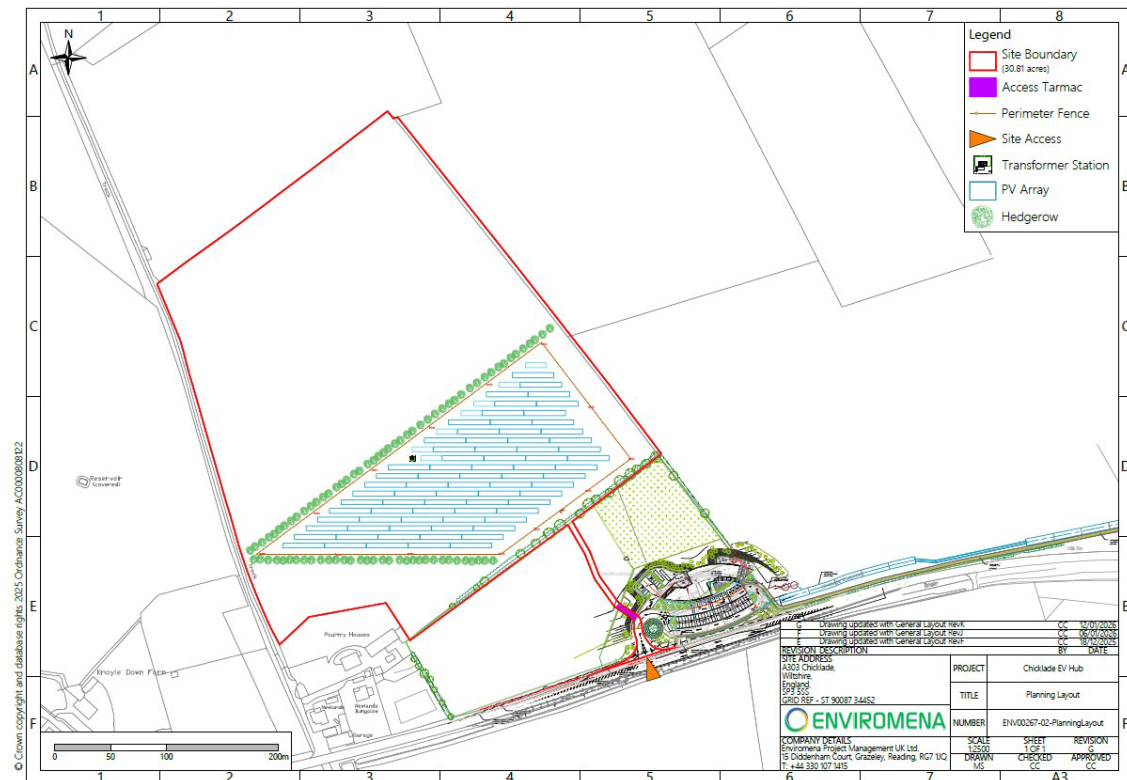


Figure 12 - Planning Submission Layout

Mitigation and Monitoring

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

Residual Effects

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

Conclusions

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

6. Ecology and Biodiversity

- 6.1. This Chapter is updated from the original ES to reflect the amended access route and revised red line application boundary.

Introduction

- 6.2. This chapter of the ESA has been prepared by DKR in conjunction with EcoLogic Consultant Ecologists who have undertaken a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Metric Assessment of the Proposed Development.
- 6.3. The Ecological Assessment describes the habitats, protected and valued species potential, any designated nature conservation sites, and any other ecological issues within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development. This has allowed for an ecological assessment of the proposed development to be completed. Avoidance measures, mitigation, compensation and ecological enhancements are specified.
- 6.4. The full report Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Metric Assessment (EcoLogic May 2026 report reference 251123 rev01B) is submitted for the attention of the LPA and relevant consultees, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and Condition Assessments spreadsheets have also been submitted with the amendments to the planning application.

Planning Policy and Legislative Context

Statutory Site Designations

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

notified and protected under the jurisdiction of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). SSSIs are notified based on specific criteria, including the general condition and rarity of the site and of the species or habitats supported by it;

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

Non-Statutory County Site Designations

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

Species Designation and Protection

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

shelter or protection; this includes both the terrestrial and aquatic components of its habitat;

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

Priority Species and Habitats

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

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

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

Field Survey:

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

Biodiversity Metric Assessment:

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

6.10. From the recorded parameters, the metric calculates:

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

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

Baseline Conditions

Desk Study

6.12. The desk study identified two sites of international importance within 10 km of the site as described in **Table 4** below:

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

Table 3 - Statutory sites with international designation within 10 km of the site boundaries

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

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

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

Table 4 – Non statutory sites with local designation within 1 km of the site boundaries

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

Field Survey

- 6.22. Field surveys were conducted on 03rd December 2025 and again on 17th April 2026 following the proposed layout amendments.
- 6.23. The survey site consisted of areas of non-cereal crops (c1d), tussocky arable field margins (c1a5), artificial unvegetated unsealed surface (u1c), built linear features (u1e), modified grassland (g4) and native hedgerows (h2a).
- 6.24. **Amphibians:** The arable field margins within the site provide limited suitability for amphibians, offering only general dispersal habitat due to the actively managed, open nature of the site and limited availability of suitable terrestrial refuge. The hedgerows represented suitable habitat for the terrestrial phases of amphibians.
- 6.25. **Badger:** WBRC held records for badger within 1 km of the site. There were no signs of badger noted during the surveys. However, it is considered possible that badger/s may frequent the site when dispersing and/or foraging on occasion.
- 6.26. **Bats:** WBRC held records for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe, noctule, serotine, barbastelle, Daubenton's, whiskered, Natterer's and Leisler's within 2 km of the site.
- 6.27. **Foraging and Commuting Bats:** The non-cereal crop land provides limited suitability for bat foraging due to it being a monoculture with limited invertebrate suitability. The arable field

margin and the hedgerows present across the site provide potential commuting and foraging habitat, with the hedgerows forming linear features within the wider agricultural landscape.

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

Biodiversity Metric Assessment

- 6.35. The site does not lie within Wiltshire and Swindon's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, therefore the site is considered to be of low strategic significance within the Biodiversity Metric.
- 6.36. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment demonstrates that the proposal will result in a net gain of 38.53 area habitat units (143.69%), delivered through the creation of other neutral grassland, traditional orchards and modified grassland. In addition, a net gain of 5.01 hedgerow units (84.12%) will be achieved through the creation of species-rich native hedgerows and enhancement of existing hedgerows on site.

Assessment of Effects

Statutory Designated Sites

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

Non-statutory Designated Sites

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

Priority Habitats

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

Amphibians

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

Common Amphibians

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

Great Crested Newt

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

Badger

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

Bats

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

Foraging and Commuting Bats

- 6.53. In conjunction with the wider landscape, the arable land and modified grassland provide a limited extent of suitable foraging and dispersing habitat for bats. The arable field margin and hedgerows provide potential commuting and foraging habitat, with the hedgerows forming linear features within the wider agricultural landscape.
- 6.54. As a signatory to the Bonn Convention (Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe) the UK has committed to protecting bat habitats, which necessitates the identification and protection from damage or disturbance of feeding areas and commuting routes.
- 6.55. There will be no lighting introduced and there will be an increase in opportunities for foraging and commuting bats associated with the habitat creation of woodland, hedgerows, other neutral grassland and a traditional orchard as part of the development.

Birds

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

Dormouse

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

Hedgehog

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

Invertebrates

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

Reptiles

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

Other Mammals

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

Biodiversity Metric Assessment

- 6.69. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment demonstrates that the proposal will result in a net gain of 38.53 area habitat units (**143.69%**), delivered through the creation of other neutral grassland, traditional orchards and modified grassland. In addition, a net gain of 5.01 hedgerow units (**84.12%**) will be achieved through the creation of species-rich native hedgerows and enhancement of existing hedgerows on site.
- 6.70. With the proposed habitat creation, the development currently exceeds the minimum legal requirement of +10% for area and hedgerow habitat biodiversity units.

Mitigation and Monitoring

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

Enhancement measures:

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

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.78. To achieve the required +10% biodiversity net gain (BNG), the landscaping proposals include on-site habitat creation and enhancement measures. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment demonstrates that the proposal will result in a net gain of 38.53 area habitat units (143.69%), delivered through the creation of other neutral grassland, traditional orchards and modified grassland. In addition, a net gain of 5.01 hedgerow units (84.12%) will be achieved through the creation of species-rich native hedgerows and enhancement of existing hedgerows on site.
- 6.79. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment (BMA) results in an 143.69% gain for area habitats and an 84.12% gain for hedgerow habitats, with mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures provided for protected species. Consequently, the development is considered to demonstrate a positive biodiversity impact at the site level.
- 6.80. The Compensation and Enhancement Plan (replicated from Appendix 6 of the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Metric Assessment is shown at **Figure 13** below:

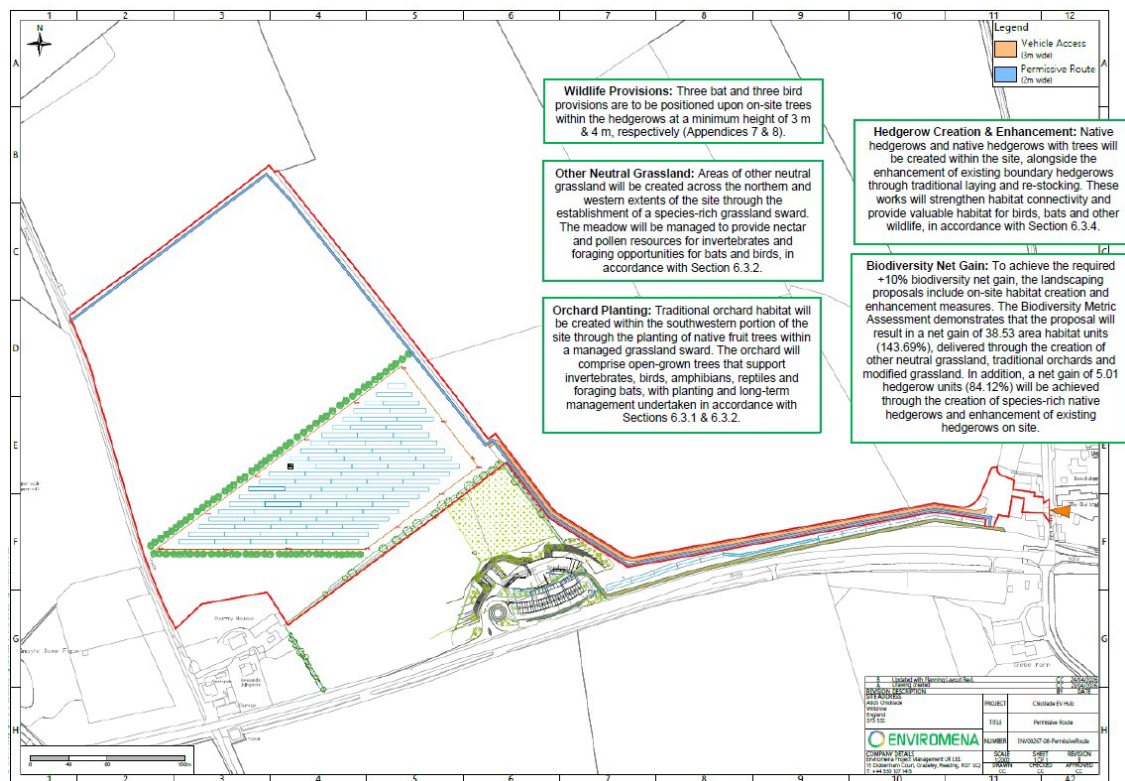


Figure 13 - Compensation and Enhancement Plan

Residual Effects

Mitigation and Monitoring

- 6.81. Mitigation is proposed in respect of retained habitats, vegetation management, hedgerow removal and timing of construction works and excavations. As no significant impacts upon ecology are expected in EIA terms, these impacts are for planning purposes and to ensure legislative compliance.
- 6.82. Enhancement measures include bird and bat boxes, orchard planting, woodland planting, creation of neutral grassland and hedgerow creation / enhancement. The resulting BNG for 143.69% gain for area habitats and an 84.12% gain for hedgerow habitats.

Residual Impacts

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

Conclusions

- 6.84. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment (BMA) results in an 143.69% gain for area habitats and a 84.12% gain for hedgerow habitats, with mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures provided for protected species. Consequently, the development is considered to demonstrate a significant positive biodiversity impact at the site level.

7. Climate Change

- 7.1. This Chapter remains the same as the original ES with no amends arising from the amended access route or revised red line application boundary.

Introduction

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

Planning Policy and Legislative Context

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

Policy context

- 7.7. Wiltshire Council has acknowledged a climate emergency (February 2019) and committed to becoming carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030, and to seek to make Wiltshire carbon neutral in the same timeframe.
- 7.8. Wiltshire Council's Local Transport Plan 4 identifies decarbonisation of transport as central to its strategy and notes that transport is the largest sector for greenhouse gas emissions in Wiltshire.
- 7.9. Wiltshire's approach to climate response in the transport context is framed within the Wiltshire Council Local Transport Plan 4: Draft LTP4 Carbon Paper (October 2024):
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation); and
 - preparing for impacts of climate change (adaptation).

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

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

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

Baseline Conditions

Current emissions context

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

Electricity and transport baseline

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

Future baseline (climate change context)

- 7.19. Good practice guidance recognises the importance of considering a future baseline for climate change, including general trends in future climate (IEMA 2020).
- 7.20. For the purposes of this assessment, the future baseline is considered in narrative terms over the lifetime of the Proposed Development (40 years). The assessment recognises that future climate conditions may include more frequent extreme weather events and changes in rainfall patterns, with potential implications for drainage performance, construction activities and ongoing maintenance requirements.
- 7.21. In line with good practice, this assessment adopts a UK Climate Projections²⁶ (UKCP18) scenario approach to avoid underestimating future climate risks.
- 7.22. The National Trust have published a Climate Hazards Map²⁷, based on Representative Concentration Pathways (RCP) 8.5 where greenhouse gas emissions continue to grow unmitigated, leading to a best estimate global average temperature rise of 4.3 °C by 2100²⁸. **Figures 14 – 16** below show that the Site would be:
- High Risk of Overheating and Humidity in the Future;
 - Medium Risk from Storm Damage; and
 - High risk of average daily mean temperature exceeding 12 – 14 degrees.

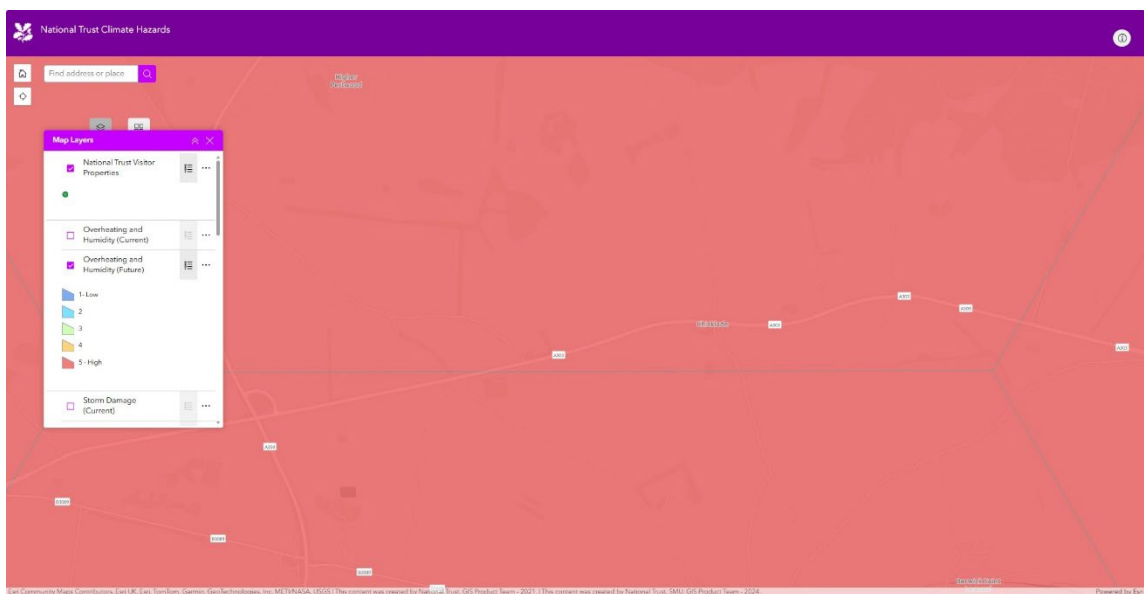


Figure 14 - Overheating and Humidity

²⁶ [UK Climate Projections \(UKCP18\) guidance and reports – Met Office](#)

²⁷ [Climate Hazards 23](#)

²⁸ [ukcp18-guidance---representative-concentration-pathways.pdf](#)

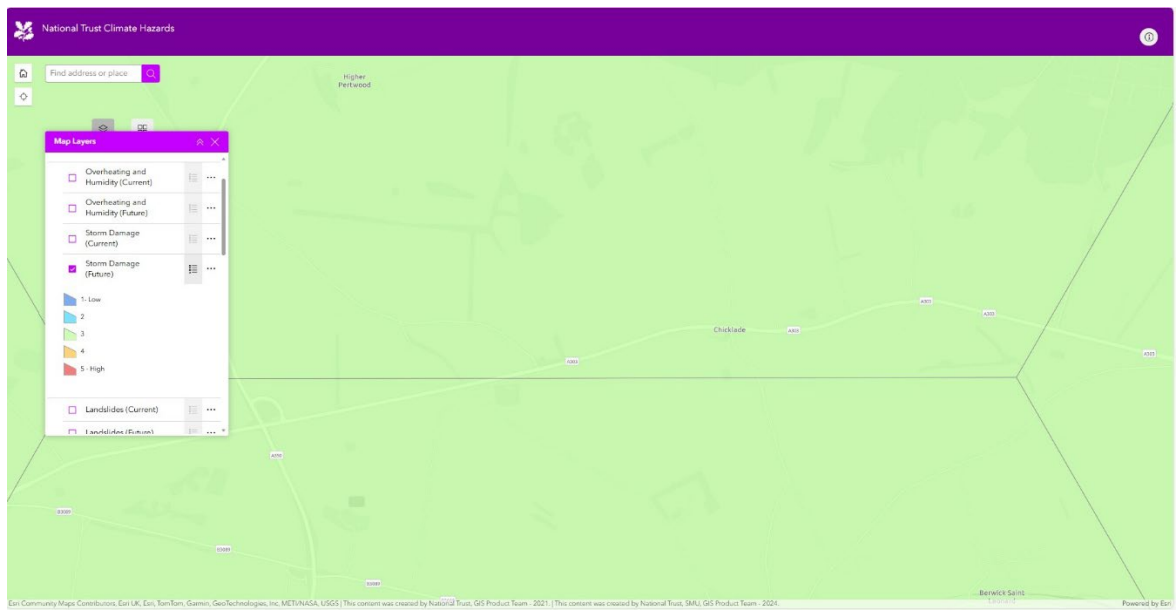


Figure 15 - Storm Damage

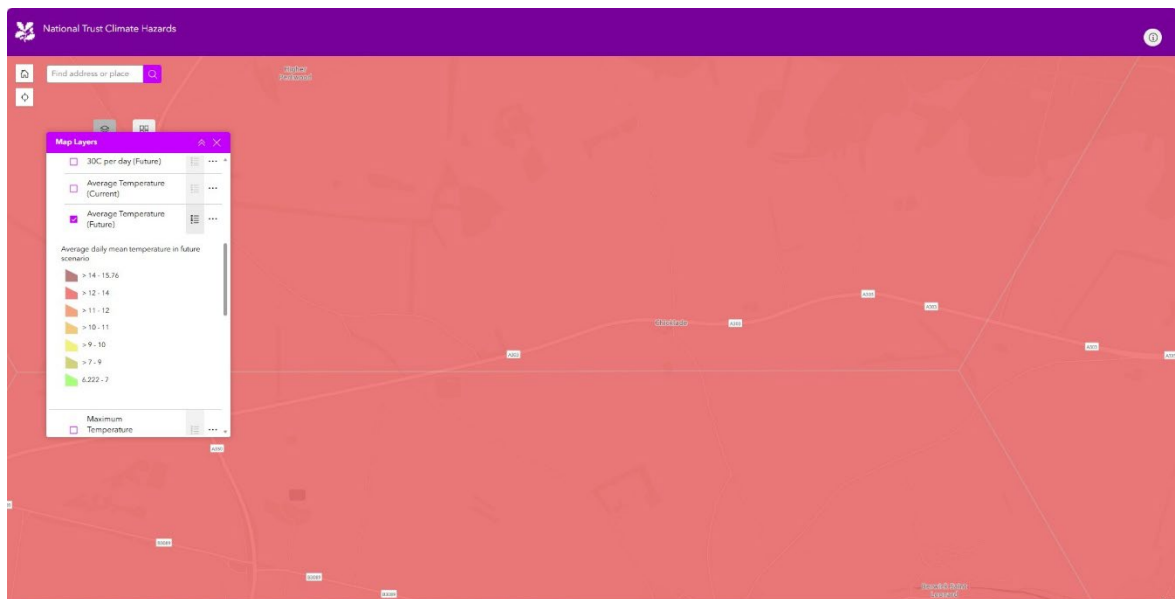


Figure 16 - Average Temperature

Assessment of Effects

Renewable energy generation and grid displacement

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

Enabling transport decarbonisation through EV charging

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

Magnitude and significance of mitigation effects

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

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

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

- 7.35. Good practice guidance recognises that climate change adaptation assessment within EIA is distinct from other topics, as it considers how the Proposed Development may be affected by future climate conditions (see **Figures 14 – 16** above).
- 7.36. The Proposed Development is temporary (40 years) and consists primarily of the solar panels and associated electrical equipment).
- 7.37. The Proposed Development is not expected to materially increase vulnerability to climate change impacts. In particular:
- the development does not introduce sensitive populations or receptors to the site;
 - operational activity is low intensity; and
 - the Proposed Development is not expected to materially change local climatic conditions.

Mitigation and Monitoring

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

Residual Effects

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

Conclusions

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

8. Landscape

- 8.1. This Chapter is updated from the original ES to reflect the amended access route and revised red line application boundary.

Introduction

- 8.2. This chapter of the ES has been prepared by DKR in conjunction with LHC Design who prepared the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and assesses the likely landscape and visual effects resulting from the Proposed Development. The full document Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LHC Design January 2026 Revision P4 dated 15th May 2026 report reference 25138-rt01) is submitted for the attention of the LPA and relevant consultees.
- 8.3. This chapter provides a description of the methods used in the assessment. This is followed by a description of the relevant baseline conditions of the Site and surrounding area, and an assessment of the likely environmental effects of the Proposed Development during the construction works and once the Proposed Development is completed and operational. Mitigation measures are identified (where appropriate) to avoid, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects identified, together with the nature and significance of likely residual effects.
- 8.4. The proposed Site comprises of a single field currently in arable use. Key changes to the site resulting from the proposal include:
- New vehicle access from an adjacent field to the east and connecting to an existing road at Seymour Farm in Chicklade;
 - New permitted grass surface footpath running from Seymour Farm in Chicklade along the eastern boundary of the site and connecting to an existing public right of way west of the site;
 - Stock proof fencing 2m in height, surrounding the Solar PV Arrays;
 - Solar PV Modules (located in the southern portion of the field only) offset from field boundaries and with transformer stations and CCTV located as required and shown on the site layout plan; and
 - New mixed native hedgerows, wildflower and woodland tree planting, and reinforcement of existing gappy hedgerow boundaries in the south and east.

Planning Policy and Legislative Context

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

European Landscape Convention 2007

- 8.6. The European Landscape Convention (ELC)²⁹ came into force in the UK on 1st March 2007; providing a people-centred and forward-looking approach to reconcile management of the environment with the social and economic challenges of the future and aims to help people reconnect with place. It is dedicated to the protection, management and planning of the landscape, and raising awareness of landscape issues at all levels.
- 8.7. The ELC adopts a broad definition of landscape: “landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”
- 8.8. This places a broad emphasis on landscapes everywhere and in any condition – land, inland water, marine, natural, rural and peri-urban, outstanding, ordinary or degraded. It therefore provides the focus on landscape as a resource in its own right.
- 8.9. The ELC recognises that today’s landscapes are the result of continuous change and that this change will continue in the future. The ELC Implementation Framework places the emphasis on the effective planning, good design and sensitive management of landscapes with people in mind. UK planning policy is compliant with this approach.

National Planning Policy Framework

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

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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

Baseline Conditions

Site and Immediate Surroundings

- 8.13. The site is currently an arable field located approximately 80-140m north of the A303 road, within a valley location with a red line boundary that extends across 2 additional fields to include a new permissive footpath and vehicle access track from the solar array to an unnamed road adjacent to Seymour Farm, Chicklade. The main field slopes gently upwards to the north and slopes downwards again in the north-east of the site, following the local rolling landscape characteristic. There are several commercial, agricultural and residential buildings to the south west, separating the site from the A303 road. The site is approximately 600m west of the small village of Chicklade. A closed service station, between the site and

²⁹ <https://rm.coe.int/16806b07e4>

the A303, is currently being redeveloped as a new electric vehicle charging service station. A public bridleway runs alongside the west boundary of the site, separated from it by a gappy hedgerow, which has recently been strengthened with new native hedge planting to create a continuous hedge. The other boundaries, similarly, have gappy hedgerows, although some new hedge planting is evident. This provides the opportunity to strengthen hedgerows and create new ones as part of a landscape framework.

- 8.14. The site lies within a landscape characterised by a patchwork of arable farmland and pasture. Fields are generally enclosed by hedgerows of low condition, interspersed with groups of trees and areas of woodland, predominantly located on ridges or along the A303 transport corridor. In the immediate vicinity of the site, field boundary hedgerows are fragmented or absent in places, presenting opportunities for landscape enhancement. The site sits within a relatively limited visual envelope within its valley location, with visibility largely constrained by ridges to the north, west and south. The exception to this is in the east, where longer distance views are possible, looking along the valley and transport corridor.
- 8.15. The village of Chicklade lies east of the site and comprises an attractive cluster of dwellings and farm buildings set within a dense framework of mature trees and hedgerows. Properties on the western edge of the village have some open views towards the site, although the village's Grade II Listed buildings have no intervisibility of the site due to location and vegetation. The landscape character of Chicklade is adversely affected by the presence of the busy A303 corridor, which forms a dominant and incongruous feature in the surrounding landscape. Associated infrastructure, including overhead telecommunications lines and road signs, further detract from landscape quality and contributes to a significant localised reduction in tranquillity and visual sensitivity.

Landscape Character and Sensitivity

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

National Character Area

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

interest, while working in harmony with the nationally recognised and distinctive character of the landscape, its natural beauty and scenic quality.

Local Landscape Character Types Areas

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

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

- 8.21. Cranborne Chase is a National Landscape, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and covers 380 square miles of countryside, overlapping the boundaries of Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset. The long-distance footpaths of the Wessex Ridgeway, Jubilee Trail and the Monarch's Way all criss-cross the National Landscape.
- 8.22. The Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan (2019 – 2024) presents objectives and policies that partners can apply to help conserve and enhance this nationally important landscape.
- 8.23. It is stated that the “primary purpose of AONB designation is ‘conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area’, but that “account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of economic and social development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.”
- 8.24. The Management Plan also notes that “high levels of tranquillity comprise important elements of the natural beauty of the AONB” and “views across and along these landscapes can be wide and expansive whilst in the valleys they are more focussed and channelled. Unspoilt and panoramic views are characteristics of this AONB.”
- 8.25. Section 5 outlines that the AONB document is not prepared in isolation and there are other factors which have influence. Some notable items include:
- 8.26. “Climate change mitigation describes measures or actions aimed at reducing the long-term risk and hazards of climate change. Climate change adaptation describes measures or actions that help individuals, groups and natural systems to prepare for and respond to changes in the climate. Alongside other organisations and individuals, the AONB Partnership will seek to build resilience and will support and promote mitigation and adaptation measures wherever practicable.” (Paragraph 5.18).
- 8.27. The landscapes of the AONB provide us with many ‘goods and services’ these need sustaining. They range from measurable things, like fresh food, clean water, healthy soils, sustainable energy and clean air; and less easily defined benefits, such as inspiration, awareness, health and wellbeing, and;

- 8.28. 'Development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. This means that within this AONB, great weight is given to conserving and enhancing natural beauty. Development has to be in the right location, at the right scale and of the right design using the right materials. (Paragraph 5.45).
- 8.29. Policy PT16, Renewable Energy Generation within the AONB says:
- 8.30. Policy PT16 "Support renewable energy generation by technologies that integrate with the landscape character, are neither visually intrusive to the AONB or its setting, nor impair significant views to or from it, are not harmful to wildlife, and are of an appropriate scale to their location and siting."

Wiltshire Council Renewable Energy Study. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2023)

- 8.31. A 2023 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment categorises the Wiltshire landscape by local character area (according to the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment) with a rating for sensitivity of an area for solar (or wind) farm developments in general terms – i.e. without specific sites analysed. The introduction to this report describes this as follows:
- 8.32. "1.2 This Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for wind energy and solar photovoltaic (PV) schemes provides judgements on the landscape sensitivity of different parts of Wiltshire to these forms of development. The findings of this study will allow the Council to identify broad areas for renewable energy development and establish a local policy framework for such development, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework."
- 8.33. The area which includes the proposed site has been assessed for sensitivity as level 1 – Greater landscape impact (from a scale of 1 – Greater to 5 – Lesser landscape impact).
- 8.34. Appendix A (User Guide) describes that:
- 8.35. "A.9 Priority should be given to views from distances of less than 3km and from sensitive locations (e.g. residential areas, areas popular with visitors or for outdoor recreation where views may be focussed on the landscape and recognised/iconic views)."
- 8.36. And sites should demonstrate how they enhance the landscape:
- 8.37. "A.11 Enhancement aims to improve the character and quality of the landscape. It may take many forms, including improved land management or creation of new landscapes or features. Landscape enhancement, as part of a proposal, will be looked upon favourably."
- 8.38. The LVIA report utilises the procedures for analysis listed within Appendix A and describe the perceived landscape and visual effects likely due to the site-specific proposals.

Heritage Assets

- 8.39. There are several historic assets within the study area, including Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
- 8.40. The closest historic asset to the site is the scheduled monument, an historic Bowl Barrow located approximately 700m away from the site to the south-west. From the Historic England website, bowl barrows are described as follows: "Bowl barrows the most numerous form of round barrow, are funerary monuments dating from the Late Neolithic period to the Late Bronze Age." The text goes on to say that "Often occupying prominent locations, they are a

major historic element in the modern landscape and their considerable variation of form and longevity as a monument type provide important information on the diversity of beliefs and social organisations amongst early prehistoric communities. They are particularly representative of their period and a substantial proportion of surviving examples are considered worthy of protection". There is no predicted visibility between this scheduled monument and the proposed development, which was confirmed with a field visit. The scale of the proposals and lack of intervisibility will therefore not have any impact on the monument or its setting.

- 8.41. A number of other scheduled monuments are generally located over 2km away from the site in the west, north and north east and include an Earthwork enclosure in Penning Wood, a Scrubbed Oak enclosure and an Earthwork enclosure in Great Ridge wood and a Long and Oval barrow on Keysley Down. There is no visibility between these monuments and the site, so the proposed development will not have any impact on their settings.
- 8.42. A section of Roman Road on Pertwood Down is situated approximately 2.5km away north west of the site. There is no intervisibility between the site and this monument due to the undulating landscape, therefore the proposals will not have an impact on its setting.
- 8.43. Hindon village, approximately one mile south of the A303 has a conservation area covering a large part of the village centre which includes many Grade II listed buildings, including the Church of St John the Baptist. There is no predicted visibility between this area and the site, which was confirmed with a field visit. The proposals will not have any impact on this conservation area or the listed buildings within it.
- 8.44. There are several other listed buildings within the study area, dotted across the area, mainly to the north, west and south. There are three listed buildings within Chicklade village, the closest (Chicklade House, Grade II) approximately 700m away. The Grade II Church of All Saints Anglican Parish Church and the Burnett Monument in the Churchyard (Grade II) are situated a further 100m away to the east. All three buildings are set back from the A303 road with dense vegetation surrounding them. They have no visibility of the site, and their settings will not be adversely impacted by the proposals.

Visual Baseline

- 8.45. The LVIA considers the effect of development on identified visual receptors within the ZTV. The assessment makes judgements on the effect of the proposed development on these receptors based on their sensitivity and the likely magnitude of effect. Several receptors are located outside of the ZTV, close to long distance footpaths or historic assets, in order to confirm lack of visibility between them and the site.
- 8.46. Key receptor groups identified are:
 - Users of main road A303 south of the site (Viewpoints, VPs 1, 2, 10);
 - Users of minor road, south east of the site (VP3);
 - Users of Public Right of Way (PROWs) and Restricted Byway south of the site (VPs 4, 5, 6, 7, 8);
 - Users of PROW bridleway on the western site boundary (VP 11);
 - Users of PROW bridleway north of the site (VP 12);
 - Users of PROW bridleways north east of the site (VPs 13, 14, 15, 16);
 - Users of PROW Monarch's Way long distance path (VPs 17, 20);
 - Users of PROW Wessex Ridgeway long distance path (VP 18); and
 - Users of PROW bridleway south of the site (VP19).

- 8.47. Photographs from representative viewpoints were recorded on 11th December 2025 and 9th January 2026.
- 8.48. The site is located on gently sloping farmland, on the side of a valley containing the busy A303 transport corridor. The boundaries feature gappy and varying quality hedges, many of which have been observed to be recently reinforced with new planting. There are agricultural, commercial and residential buildings nearby, and the A303 has associated telecommunications poles and wires and signage, leading to a sense of clutter and activity. Above the site, on rising slopes, arable fields give way to wooded areas and a greater sense of tranquillity and quiet. The small village of Chicklade is located east of the site and there are several public rights of way nearby, mostly public bridleways, with many appearing to have low or no use, and are difficult to use due to extremely busy road crossings, a lack of joined-up-ness and overgrown vegetation. The Monarch's Way and Wessex Ridgeway long distance footpaths pass through the local area.
- 8.49. The site's visibility is constrained by its location on low valley slopes, with wider views constrained by nearby ridges and clumps of woodland. The majority of the proposed development's visibility is situated well within 3km of the site, apart from longer views out towards the east along the transport corridor.

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

- 8.50. The methodology used in the preparation of this LVIA is in accordance with the published Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd. Ed.2013 GLVIA) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment.
- 8.51. The assessment approach first examines the baseline conditions, considering the national and local policy framework, site-specific factors, and relevant published landscape character assessments.
- 8.52. Landscape and visual impact assessment is undertaken by combining judgements on the sensitivity of the receiving landscape or visual receptors with those on the magnitude of the change proposed.
- 8.53. For the purposes of this study, discussions of landscape sensitivity have included consideration of landscape value, landscape condition and the susceptibility of the receiving landscape to the type and scale of the change proposed. Sensitivity is recorded on a scale of high, medium or low, with gradations between where necessary.
- 8.54. Visual sensitivity is assessed through consideration of the value of a particular view and the susceptibility to change of people experiencing the view. For example, a popular viewpoint experienced by people out walking in the countryside will be more sensitive to change than a view glimpsed through a gap in the hedgerow experienced by people travelling on a major trunk road.
- 8.55. Judgements on the scale of the change proposed, the duration of the effect and the geographical influence (extent) of the change are combined to assess the magnitude of landscape or visual effect. Magnitude of change is related to a scale of high to negligible. Effects are considered beneficial where they strengthen baseline characteristics or contribute to landscape strategies and policies and adverse where they result in the dilution of positive baseline characteristics or work against strategies. Neutral effects have neither positive nor negative effects on character and no impact on landscape strategies.

- 8.56. Viewpoint photographs have been presented in line with the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 6/19 “Visual Representation of Development Proposals”. The guidance proposes a proportionate approach to the complexity of visualisation presented, based upon factors such as the scale and complexity of development proposal, the sensitivity of the receptor and the context for the proposal. The proposal assessed here is for a solar farm approximately 3.01ha in size, within a red line boundary of 12.29ha, including associated infrastructure plus proposed landscape features. In this case, type 1 visualisations have been considered appropriate (annotated photographs presented at 100% scaling).

Study Area

- 8.57. A 5km radius was used to establish the study area for the LVIA. Solar arrays with a height of approximately 2.5m from existing ground levels were used to test the potential Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), shown on Figure 2. This was produced using Digital Surface Modelling (DSM) information which includes trees, hedges, buildings and other structures to produce an estimate for the potential visual effects of the development. As can be seen the expected visibility is constrained due to the enclosed valley location, with the majority of predicted visibility located within a few kilometres of the site. Therefore, a revised study area radius of 3km has been used which shows the local topography constraining potential visibility close to the site, with a single outlying visual receptor located approximately 4.2km to the east. This visual receptor has been included within the study.
- 8.58. The proposals and entire study area lie within National Character Area (NCA) 132 – Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs. The NCA description notes that Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs to the south is designated as a National Landscape (formally Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB) for its rich chalk down, whaleback ridges, wooded valleys and deeply rural, agricultural character and rich archaeological resource. It is noted for a sense of remoteness and generally dark skies.
- 8.59. The site sits within local landscape character area 2A West Wiltshire Downs Open Chalk Downland. The Heritage Lottery funded Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership scheme has supported a more detailed Landscape Assessment (Sept 2024) of this part of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. This contains fourteen local landscape character areas, which nest within the broader character areas of the earlier assessment. The site, and entire ZTV, lies within the landscape character type ‘Wooded Downland’.

Landscape Effects

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

Assessment of Effects

Site and Immediate Surroundings

- 8.62. The proposed development will introduce new boundary fencing, solar PV modules an associated transformer, CCTV posts, a new site entrance track and new native hedge and woodland planting which will significantly alter the current intensively farmed arable use.
- 8.63. The site is located within a rural setting, however one that is significantly impacted by the busy A303 transport corridor which has been observed with almost constant traffic flow, including many HGV vehicles, resulting in a significant level of noise and disturbance in the landscape. As it passes the site, the A303 runs along a valley with rising land to the north and the south. A commercial business, agricultural buildings and a couple of houses are situated next to the road and south west of the site. Chicklade Service Station is situated next to the road to the south of the site. This is currently undergoing redevelopment, and it is proposed that the solar access track will share the service station access. The small village of Chicklade is located approximately 600m east of the site, with most houses and a church located to the north of the road, the majority surrounded by trees, although some homes do have west facing views towards the site.
- 8.64. The farmed valley slopes, leading away from the transport corridor is characterised rolling pastoral and arable fields with some small clumps of woodland and a few isolated trees dotted across the landscape. Field boundaries are generally low in height, and many are incomplete or have frequent gaps, leading to a sense of openness. Ridges to the north and south of the A303, form a barrier to long distance views, as is illustrated on the ZTV diagrams.
- 8.65. Existing hedge boundaries around the site will be retained, apart from a gap in the eastern hedge to create vehicular access to the development. Additional planting is proposed to reinforce the existing hedges, helping to create a continuous vegetated boundary. New hedge planting will connect existing hedges, and the proposed area of woodland planting will reflect the local landscape characteristics and help to visually enclose the site from views from the east.
- 8.66. The following features of the proposed development reflect the landscape character of the local area and will help with mitigation:
- New native hedges which connect to existing hedgerows and the northern hedge to include hedgerow trees;
 - Proposed solar PV modules are offset from existing retained hedges to maintain the legibility of field patterns and assist with hedgerow management;
 - Areas of wildflower meadow grass will enhance species diversity;
 - Existing field boundaries are enhanced with new hedge planting and tree planting; and
 - An area of new woodland will enhance ecology and reflects local landscape character.
- 8.67. The proposals will result in a change of land use, however the ecological and landscape assets within the site are to be enhanced. The nature of the proposed development will retain the current levels of landscape tranquillity once constructed. The existing quality of the site and immediate surroundings has been assessed as medium to low. There are few landscape elements intact and in good repair and there are many detracting elements evident.
- 8.68. The landscape value is concerned with the relative value that is attached to different landscapes. The site and immediate surrounding landscape value is assessed as high. The site is located within a Nationally recognised landscape, despite its location close to the

transport corridor and associated detracting elements from this. The site is in use for intensive arable farming with low quality hedgerows, offering potential for improvement.

- 8.69. The proposed development involves low impact construction meaning that landscape elements will overall not be lost and there is a moderate level of containment due to topography and vegetation, plus the character is noticeably influenced by some detracting features. The site and immediate surroundings is therefore judged to have a medium level of ability to accept the type of development proposed and there are opportunities for mitigation. Combining assessments of quality, value and susceptibility to change, results in a landscape sensitivity of medium. This is the degree to which this particular landscape area can accommodate change without unacceptable detrimental effects on its character.
- 8.70. The scale of landscape effect on the site and immediate surroundings resulting from the proposed development is judged as large, due to the proposals describing a fundamental change to the baseline situation. The field boundaries will remain, with enhancements, however the introduction of solar panels and new fencing will change the site considerably. The duration of effect is long term and the extent of effect is localised (limited to the site and surroundings up to approximately 2km). The magnitude of effect is determined as high.
- 8.71. Some of the changes resulting from the development will have an adverse effect on the landscape character of the site due to new fencing, solar modules, a new site entrance track and transformers on a site currently without any structures. Mitigation design measures include new hedgerows, enhancement of existing hedgerows, new woodland planting, and wildflower meadow seeding. Combining the magnitude of effect with existing quality and sensitivity, results in an overall significance of landscape effect upon the site and immediate surroundings of major to moderate adverse.

Landscape Character Areas

- 8.72. The site is located within National Character Area (NCA) 132 – Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs. The main characteristics of this NCA are a sparsely settled landscape with a strong sense of remoteness and gently rolling chalk downland. The area has a strong sense of historical continuity with many prehistoric monuments. Noted opportunities within the NCA include protection and enhancement of chalk grassland, conservation of the rich historic resource and protection of the agricultural interest in harmony with the character and natural beauty of the landscape.
- 8.73. The proposals include the retention of existing hedgerows which will be strengthened with new native planting. The solar array will be a physically low impact, temporary intervention within the landscape, albeit long term. There would be loss of part of an arable field, however new hedges and woodland planting forms part of the mitigation and integration. The location of the site, close to existing busy road infrastructure and nearby buildings, forms part of the mitigating factors for the site, avoiding more tranquil and popular and picturesque rural landscapes within this NCA (and National Landscape).
- 8.74. The proposed development alters the site, but within the NCA the scale of change would be small, much of it positive, offering landscape enhancement to improve existing assets, and without adversely impacting the opportunities and objectives set out for the NCA.
- 8.75. The quality of the NCA is assessed as medium to high as the much of the character demonstrating landscape elements appear intact and good repair. The value is national scale, therefore rated high, and the receptor has a medium level of ability to accept the type of development proposed, with some good opportunities for mitigation.

- 8.76. The scale of change on the NCA is small, long term and the effect would be seen and experienced within an intermediate (approx. 2-4km) area. The magnitude of effect is determined by combining the scale, duration and extent of effect, in this case providing a result of low. The significance of effect upon the NCA (magnitude combined with sensitivity) is overall slight to moderate adverse.

Cranborne Chase National Landscape and associated Local Landscape Character Area

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

Visual Effects

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

- Users of PROW Monarch's Way long distance path (VPs 17, 20);
- Users of PROW Wessex Ridgeway long distance path (VP 18); and
- Users of PROW bridleway south of the site (VP19).

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

- 8.83. Viewpoint 1 shows the view from the pavement on the south side of the main A303 road passing through Chicklade, just east of the junction for Hindon Village. This busy road corridor is bordered by mature deciduous trees, road signs and telecommunications wires. Looking along the road corridor towards the site, fields prior to the site are visible, with the site itself forming a very small part of the view beyond.
- 8.84. Viewpoint 2 shows the view from the A303 near Chicklade Service Station, looking west. Road activity and associated infrastructure along the valley road corridor is a very large part of the view with constant traffic movement and telecommunications posts and wires. Views out to the surrounding landscape are constrained by landform, existing vegetation and existing development. The site is located behind a gappy hedge at a higher elevation than the road and the proposed reinforced boundary hedges will help to limit visibility of the proposals for road users further.
- 8.85. Viewpoint 10 shows the view from the southern side of the A303 road looking west opposite a commercial garage 'Classic Vehicle Restorers'. The view shows the road with trees and hedgerows to both sides and telecommunications posts and cables running along the north edge of the road. The garage buildings are located to the left of the view, with a vehicle access directly from the A303. Other houses and agricultural buildings to the rear of the vehicle repair building are not visible, nor is the site.
- 8.86. The sensitivity to visual change for users of roads south of the site is valued as medium.
- 8.87. The scale of the effect on these visual receptors resulting from the proposals is judged to be negligible (very hard to discern) to none. This stretch of road has constrained views out into the landscape, due to the local landform, plus activity and distracting elements. There are not extensive views across the landscape and the high level of activity at the roadside level, the proposed height of the development is relatively low and located behind hedgerows. The magnitude of change found by combining assessments of scale, duration and extent, is assessed to be negligible. This results in an overall significance of effect of minimal adverse.

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

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

This results in magnitude of effect as negligible. The overall significance of effect is minimal adverse.

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

- 8.90. Viewpoints 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 represent users of the public bridleway and Ox Drove restricted byway on a ridge to the south of the site and the A303 road. The majority of this track is bounded to both sides by dense hedgerow and trees, which offers little or no views though it, even during winter months, when site visits were undertaken. Despite this, there are several gaps at field entrances and a few gaps in the otherwise dense planting. Several photographs taken along this route are included to illustrate differing views along it.
- 8.91. Viewpoint 4 shows one such gap at a field entrance, looking towards the site. The view includes the existing Chicklade Service Station on the A303 road. The remainder of the view shows rolling fields with clumps of woodland dotted across the landscape. As well as the service station, there are several houses and farm buildings visible, and telecommunications posts and wires running across the landscape. Despite this viewpoint being on an elevated position and approximately 600m away from the road, constant traffic noise was audible, significantly reducing feelings of tranquillity.
- 8.92. Viewpoints 5 and 6 demonstrate glimpsed views towards the site at gaps in the otherwise dense vegetation bounding the track. The site can be seen from these viewpoints. The proposals would introduce a built element into this landscape, however only effecting a small part of the view. This track is not a named long-distance path (of which there are two nearby) nor does this section offer the best local views of the rural countryside nearby.
- 8.93. Viewpoints 7 and 8 demonstrate views at a field entrance and a large gap in a field boundary hedgerow from the public bridleway connecting to Ox Drove track. Both photographs include a clear view of the site, set amongst rolling fields and low hills with wooded summits. The traffic noise is evident from these locations reducing the tranquillity slightly.
- 8.94. The views from this public right of way are not identified as viewpoints of importance and there are many locations with countryside views nearby, offering greater tranquillity (the further away from the transport corridor they are). The sensitivity of users of PROW and restricted byway south of the site is classed as high. The scale of effect is judged to be medium as the views will be noticeably changed with new features introduced. The long-term duration and localised extent of this effect give rise to a medium magnitude of effect. Combining assessment of the sensitivity of the receptor with the magnitude of effect, provides an overall significance of effect as major-moderate adverse.

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

- 8.95. Viewpoint 11 is taken from a bridleway adjacent to western boundary of the site, looking south east across the site. The site is separated from the bridleway by an existing native hedgerow which is dense in places, but with large gaps. New saplings have been recently planted to strengthen this field boundary and create a continuous hedgerow. The view is dominated by the existing arable field, planted with crops, which slopes gently downwards to the A303 road corridor. Beyond this point, the terrain rises as a succession of fields interspersed with small woodland clusters. Constant traffic noise reduces the tranquillity from here significantly, with large vehicles visible on the road. Small groups of farm buildings and houses on the edge of Chicklade village, can be seen on the left of the view.

- 8.96. The proposals have concentrated the solar panels development to the south-eastern part of the field. Mitigation includes a new mixed native hedgerow across the north or the solar panel area and across the south west part of the field. There would be a large change experienced by this receptor due to the proposals, although the mitigation planting and site layout would help to minimise the impact of this, especially once new hedge planting has established.
- 8.97. The sensitivity of this receptor is high and the scale of effect is assessed as large, due to the fundamental change post development. The scale of development and mitigation measures would see this reduce to medium once planting has fully established. The changes are long term in duration and localised in extent, providing a magnitude of change of high, becoming medium in time. The significance of effect for this receptor is major adverse, becoming major to moderate adverse once hedge planting has established.

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

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

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

- 8.99. Users of public bridleways on the hillside to the north east of the site have been grouped together. Four photographs represent these users. Viewpoint 13 is taken from a bridleway which ascends Cratt Hill, looking south west towards the site, approximately 840m away. The view across the landscape is extensive with a wide expanse of rolling landscape leading to wooded hilltops stretching into the distance. A sloping arable field in the foreground leads to views of pastoral fields bounded by hedges on valley slopes. Vehicles on the A303 road (particularly HGVs or coaches) can be seen, although traffic noise is quiet from this distance. The existing Chicklade Service Station can be seen, as can agricultural buildings located adjacent to the site. The site is visible from here, seen as a large hedge bounded field, although the hedge boundary on the eastern site edge can be seen with many gaps. The area of the site proposed to contain solar PV panels is seen as a very small part of the field from this location.
- 8.100. Viewpoint 14 is taken further south on the bridleway, closer to Chicklade village, and approximately 650m away from the site. The view again consists of rolling fields which are a combination of arable and pastoral. Nearby hedgerow field boundaries are low, or gappy, becoming more substantial around distance fields. Blocks of woodland are visible, mainly on the top of hills, however small clumps are present along the valley corridor. Large vehicles, signage and telecommunications infrastructure can be seen along the road corridor and the background noise of passing vehicles has increased compared to VP13. Chicklade Service Station roof is visible in the distance and the site is visible, however the southern portion of the site which is to be altered with the addition of solar panels, landscaping and associated infrastructure, forms a very narrow part of the view. Proposed reinforcement to boundary hedges, woodland planting and a new hedge along the northern edge of the fenced solar array will further enclose and screen the proposals once planting has established.
- 8.101. Viewpoint 15 is taken from another bridleway approximately 1.47km away from the site on the hillside leading to Great Ridge and large areas of woodland. The view consists of sloped arable fields with some hedgerow planting leading towards the valley's transport corridor containing glimpses of vehicles travelling along the A303. Beyond the road the landscape the rises as pastoral fields and in the far distance wooded hilltops can be seen. The transport

corridor forms a distinctive part of the view, due to travelling vehicles and associated infrastructure and noise. Agricultural barns beyond the site can be seen, although the site itself forms a very small strip of land from here and is difficult to determine. Proposed reinforced hedge boundaries as part of the proposals will hinder views of the site from here further. Once woodland and hedgerow planting has established, it is expected that the proposals would be hard to see from here.

- 8.102. Viewpoint 16 is taken from a public bridleway above Chicklade Dairy and approximately 1.29km away from the site. Much of the view is of pastoral rolling fields with gappy hedgerow boundaries leading to areas of woodland on hilltops. The A303 road corridor is visibly prominent and audible, with continual traffic observed passing thorough. Chicklade Service Station can be seen, as can agricultural buildings and houses located next to the site. The site is clearly visible from here, and the northern half is quite prominent seen as rolling fields in the middle distance. The bottom section of the field, proposed to contain the solar arrays and associated landscaping, forms a small section of the view. With proposed planting on the northern and eastern boundaries, the solar development will be screened from here to some extent, however still visible.
- 8.103. The overall scale of change experienced by users of bridleways north east of the site, is assessed as small, due to a minor alteration to key elements within the view and discernible differences against the baseline situation, although the character of views will be largely unchanged. Higher up the hillside the solar arrays would be less visible, even very difficult to see once mitigation planting has established, however lower slopes would have clearer views. These, however, coincide with an increase in traffic noise, visual clutter along the road corridor and less tranquillity due to the closer proximity of the busy A-road. The duration of effect due to the proposals is long term, with a limited extent of effect. The magnitude of effect is negligible, resulting in an overall significance of effect of minimal adverse.

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

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

the scale of the proposed changes, and due to mitigation planting, hedgerow management and the tiny portion of the view effected. The overall character of the view will remain the same - a vast panoramic rural landscape with only a minor change occurring within an already developed transport corridor.

- 8.107. The duration of the effect will be long term and the extent will be intermediate. The resulting magnitude of the effect is low and the overall significance of effect on this receptor is moderate to slight-adverse.

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

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

Users of PROW bridleway south of the site (VP19)

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

Mitigation and Monitoring

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

Residual Effects

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

Conclusions

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

Landscape Effects

- 8.115. The assessment evaluates the landscape effects of the proposed solar development using fieldwork and photography, considering the scale, duration, extent and magnitude of change. The scheme will introduce solar PV modules, fencing, access tracks, transformers and associated infrastructure, replacing intensively farmed arable land. While the proposed development represents a fundamental long-term change at the site level, existing field boundaries will be retained and enhanced through new native hedgerow planting and an area of woodland planting and wildflower meadow will be created. The surrounding landscape is heavily influenced by the A303 transport corridor and nearby development, with moderate containment from landform and vegetation. Overall, the site and immediate surroundings are assessed as having medium landscape sensitivity, a high magnitude of change, and a resulting major to moderate adverse landscape effect.
- 8.116. At a wider scale, the site lies within National Character Area 132 (Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs). Although the NCA has high value and medium to high quality, the development would result in only a small-scale change within the broader landscape context. The solar array is considered a low-impact, temporary (albeit long-term) intervention, located close to existing infrastructure and away from more tranquil parts of the NCA. Proposed mitigation aligns with the NCA's objectives by strengthening hedgerows and enhancing landscape and ecological assets. The magnitude of effect on the NCA is assessed as low, with an overall significance of slight to moderate adverse.
- 8.117. The site is also within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (AONB), and the West Wiltshire Downs Open Chalk Downland character area. Much of this covers the same area as shown in the older Wiltshire Landscape Assessment (2005), so they are treated as one. This nationally designated landscape has high sensitivity, although the site location is already influenced by fast-moving transport corridors. The proposals are small in scale relative to the wider landscape, they retain and enhance field boundaries, and do not affect key archaeological features. The changes are long term and experienced over an intermediate area resulting in an overall moderate adverse effect on the National Landscape.

Visual Effects

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

9. Cumulative Impact

- 9.1. This Chapter remains the same as the original ES with no amends arising from the amended access route or revised red line application boundary.

Introduction

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

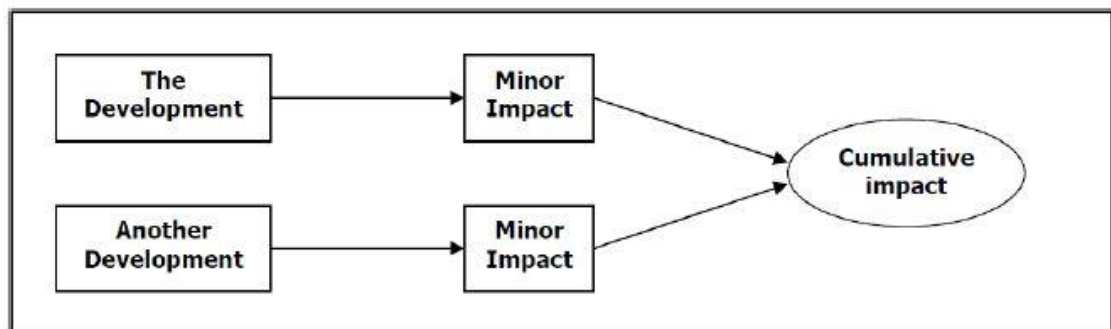


Figure 17 - Inter-project effects

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

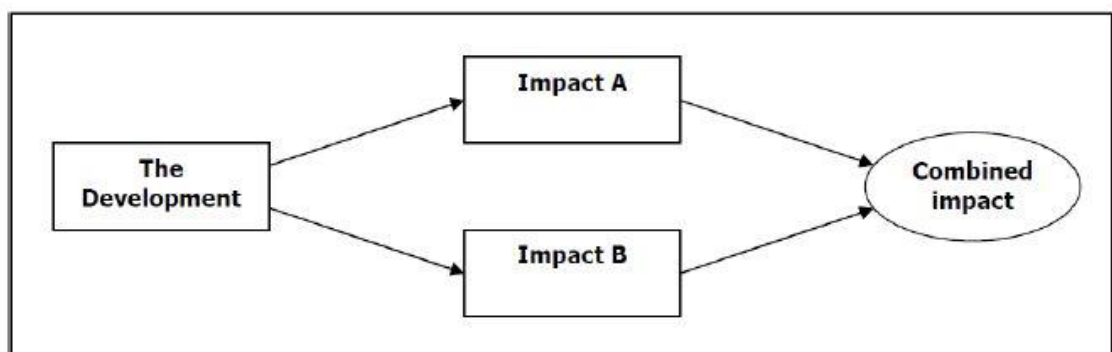


Figure 18 - Intra-project effects

Planning Policy and Legislative Context

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

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

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

Inter-project effect

9.7. There is no established EIA methodology for assessing and quantifying the combined effects of individual effects on sensitive receptors. It should, however, be noted that cumulative effects of individual effects can generally only be broadly identified and assessed qualitatively and where possible, quantified.

9.8. Where cumulative effects are anticipated, they are assessed as being negligible, minor, moderate or major. Only those that are predicted to be moderate or major are considered to be significant.

9.9. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the following stages:

- Identification of sensitive receptors;
- A review of the residual effects reported in **Chapters 6 to 8** to identify the potential for effects and interactions and, therefore, combined cumulative effects; and
- Identification of appropriate mitigation of the identified effects, as required.

9.10. The criteria for identifying those receptors that are considered to be potentially sensitive include the nature of the receptor, proximity to the works, and extent of exposure to impacts. It should also be noted that different stages of construction works will result in different effect magnitudes. It may be that for some environmental topics, there are no interactions with other individual effects and, therefore, there are no combined cumulative effects.

Intra-Project Effects

9.11. NE guidance³⁰ identifies the following sources of information that project proposers or competent authorities can use to identify plans or projects that might act in-combination:

- **Planning Portals** to locate applications awaiting permissions;
- **Environmental Permits** Register of Applications and Register of Issued Permits; and

³⁰ Natural England's approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitats Regulations – NEA001

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

- 9.12. An initial search exercise was undertaken to identify potential major developments within the vicinity of the Proposed Development for consideration within the cumulative impact assessment. A review of the Renewable Energy Planning Database³¹ and Wiltshire Planning Explorer³² confirms there are no cumulative solar developments within the study area.
- 9.13. The closest solar array is the land at East Farm / East Codford Solar Farm some 12km to the north east of the Site.

Baseline Conditions

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

Assessment of Effects

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

Mitigation and Monitoring

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

Residual Effects

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

Conclusions

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

³¹ [Renewable Energy Planning Database | DESNZ & Barbour ABI](#)

³² [Wiltshire Planning Explorer](#)

10. Summary and Conclusions

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

Alternatives

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

Biodiversity

- 10.9. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment (BMA) results in an 143.69% gain for area habitats and a 84.12% gain for hedgerow habitats, with mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures provided for protected species. Consequently, the development is considered to demonstrate a positive biodiversity impact at the site level.

Climate Change

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

Landscape

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

Cumulative impact

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

Avoidance and Mitigation and Residual Impacts Summary

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

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

Chapter	Avoidance and Mitigation	Residual Impacts
	planting, woodland planting, creation of neutral grassland and hedgerow creation / enhancement. BNG of 143.69% gain for area habitats and a 84.12% gain for hedgerow habitats,.	
7. Climate Change	No mitigation required.	Residual effects arising from carbon offset and the combatting of climate change are predicted. The magnitude of the mitigation effect is considered to be beneficial and, given the estimated scale of annual emissions savings, is assessed as moderate beneficial (significant) at a local level.
8. Landscape	The existing field currently has gappy hedge boundaries which will be planted with new native hedge planting to strengthen them. The panels are located in the lower portion of the site, close to the A303 traffic corridor, Chicklade Service Station and several agricultural buildings adjacent to the south west corner of the site. Two new mixed native hedgerows will be planted along the north and south of the fenced off solar arrays, with the northern hedge line, to include hedgerow trees. An area of native woodland will be planted to the east of the solar arrays which will create new habitat and help to mitigate views of the panels from public rights of	The site and immediate surroundings are assessed as having medium landscape sensitivity, a high magnitude of change, and a resulting major to moderate adverse landscape effect (for the duration of the solar array operation). The magnitude of effect on the NCA is assessed as low, with an overall significance of slight to moderate adverse. The changes are long term and experienced over an intermediate area resulting in an overall moderate adverse effect

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

Table 5 - Avoidance and Mitigation and Residual Impacts Summary

Overall Conclusion

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

Appendix 1 – LPA Scoping Opinion



Mr. J Rankin
DKR Planning

Development Services Wiltshire Council
Tel: 0300 456 0114
Email: developmentmanagement@wiltshire.gov.uk
www.wiltshire.gov.uk

22nd January 2026, **updated 25th February 2026**, **updated 10th March 2026**

Dear Sir,

SCOPING OPINION

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/09603
APPLICATION TYPE:	SCOPING OPINION
PROPOSAL	Request for a Scoping Opinion for 3MW solar array and ancillary development
SITE ADDRESS:	Land north of the A303, Chicklade, Salisbury, SP3 5SS
ON BEHALF OF:	DKR Planning

Thank you for your request for a scoping opinion in relation to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the above proposal. Following careful consideration of the information provided, I am writing to provide a Scoping Opinion. **Any comments received from the Council's landscape team will be shared in due course.**

1. INTRODUCTION

This Scoping Opinion Report is issued by Wiltshire Council in response to the request for a Scoping Opinion submitted on behalf of DKR Planning under Part 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, for a 3MW solar array and ancillary development.

The applicant has considered the Schedule 2 thresholds for EIA development.

The proposed development falls within category 3 (a) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations, applicable to any 'Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water' where 'The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare'. The red line boundary for the application extends to 12 hectares, with the proposed solar array taking up 3.4 hectares, exceeding the 0.5 hectare threshold given in Schedule 2.

Given the scale of the proposed development and its environmental setting within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, it is considered by the applicant that EIA is applicable in this instance and therefore, the environmental assessment process has commenced with the EIA scoping stage.

Therefore, the applicant has issued a Scoping Report to Wiltshire Council as LPA (and statutory

consultees) and to seek agreement on the coverage of the EIA, proposed assessment methodologies and ES structure, by way of a formal Scoping Opinion. The purpose of this Scoping Opinion is to provide guidance on the key environmental issues and topics that should be assessed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed development. The scoping process helps to identify the *likely significant effects* of the development on the environment and the scope of information that should be provided in the EIA.

In order to provide this opinion, I have considered the information provided in your EIA scoping report dated December 2025 by DKR Planning. It is agreed that this is Schedule 2 development that has potential for likely significant environmental impacts either individually or cumulatively with other development. Furthermore, I have had regard to the consultation responses received to date and included as Appendices to this scoping opinion:

Appendix 1	Environment Agency response
Appendix 2	National Highways response
Appendix 3	Wiltshire Council (WC) Conservation response
Appendix 4	WC Highways response
Appendix 5	WC Public Protection response
Appendix 6	WC Rights of Way response
Appendix 7	WC Ecology response
Appendix 8	WC Archaeology response
Appendix 9	WC Drainage response
Appendix 10	Natural England response

Below is the list of the other consultations that have taken place, but for which no comments have been received to date. These will be forwarded when they arrive, please have regard to the advice in the development of your Environmental Statement:

- **WC Landscape and Climate Change teams**
- **Cranborne Chase National Landscape (AONB) Partnership**
- **Historic England**

2. DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The site comprises a 12 hectare arable field with the proposed solar array taking up 3.4 hectares. The Site is located approximately 120m to the north of the A303 and 900m to the west of Chicklade itself. Chicklade Services Station is approximately 170m to the south east of the Site and there is a cluster of commercial and residential properties at 'Newlands' approximately 100m to the south west.



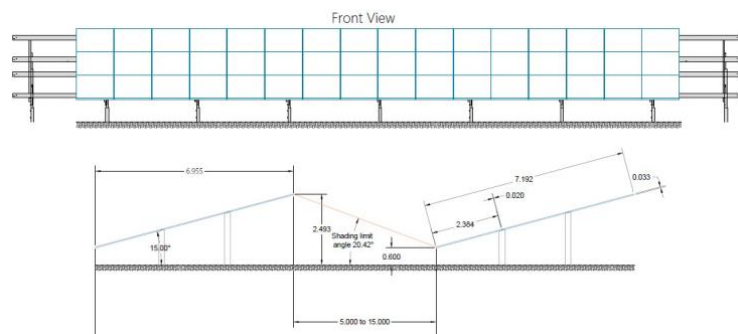
Specific policy constraints for the site include:

- Chilmark Quarries bat SAC
- River Avon Hampshire SAC
- A303 trunk road
- Bridleway CHIC 5 runs to the west of the site in a north/south direction
- Chicklade Neighbourhood Plan area – undesignated
- No flood risk from any source identified in 20204 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs Countryside Character Area
- Cranborne Chase National Landscape

Planning History: There is no recent planning history for the site area.

PROPOSALS

The proposal is to erect a 3MW solar array and ancillary development consisting of frame mounted photovoltaic panels, a transformer station, substation, perimeter fence and proposed hedgerow planting. An 11kV power line crosses the southern portion of the Site, and another runs parallel to the western boundary, allowing for ready connection to the National Grid.



3. PLANNING POLICY AND LEGISLATION CONTEXT

The following key policies, legislation, and guidance documents are relevant to the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed development:

- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA 1990)
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2017
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015)

The scoping opinion also refers to specific legislation or guidance that may apply to the development, such as:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (for European protected species and habitats).

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (for national protected species).
- The Climate Change Act 2008 (for carbon emissions considerations).
- The Air Quality Standards Regulations (2010).

4. SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As required by legislation, before adopting this scoping opinion, the following matters have been taken into account:

- a) Any information provided by the applicant about the proposed development;
- b) The specific characteristics of the particular development;
- c) The specific characteristics of development of the type concerned; and
- d) The environmental features likely to be significantly affected by the development

Once an Authority has adopted a scoping opinion this does not preclude it from requiring (of the person who made the scoping opinion) additional information in connection with any Statement that may be submitted by that person as an Environmental Statement in connection with the planning application.

Section 6 of your Scoping Report provides a useful summary of your starting point on what the significant environmental impacts of the development are *likely* to be. It is key to consider this as a starting point because this Scoping Opinion and the consultation responses from various stakeholder experts will help you to develop your thinking by providing further opinion and local context. Please do read all of the consultation responses provided and take a precautionary approach to scoping matters into the Environmental Statement.

To aid the evolution of your preliminary views as you begin working on your EIA submission and Environmental Statement, please note the following specific comments and all the consultation responses included as Appendices. I have indicated the LPA's conclusion on whether a matter should be scoped in or out in the main heading:

Designated Heritage Assets and Built Heritage: Scoped Out

You have scoped in the potential impact of the development on built heritage. Other non designated historic assets are scoped out of any EIA and modern and historic mapping indicates there is nothing within or immediately adjacent to the site that could be affected. Nearby Knoyle Down Farm to the west is of some historic interest, but there would be no intervisibility. Indeed, there seem to be very few potential viewpoints other than the public footpaths/bridleways. Given the lack of potential for direct effects on the fabric of heritage assets or their immediate setting, it is determined that no significant adverse effects in relation to heritage are expected. This conclusion is agreed.

Archaeology: [Scoped Out](#)

The red line boundary of this proposal covers a large tranche of land, although it is noted that the proposed solar array will only occupy a portion of this area but, at 3.4ha, it is still a large area of previously undeveloped farmland.

The accompanying 'Scoping Report' notes the designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the proposed solar array but does not include the undesignated heritage assets shown on Wiltshire's Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER shows traces of an ancient field system within the site area and identified as soil and crop marks on aerial photographs of the 1970s.



These are just one of several ancient field systems recorded on the chalk downland around and above Chicklade. Based on evidence elsewhere, these ancient field systems may date from as early as the Bronze Age (2,000 – 800 BC) and been re-used in the Iron Age and Roman periods. The farmsteads and burial grounds of the farmers that created and used these ancient fields will lie within these field systems and largely await discovery.

The archeologist has considered the further documentation in relation to this Scoping Opinion following a screening opinion. The applicant has now submitted an archaeological desk-based assessment report (BWB, January 2026) and a geophysical survey report (Magnitude Surveys, January 2026).

The desk-based report assesses the archaeological potential of the site of the solar array and associated works as low and this is corroborated by the results of the geophysical survey, which only identified a few anomalies that might indicate the presence of buried remains. While geophysical survey cannot authoritatively prove a negative, the archaeologist is satisfied, based on this information, that the buried archaeological heritage can be **scoped out** of any environmental impact assessment. The need for any further archaeological investigation and mitigation can be considered once full details of the proposal become available.

Please refer to the comments from the Archaeology and Conservation officers and Historic England in the Appendices. Historic England has deferred to the local authority Historic Environment staff regarding local historic environment issues and priorities.

Landscape, the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and visual impact: Scoped In

Your preliminary view has already scoped in landscape and visual impacts. The scoping report concludes that *Pending assessment and the results of the LVIA, significant environmental issues in relation to landscape, cannot be scoped out at this time and Landscape will form a 'scoped in' topic of the ES.*

This is agreed. The EIA should assess the potential effects of the development on the character and quality of the landscape and views including the Cranbourne Chase National Landscape.

It should be noted that this is a sensitive site in landscape terms in a prominent location on a trunk road and therefore, the visual impact of the scheme is of significant importance. The visual impacts of the proposal should also be considered throughout any EIA, as the visual appearance of the scheme may be affected by other matters such as transport matters.

Provided the LVIA submitted with the application as part of the Environmental Statement complies with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (IEMA, 3rd Edition, 2013) by the landscape institute and that the above matters are taken account into account, the methodology you set out is likely to be acceptable, and subject to consultee responses. **I will forward comments from the Council's Landscape officer in due course.**

Comments from The Cranborne Chase National Landscape partnership are in Appendix 13. They consider that the site falls within a zone of greatest sensitivity for 'small scale' solar. Please could you refer to their specific comments in relation to the scoping report and in particular, their comments relating to omissions.

Lighting: Scoped In

Lighting and its impact both on the surrounding landscape including the Cranbourne Chase National Landscape and its International Dark Skies Reserve need to be carefully considered. The NPPF attaches great weight to matters of landscape conservation in the NL. Whilst it is possible that the amount of light produced by the development would not be sufficient to cause *significant* effects, the **LPA will confirm** its view once the comments from National Landscape and landscape teams are received. For now, the LPA considers that lighting should be scoped in to the ES.

Ecology and Biodiversity: Scoped In

The site is not covered by any statutory nature conservation designations however it is located within three 6km Barbastelle SAC parcel buffers associated with the Chilmark Quarries SAC. Your preliminary view has scoped in ecology and biodiversity (natural heritage) impacts and considers that pending assessment and the results of the BNG assessment, significant benefits in relation to biodiversity cannot be scoped out at this time and Biodiversity will form a 'scoped in' topic of the ES.

The EIA Scoping Report is proposing to scope in the positive effects of achieving Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as it considers the positive benefits of BNG are likely to be significant. Under the Environment Act 2021 an application on this site would be required to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG and must be accompanied by a completed statutory metric calculation (including condition assessment sheets and maps) using the current version of the Natural England Biodiversity Metric.

The EIA Scoping Report is proposing to scope out further ecological assessments as significant impacts are not considered likely. An Extended UK Habitat Survey and any identified further species surveys are proposed. Overall, we agree with the proposals as set out in Section 6, however please refer to the detailed ecology comments in the Appendix below.

The site is located within three 6km Barbastelle SAC parcel buffers associated with the Chilmark Quarries SAC. Therefore, bat surveys will be required to identify key flight routes and to ensure mitigation identified within the application is sufficient and appropriate. An application on this site would also be subject to an Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Section 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended, which must be carried out by the Competent Authority (the LPA) to determine the potential significant effects and the suitability of any measures proposed to avoid or mitigate those effects.

An application on this site should follow the ecological advice in the Solar PV Farms and Ecology: Developer Advice Note, 2021, which can be found at the following link:

[SolarPVFarmEcologyAdviceNoteJuly2021.pdf](#). Further information can be found here:
[Biodiversity and development - Wiltshire Council](#)

Natural England has provided specific and detailed advice in Appendix 10 to assist with this chapter of the ES regarding:

- Cumulative and in-combination effects

- Environmental data
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- International and European sites, Nationally designated sites and Regionally and Locally Important Sites
- Protected Species, Priority Habitats and Species
- Ancient Woodland, ancient and veteran trees
- Biodiversity net gain
- Nationally Designated Landscapes, Landscape and visual impacts, Heritage Landscapes
- Connecting People with nature
- Soils and Agricultural Land Quality
- Air Quality, Water Quality and Climate Change and
- Contribution to local environmental initiatives and priorities

Climate Change: Scoped In

Your scoping report concludes that given the nature of the development, generating renewable energy and offsetting the use of fossil fuels, the EIA will consider the context of the outlined climate change projections and:

- The vulnerability of the baseline environment to projected changes in climate;
- The vulnerability and resilience of the proposed development to climate change; and
- The effect of the proposed development within the context of climate change.

The assessment will include for qualitative and quantitative assessment, having regards to the relevant IEMA guidance; Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to: Climate Change Resilience & Adaptation (IEMA 202). Pending assessment and the results of the climate change assessment, significant beneficial effects in relation to climate change adaption, cannot be scoped out at this time and Climate Change will form a 'scoped in' topic of the ES.

Please also have regard to the comments from the Council's Climate team in Appendix 12 of this letter. Whilst the team would not envisage any 'likely significant effects,' there is an appreciation for climatic risk over the lifetime of the project, depending on its relative location.

Agricultural Land: Scoped In

The land is classed as grade 3 agricultural land and the LPA understands that Kernon Countryside Consultants will confirm the grading (3a BMV or 3b), and this will be available for the LPA's attention. The proposed scheme would result in the temporary loss of agricultural land for the duration of the operational period of the solar array. The array mounting structure is piled, not requiring deep foundation excavation, maintaining topsoil and otherwise ensuring the reversibility of the development. Any Grade 3a agricultural land means that it is the best and most versatile use (BMV). Such BMV land would be considered important in agricultural terms and any future planning application would need to justify its loss. None the less, its loss to agriculture from this development is not considered significant in EIA terms to warrant scoping into any future EIA

The National Landscape partnership considers that this matter should be scoped in and I would draw your attention to their advice in Appendix 13.

Flood Risk - Scoped Out

You have scoped this issue out of your EIA. You are advised to consider the responses received from

Lead Local Flooding Authority and the Environment Agency in the Appendices.

The Wiltshire Council 2024 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has indicated that the site is located within Flood Zone 1. The north-eastern portion of the site is adjacent to a small area indicated to be at risk of flooding from surface water from the 1 in 30 year extent.

Your report explains that Amazi Consulting will undertake a Flood Risk Assessment and submit a Drainage Strategy in support of the planning application. Given the nature of development, which does not require large extents of non-permeable development or dug foundations, flood risk has been 'scoped out' of the ES.

Contamination and the Water Environment: Scoped In

As the site is in agricultural use, it is unlikely that any activities to have occurred on the site or immediate surrounds which could have led to significant ground contamination. There may be some localised contamination associated with the use of farm vehicles, fertilisers and herbicides. However, the site is generally considered to present a low risk of contamination in its current use.

However, the Environment Agency note that the Site Location Plan (Ref: 00267-05-SiteLocation) includes areas which are located on Source Protection Zone 3, which is a groundwater resource that is particularly sensitive to contamination. The EA recommend that SPZs and their protection should be scoped in to the EIA, avoiding potentially contaminative development in these areas. Please refer to the EA comments in the Appendix.

Therefore, the impact on water resources should be scoped in the EIA and I would draw your attention to the detailed advice provided by the LLFA and the EA for compiling documents to support a planning application, set out in the Appendices.

Daylight, Sunlight Overshadowing and Solar Glint and Glare: Scoped In

Your report suggests that Pager Power will undertake a glint and glare assessment of the proposed array. Given the scale of the array and siting, set back from the closest road (A303) and the intervening topography and vegetation, you don't expect glint and glare to give rise to significant environmental effects to road users, air traffic or residential receptors. Accordingly glint and glare as a topic is proposed to be 'scoped out' of the ES.

However, the site is within the National Landscape and the National Landscape Partnership and Landscape team may have a view on likely significant impacts from glint and glare, and the LPA may agree with this assessment. Comments from these teams will be sent in due course with further conclusions if necessary.

Furthermore, I would draw your attention to the initial and updated responses from National Highways in the Appendix, which state:

A glint and glare assessment will need to be provided which should consider any potential impacts on trunk road users. National Highways will not accept any glint or glare impacts on highways safety grounds and all necessary screening mitigation will need to be provided by the developer, wholly within the development site. The developer cannot rely on National Highways estate to provide any screening

mitigation for their development, in accordance with DfT Circular 01/2022.

Thank you for providing National Highways with the opportunity to comment on further information in respect of scoping for a proposed solar array north of the A303 at Chicklade. Specifically, we have considered the Solar PV Glint and Glare Study prepared by Pager Power and dated January 2026.

Whilst it is noted that boundary screening is to be provided by the applicant to mitigate impacts on receptors 13-24, we remain concerned about the potential for impacts on A303 users between receptors 1-5. The applicant is placing reliance for screening mitigation on vegetation which is located on land outside of the applicant's control which introduces a risk that the vegetation may not remain in place or be maintained to provide a screening function for the development.

We will therefore expect the application to include proposals to provide sufficient screening within the development site, or by a site boundary feature, to mitigate the identified impact on the A303.

For these reasons, the LPA currently considers that this matter should be scoped in.

Major Accidents and Disasters: Scoped Out

It is noted that Major Accidents and disasters have been scoped out of the potential EIA clearly there is always a risk that an accident or Natural Disaster could occur at the site but given its positioning and topography it is considered that any risk is likely to be minimal and can be mitigated through the design of the development. The local authority agrees with the view that major accidents and disasters associated with the development can be appropriately scoped out of the EIA.

Socio-economics, Health and Population – Scoped Out

Direct and indirect temporary jobs would be created associated with construction of the solar array, including opportunities for apprentices, graduates and other trainees during both the construction and operational phase. The purpose of the proposed solar array is to generate renewable energy, reducing reliance upon fossil fuels. Whilst it is anticipated that there will be positive effects associated with the proposal in relation to socio-economics, health and population, these are not considered significant and the LPA agrees that this can be scoped out from the ES.

Traffic and Transport – Scoped Out

The site access for this is over a Public Bridleway known as CHIC5. The bridleway is recorded with a minimum width of 2 metres. It should be noted that the Council are in receipt of an application to modify the definitive map for this path and record it as a Byway open to all traffic with a width of 40 metres.

Please note the specific queries in the Appendix from the Rights of Way team

The planning application for the proposed development would be supported by an Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). The principal aim of the CTMP will be to ensure that the construction works are organised and delivered in a manner that safeguards the highway impact, highway safety and amenity of the area surrounding the construction works. Once operational, there will be no material vehicular movements associated with the clearing and maintenance of the array, noting the proximity to the A-Road network and existing field access.

The local planning authority accepts that the impact of traffic from this development is unlikely to create significant effects and may be scoped out of the EIA. Please note the comments of the Local Highway Authority, Rights of Way and National Highways in the Appendices.

Pollution and Nuisance: Scoped Out

Please note the comments provided by Public Protection colleagues here, as they have raised the issue of noise. A Noise Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken and a report provided to demonstrate that the installation of inverters at this location will not result in any adverse impact on the nearest noise-sensitive receptors. This is an important planning consideration that will be assessed in any planning application. Furthermore, assessment will require information from you and the comments from colleagues in environmental protection will assist you further in determining how to proceed. These focus around managing noise during the construction and operational phases.

It is not considered that the effects of these matters on human health are of such significance that they need to be scoped into the EIA and as such can be excluded from it as a specific topic.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the scoping process, the relevant planning policies and legislation outlined in this report, the applicant should ensure that the EIA comprehensively addresses the key environmental issues already identified within their EIA Scoping Report. It is noted that these are preliminary findings and as such hopefully these comments and the consultation responses appended below will help further inform the production of the Environmental Statement.

It is hoped that this Scoping Opinion provides guidance to help you ensure that the EIA is robust and adequately covers all areas of likely significant environmental concern. The LPA will expect to receive a detailed EIA in due course, addressing these issues and incorporating any feedback received from the consultees.

Yours faithfully

Head of Development Management

APPENDICES Ctd....

APPENDIX 1 – ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

EIA SCOPING OPINION 3MW SOLAR ARRAY AND ANCILLARY DEVELOPMENT

LAND NORTH OF THE A303, CHICKLADE, SALISBURY

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the above EIA scoping opinion request.

Environment Agency Position

We have reviewed the submitted Scoping Report (DKR Ref: 02482). The following comments, made regarding Source Protection Zones, the red line boundary, and future development, will help ensure that the environmental statement addresses the key environmental issues within our remit for this proposed development.

Source Protection Zones (SPZs)

The Site Location Plan (Ref: 00267-05-SiteLocation) includes areas which are located on a Source Protection Zone 3 which is a groundwater resource particularly sensitive to contamination. SPZs and their protection should be scoped into the EIA, avoiding potentially contaminative development in these areas. Information on the designations and implications can be found in our Groundwater Protection guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>.

Red Line Boundary

The Site Location Plan (Ref: 00267-05-SiteLocation) submitted shows a red line boundary around an agricultural field, however, there is no boundary extension showing a connection for the solar array to the main grid or confirmation of where the energy will be used. This will need to be confirmed as part of any planning application.

Future Development

The Planning Layout (Ref: 00267-02-PlanningLayout) drawing for the solar array shows the panels will only take up a third of the site. If further development for the rest of the site within the red line boundary were to take place in the future, we would need to be consulted again.

The EIA Scoping Report (DKR Ref: 02482) does not include mention of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), however, if energy storage were to be considered in future development of the site, then we would advise the following:

- Applicants are encouraged to engage with Local Fire & Rescue Services to ensure issues of siting and location of BESS are dealt with before applications are made. Ideally this should be done before submitting a planning application.
- LPAs are encouraged to engage with Local Fire & Rescue Services and to refer to guidance produced by the National Fire Chiefs Council for consideration when determining applications.
- Applicants will also need to comply with relevant Building Regulations in Part B. They require applicants to provide suitable access for the fire service.

CTD....

Applicants should also refer to guidance published by The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: [Health and safety in grid scale electrical energy storage systems](#), which provides guidance on a number of topics related to health and safety including on 'Design and planning' that provides guidance on battery technology, site selection, site layout and emergency planning. It also includes a section on 'Decommissioning and end of life', including dealing with batteries that have come to the end of their use in the BESS.

Closing

Our advice and comments are based on the information available to us at the time of the EIA scoping opinion request. Regarding any further enquiries and/or information submitted relating to the proposed development, our position may change if there have been changes to environmental risk, evidence or legislation and/or to planning policy and guidance.

Should you require any additional information, or wish to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Jay Shaw (on behalf of Lindsay Ffello)
Sustainable Places - Graduate Trainee

Phone 02080 261949

Email wx.sp@environment-agency.gov.uk

Ctd....

APPENDIX 2 – NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

National Highways and Environmental Impact Assessment Reports

Request for a formal Scoping Opinion from the LPA under Part 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

PL/2025/09603: Scoping for 3mw solar array – land north of the A303, Chicklade, Salisbury, SP3 5SS

Thank you for inviting National Highways (previously operating as the Highways Agency and Highways England) to provide comments on the above request for a scoping opinion. As a Statutory Consultee we seek to act as a proactive partner and therefore welcome pre-application discussion. This includes the opportunity to provide advice on the scope of any Environmental Statement pursuant to the procedures set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017, which also identifies us as a statutory party.

Whilst we have no view on whether the above development meets the requirements for an Environmental Statement, we offer comments on the assessment of traffic impacts that we would expect to accompany any submission, as well as potential operational asset impacts that will require consideration by the applicant. Our comments relate to matters arising from our responsibilities to manage and maintain the strategic road network (SRN) which in this case comprises the A303 trunk road. Comments relating to the local road network should be sought from the appropriate Local Highway Authority.

The Proposals

The proposed development comprises a 12 hectare agricultural field with the solar panels located within the south portion comprising around 3.4 hectares. The Site is located approximately 120m to the north of the A303 and 900m to the west of Chicklade. The site is currently accessed directly from the A303 via a track which also serves a small number of residential and commercial properties as well as agricultural land. The A303 in this location is single carriageway and subject to the national speed limit.

The proposed 3MW solar array and ancillary development will comprise frame mounted photovoltaic panels, a transformer station, substation and perimeter fencing and hedgerow planting. It is proposed to connect to the National Grid via existing power lines which cross the southern portion of the proposed development site or run parallel to the western boundary. It is therefore understood that no cable crossing of the A303 will be required to form a grid connection.

It is acknowledged that the primary traffic impacts will occur during the construction phase of development and National Highways will need to be satisfied that safe and suitable access can be provided.

We have therefore set out below both the general and specific areas of concern that National Highways would expect to see considered as part of any Environmental Statement submission.

General aspects to be addressed

- An assessment of transport related impacts of the proposal should be carried out and reported as described in current national planning practice guidance.
- ♣ Environmental impacts arising from any disruption during construction, traffic volume, composition or routing change and transport infrastructure modification should be fully assessed and reported, along with the environmental impact of the road network upon the development itself.
- ♣ Adverse changes to noise and air quality should be considered, including in relation to compliance with the European air quality Limit Values and/or Local Authority designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and World Health Organisation (WHO) criteria.

Location specific considerations

- The assessment of traffic impacts accompanying the application should consider the operation of the SRN in

line with national planning practice guidance and DfT Circular 01/2022 The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development. Where proposals result in a severe congestion or unacceptable safety impact, mitigation will be required in line with current policy.

- A construction traffic management plan will be required for our approval and acceptance which will need to consider construction vehicle routing and the adequacy of the existing site access arrangements to accommodate construction vehicle movements. The plan will need to consider any temporary improvements or mitigation measures necessary, accompanied by vehicle swept path plans.
- A glint and glare assessment will need to be provided which should consider any potential impacts on trunk road users. National Highways will not accept any glint or glare impacts on highways safety grounds and all necessary screening mitigation will need to be provided by the developer, wholly within the development site. The developer cannot rely on National Highways estate to provide any screening mitigation for their development, in accordance with DfT Circular 01/2022.
- The effects of the proposed development should be assessed cumulatively with other schemes, including committed development in the area.

These comments are only advisory as the responsibility for determining the scope and form of any EIA Report rests with the Planning Authority. Our comments are made on the basis of the information available to us at this time, and are made without prejudice to future advice and/or recommendations.

Kind regards

Gaynor Gallacher

South West Operations – Assistant Spatial Planner (Highways Development Management)
National Highways | Ash House | Falcon Road, Sowton Ind. Estate | Exeter | EX2 7LB

Thank you for providing National Highways with the opportunity to comment on further information in respect of scoping for a proposed solar array north of the A303 at Chicklade. Specifically, we have considered the Solar PV Glint and Glare Study prepared by Pager Power and dated January 2026.

This has been prepared in response to our scoping comments dated 10 December 2025 which stated that “A glint and glare assessment will need to be provided which should consider any potential impacts on trunk road users. National Highways will not accept any glint or glare impacts on highways safety grounds and all necessary screening mitigation will need to be provided by the developer, wholly within the development site. The developer cannot rely on National Highways estate to provide any screening mitigation for their development, in accordance with DfT Circular 01/2022.” Our previous response is provided again below for completeness and ease of reference.

The Study identifies two sections of the A303 where solar reflections are geometrically possible within a road users primary field of vision. With regards receptors 1-5, the Study considers that existing vegetation would obstruct views such that there should be no impact on road users in practice. With regards receptors 13-24, any screening that may be provided by existing vegetation will be supplemented by proposed vegetation along the east and south-east boundary of the site (shown edged in white on Figure 8 of the Study), such that views are unlikely to occur in practice.

Whilst it is noted that boundary screening is to be provided by the applicant to mitigate impacts on receptors 13-24, we remain concerned about the potential for impacts on A303 users between receptors 1-5. The applicant is placing reliance for screening mitigation on vegetation which is located on land outside of the applicant's control which introduces a risk that the vegetation may not remain in place or be maintained to provide a screening function for the development.

We will therefore expect the application to include proposals to provide sufficient screening within the development site, or by a site boundary feature, to mitigate the identified impact on the A303.

APPENDIX 3 – HIGHWAYS

I note the EIA scoping opinion request. In terms of the local highway network managed by this Authority, I do not believe that an EIA would be required for highway impacts. However, the primary means of vehicular access to the site is from the A303T and thus recommend that you take guidance from National Highways on the impact to this route. Additionally, within the site, traffic routing is likely to use a public rights of way and I thus recommend that you consult the Council's Rights of Way Team directly.

APPENDIX 4 – CONSERVATION

I see no reason to disagree with the conclusion regarding the exclusion of built heritage from the ES. The Scoping Report doesn't appear to consider the concept of non-designated heritage assets, but as far as I can tell from modern and historic mapping there is nothing within or immediately adjacent to the site that could be affected. Knoyle Down Farm is of some historic interest and close to the west, but there would be no intervisibility. Indeed, there seem to be very few potential viewpoints other than the public footpaths/bridleways.

APPENDIX 5 – PUBLIC PROTECTION

I write regarding the request for a formal Scoping Opinion under Part 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 – 3MW solar array and ancillary development at Chicklade.

Upon submission of a full application, this department would expect a Noise Impact Assessment to be undertaken and a report provided to demonstrate that the installation of inverters at this location will not result in any adverse impact on the nearest noise-sensitive receptors.

APPENDIX 6 – RIGHTS OF WAY

The site access for this is over a Public Bridleway known as CHIC5. The bridleway is recorded with a minimum width of 2 metres. It should be noted that we are in receipt of an application to modify the definitive map for this path and record it as a Byway open to all traffic with a width of 40 metres.

I know these comments will not be relevant for the screening opinion but I thought early warning might help the applicant.

How will vehicles accessing the site and turning in from the A303 deal with meeting a user of the PROW for instance an equestrian user. It would make crossing the A303 a little more challenging for users of the PROW, it maybe that a banksman will be required to assist with crossing the A303 and allowing vehicles to leave the A303 and access the development. What surfacing will be used on the PROW from the A303 to the entrance into the site? The applicant is likely to require a surface of a higher standard than the grass surface that currently exists. All gates on CHIC5 between the A303 and the site entrance will need to be removed unless they are required for the control of livestock or are authorised under section 66 of the Highways act 1980 for the safeguarding of users of the PROW. All gates into the solar farm will need to open into the site rather than out on to the bridleway. The site entrance from CHIC5 should be constructed so that a suitable visibility splay is available to allow vehicles to exit the site out onto CHIC5.

APPENDIX 7 - ECOLOGY

LAND NORTH OF THE A303, CHICKLADE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCOPING REPORT DECEMBER 2025 – DKR Rural Planning

Thank you for inviting us to review the above Scoping Report in relation to Land north of the A303, Chicklade, which we have assessed against OS maps and aerial photographs of the site and surrounding area, together with GIS layers of statutory and non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation and existing records of protected species.

The site is located to the east of Chicklade and to the north of the A303 and consists of an arable field bound by hedgerows and trees. The site is surrounded by agricultural land and there are residential properties to the south of the site.

The proposals consist of the erection of a 3MW solar array and ancillary development consisting of frame mounted photovoltaic panels, transformer station, substation, permitter fence and proposed hedgerow planting, on a site extending to 3.4ha, within a wider 12ha field.

The site is not covered by any statutory nature conservation designations however it is located within three 6km Barbastelle SAC parcel buffers associated with the Chilmark Quarries SAC. The site consists of an arable field and supports some habitats of ecological value to local wildlife, contributing to habitat connectivity with the wider landscape area, providing function for commuting and foraging by a range of species, via hedgerows with trees and grass margins. Records within the surrounding area include bats, badgers and birds including barn owl records.

Hedges are Natural England Priority Habitats, of high biodiversity value and are likely to support protected and notable species. Hedges are also recognised for their function as important corridors essential for species movement and maintenance of population status. Records indicate that there are no other known areas of priority habitat (listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006) within the site. There is an area of deciduous woodland adjacent to the south western corner of the site and there are several areas of deciduous woodland and lowland calcareous woodland priority habitat within 1km of the site.

An EIA Screening Opinion has not been requested as the applicants team considers the development to constitute EIA development and are therefore preparing an Environmental Statement to support the planning application.

The EIA Scoping Report is proposing to scope in the positive effects of achieving Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as it considers the positive benefits of BNG are likely to be significant. Under the Environment Act 2021 an application on this site would be required to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG and must be accompanied by a completed statutory metric calculation (including condition assessment sheets and maps) using the current version of the Natural England Biodiversity Metric.

The EIA Scoping Report is proposing to scope out further ecological assessments as significant impacts are not considered likely. An Extended UK Habitat Survey and any identified further species surveys are proposed.

Overall, we agree with the proposals as set out in section 6, however please see comments below.

The site is located within three 6km Barbastelle SAC parcel buffers associated with the Chilmark Quarries SAC therefore bat surveys will be required to identify key flight routes and to ensure mitigation identified within the application is sufficient and appropriate. An application on this site would also be subject to an Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Section 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended, which must be carried out by the Competent Authority (the LPA) to determine the potential significant effects and the suitability of any measures proposed to avoid or mitigate those effects.

An application on this site should follow the ecological advice in the Solar PV Farms and Ecology: Developer Advice Note, 2021, which can be found at the following link:

[SolarPVFarmEcologyAdviceNoteJuly2021.pdf](#).

Further information can be found here:

[Biodiversity and development - Wiltshire Council](#)

APPENDIX 8 – ARCHAEOLOGY

Thank you for consulting Wiltshire Council's Archaeology Service regarding this Scoping Opinion following a screening opinion. Please note that my comments relate solely to the buried archaeological heritage and the historic built environment is a matter for your Conservation Officer.

The red line boundary of this proposal covers a large tranche of land, although it is noted that the proposed solar array will only occupy a portion of this area but, at 3.4ha, it is still a large area of previously undeveloped farmland.

The accompanying 'Scoping Report' notes the designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the proposed solar array but does not include the undesignated heritage assets shown on Wiltshire's Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER shows traces of an ancient field system within the site area and identified as soil and crop marks on aerial photographs of the 1970s. These are just one of several ancient field systems recorded on the chalk downland around and above Chicklade. Based on evidence elsewhere, these ancient field systems may date from as early as the Bronze Age (2,000 – 800 BC) and been re-used in the Iron Age and Roman periods. The farmsteads and burial grounds of the farmers that created and used these ancient fields will lie within these field systems and largely await discovery.

The presence, character and significance of buried archaeological remains within the site that will be harmed by proposed development is therefore currently not known. It is therefore appropriate that the 'Scoping Report' notes that an archaeological desk-based assessment will be prepared in support of this proposal. The desk assessment should be informed by a non-intrusive geophysical survey of the area of the proposed solar array. This will go some way to establishing the likely archaeological content of the site and the likely harm that the proposal will have upon buried archaeological remains.

Without this information, it is not possible at this stage to understand the likely impact of the proposed development on the buried archaeological heritage and therefore the harm that it may cause. It is therefore premature for archaeology to be scoped out of the environmental assessment as there is currently insufficient information to make that judgement.

The results of the geophysical survey will determine if any further field survey would be appropriate. These archaeological surveys will enable an authoritative understanding of the archaeology of the site to be established, the impacts of the proposed development upon it, any archaeological constraints to development, and the mitigation measures that might be required to remove or ameliorate the harm.

I trust that this is satisfactory. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this further or require any further information.

Best wishes,

Roland J C Smith
Assistant County Archaeologist

Thank you for sending me further documentation in relation to this Scoping Opinion following a screening opinion. The applicant has now submitted an archaeological desk-based assessment report (BWB, January 2026) and a geophysical survey report (Magnitude Surveys, January 2026).

The desk-based report assesses the archaeological potential of the site of the solar array and associated works as low and this is corroborated by the results of the geophysical survey, which only identified a few anomalies that might indicate the presence of buried remains. While geophysical survey cannot authoritatively prove a negative, I am satisfied, based on this information, that the buried archaeological heritage can be scoped out of any environmental impact assessment. The need for any further archaeological investigation and mitigation can be considered once full details of the proposal become available.

APPENDIX 9 – DRAINAGE

To:	Development Management	From:	AtkinsRéalis (Drainage Team)
Planning App Ref:	PL/2025/09603		
Service Ref:	Drainage		
Date:	15/01/2026		

PROPOSAL

Request for a formal Scoping Opinion under Part 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 – 3MW solar array and ancillary development

SITE LOCATION

Land north of the A303, Chicklade, Salisbury, SP3 5SS.

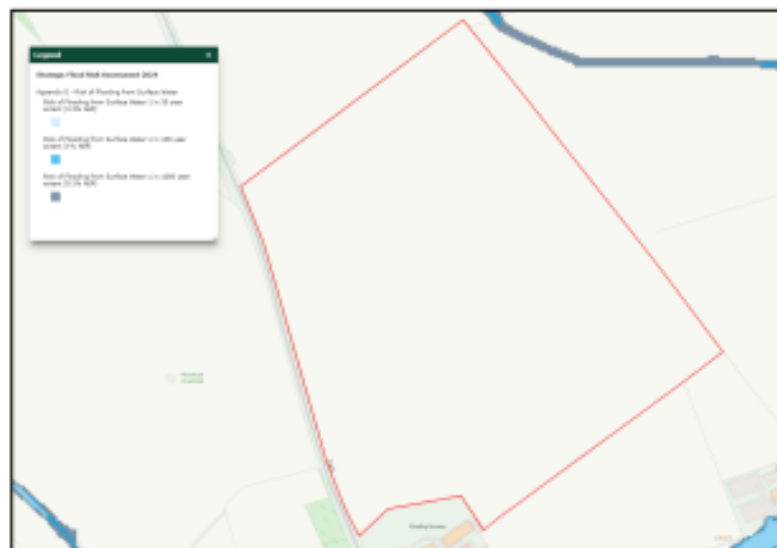
APPLICATION DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- Site Location Plan (Drawing no. 00267-05-SiteLocation; dated 18/11/2025).
- Scoping Report, produced by DKR Rural Planning (Ref. 02482; dated December 2025).
- Planning Layout (Drawing no. 00267-02-PlanningLayout; dated 18/11/2025).
- Array Sections (Drawing no. 00267-03-ArraySections; dated 18/11/2025).
- Fence Sections (Drawing no. 00267-04-FenceSections; dated 18/11/2025).

We would expect the drainage specific inputs will largely be covered off through the FRA and Drainage Strategy for the development (as stated in the provided Scoping Report (pg. 21)). As part of those, we would expect to see the following information included:

SCOPING OPINION: FLOOD RISK

The Wiltshire Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, [SFRA Data Explorer](#), has indicated that the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is not in an area indicated to be subject to surface water flooding. The north-eastern portion of the site is adjacent to a small area indicated to be at risk of flooding from surface water from the 1 in 30 year extent.



The SFRA Data Explorer does not indicate that the site is at risk of groundwater flooding.

Based on BGS Mapping, the site is indicated to be predominantly underlain by freely-draining shallow lime-rich over chalk or limestone (Soilscape 3), with a small portion of the north-west of the site underlain by freely-draining slightly acidic loamy soils (Soilscape 6). This indicates that infiltration is likely to be a feasible means of discharge on the site; however, the applicant will still be required to carry out appropriate Ground Investigations, including soakaway testing in accordance with BRE365, supporting detailed desk studies and carry out groundwater level monitoring that accounts for seasonal variation.

Scoping Advice: Drainage Strategy / Drainage Design

The applicant should note that in all instances the preference should be to utilise blue-green SuDS which provide multi-faceted benefits to the site (in terms of water quantity, quality, amenity and biodiversity); for example, for attenuation features preference should be given to use of swales / ponds / detention basins (if technically feasible) instead of attenuation tanks. The applicant should adopt a holistic approach to planning the site, and sufficient space for SuDS features should be provided at an early stage in order to fulfil the requirements of NPPF Paragraph 169; the LLFA will not accept statements that there is insufficient space for SuDS or that SuDS have not been utilised due to cost.

Any proposals should be designed in accordance with the Non-statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems and the latest SuDS Manual (C753) and the National Standards for SuDS.

The LLFA would consider this to be a greenfield site for the purposes of planning.

We acknowledge that Solar Farms are often considered as "Essential Infrastructure" however that does not excuse the need for a Flood Risk Assessment to be provided (as per any major development or development at risk of flooding from any source). Specifically, within the FRA for a Solar Farm the following must be included:

- Comprehensive Evaluation: Assess flood risks from rivers (fluvial), overland storm rainfall runoff (pluvial), groundwater, field drainage, and sewers.
- Hydraulic Modelling to delineate flooding extents for different return periods.
- Solar Panel Runoff: Recognize that solar panels increase runoff and erosion. Manage stormwater runoff from the entire development area, not just associated infrastructure.

All solar farm applications must include a detailed drainage strategy. The following principles of the site's layout which may impact on Drainage/Flood Risk and therefore must be included and commented on within the strategy:

- Panel Arrangement: Arrange solar panel rows parallel to site contours to minimise flow channels and soil erosion.
- Flood Zone Precautions: Ensure all panels and additional items are located above the maximum predicted flood depth plus a freeboard (0.6m for flood zones 2 and 3, 0.3m for surface water flooding areas).

The proposed drainage strategy should focus on the following key areas:

- Infiltration: Preferred method for managing surface water runoff is by a combination of interception storage and formal infiltration-based features. These will need to be accompanied by site-specific Ground Investigations and Infiltration Testing in compliance with BRE385.
- Vegetation Management: The applicant shall outline how they will ensure the ground beneath solar panels is sufficiently vegetated and maintained, to ensure that channelisation and an increase in runoff does not occur. It must be noted that vegetation may not establish as well under the panels (due to the shade), and that runoff from the panels will likely be concentrated at the drip-edge.
- Bunds and Infiltration Strips: Install where necessary based on soil type and slope angle to manage overland flow routes.
- Swales: Incorporate swales to intercept and store runoff before it enters downstream watercourses.

The applicant should note the EA's updated climate change guidance (dated [27 May 2022](#)) when preparing the Flood Risk Assessment / Drainage Strategy.

The surface water drainage strategy should be submitted as part of future planning applications and should include/demonstrate the following in accordance with the [National Standards for SuDS](#):

Standard 1: runoff destinations

- Existing greenfield runoff rates for the site.
- Post development runoff rates.
- The strategy mimics the existing drainage characteristics of the site by retaining and utilising any existing drainage features.
- Evidence that the [surface water disposal hierarchy](#) has been applied and how all other options have been exhausted.
- If infiltration is proposed, it is implemented in manner that does not create an offsite impact, particularly if there are reports of groundwater flooding in the area.
- Consent for any outfalls from the proposed drainage systems into a public sewer or other drainage system not owned by the applicant.
- Land drainage consent is required if a development proposes to discharge flow into an ordinary watercourse or carry out work within 8m of an ordinary watercourse.

Standard 2: interception

- The first 5mm of rainfall from the majority of rainfall events will be managed by interception features and will not result in runoff from the site to surface water or piped systems.
- SuDS source control measures to manage water quantity and maintain water quality will be implemented wherever possible, and throughout the management train, so the development is not reliant upon large attenuation features close to the points of discharge.

Standard 3: management of extreme rainfall and flooding

- A detailed topographical survey that clearly identifies the existing drainage features on the site as well as level contours to show overland flow routes.
- Existing flood flow routes through the site have been maintained or where they will be affected, adequate measures to intercept and safely control flows through the site have been provided to ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
- Exceedance routes that minimise the risks to people and property.
- Evidence that the finished floor levels above the maximum predicted 100-year flood level or if no flooding is predicted, at a sufficient height above the SW drainage cover levels.
- The drainage strategy does not increase flood risk as a result of catchment transfer.
- All proposed drainage features are outside flood zones 2 and 3 and where they are adjacent to an ordinary watercourse, they are not located within the EA surface water flood maps. Where drainage features are located adjacent to flood zones 2 and 3, they must be above the 1 in 100 year plus climate change flood level. This information can be provided by the EA.
- Calculations and drawings for the drainage system design showing designated holding areas and conveyance routes based on no flooding on site for a 1 in 30 year plus climate change rainfall event.
- Calculations and drawings for the drainage system design showing designated holding areas and conveyance routes based on no flooding on site for a 1 in 100 year plus climate change rainfall event in respect to a building (including basement) or utility plant susceptible to water within the development.
- If attenuation tanks are proposed that an allowance for reduced attenuation volume due to silt ingress (as per Section 21.9.9 of the SuDS Manual CIRIA C753).

Standard 4: water quality

- SuDS have been selected to provide a wide range of benefits, including water quality.
- Calculations which demonstrate that the proposed drainage design provides a sufficient level of water treatment.

Standard 5: amenity

- SuDS have been selected to provide a wide range of benefits, including amenity.

Standard 6: biodiversity

- SuDS have been selected to provide a wide range of benefits, including biodiversity.

Standard 7: design of drainage for construction, operation, maintenance, decommissioning and structural integrity

- A clearly labelled drainage layout plan showing the pipe networks and any attenuation ponds. The plan should show any pipe node numbers referred to within the drainage calculations.
- A plan showing the cross sections and design of any attenuation pond and its components.
- Geotechnical factual and interpretive reports, including infiltration tests in accordance with British Research Establishment (BRE) Digest 385 – Soakaway Design.
- Groundwater level monitoring (taking into account seasonal variations).
- The applicant is referred to Wiltshire Council's Surface Water Soakaway Guidance for the standards that must be met for planning approval and adoption of infiltration drainage features.
- Adequate measures during construction to control pollution to existing watercourses and groundwater.
- Details of how the proposed and existing drainage features on the site will be maintained and managed after completion with confirmation from the relevant authority that they will adopt any systems that are being offered for adoption.

If access to the site is predicted to flood, an emergency plan must be agreed with Wiltshire Council. Guidance on the preparation of an emergency plan can be found [here](#).

Scoping Advice: Construction Phase Plan

The applicant will need to specifically outline how they will manage the construction phase to both limit vegetation disturbance and prevent compaction of the soils (due to both being documented causes of increased runoff from solar farms). We would expect specific details provided on how the construction will:

- **Minimise Disturbance:** Limit vegetation disturbance and re-vegetate promptly after construction.
- **Prevent Soil Compaction:** Restrict vehicular movements to designated access tracks and mitigate soil compaction through methods like chisel ploughing.
- **Establish a Construction Phase Maintenance Plan:** Conduct regular inspections to ensure vegetation cover is adequate and no flow channels are generated. Remedial work should be carried out promptly if necessary.
- **Prevent any temporary increase in flood risk during the construction phase through phasing and provision of temporary drainage solutions.**

Scoping Advice: Monitoring Plan

As part of the development of solar farms in Wiltshire, we will expect owners to monitor and maintain their sites throughout the full life (including full restoration back to greenfield conditions at the end of the design life) such that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. We would expect the applicant to detail as part of their submission their plans for:

- **Regular Inspections:** Conduct regular inspections to ensure compliance with drainage and land management strategies.
- **Routine and ad-hoc maintenance:** Details of what maintenance activities will be completed, frequency of activities, and responsible parties.
- **Reporting:** We request developers to submit periodic reports on the effectiveness of flood risk management measures; both to ensure compliance with the strategies agreed and to facilitate greater learning of long-term performance of solar farms in managing local flood risk.

Context

In planning terms, flood risk refers to the potential for development to increase the likelihood or severity of flooding on-site or elsewhere, while drainage considerations relate to the capacity of the site and surrounding infrastructure to manage surface water runoff in a sustainable and effective manner.

The local planning authority must be satisfied that the proposed development will not increase flood risk, either on-site or elsewhere, and that surface water will be managed in a sustainable and coordinated manner.

Where necessary, planning conditions or legal agreements may be used to secure the implementation, maintenance, and monitoring of SuDS and other drainage infrastructure.

INFORMATIVES

Albeit not included as part of the application, the following details are included as additional information regarding drainage strategy requirements for Battery Storage Sites:

- **Flood Risk –** Battery Storage should be sequentially located outside of areas at High Risk of Surface Water Flooding, and Fluvial Flood Zones 2 and 3. Where this is not possible the applicant must demonstrate how the battery storage will be adequately protected from flooding.
- **Surface Water Runoff Management –** Runoff would need to be managed in accordance with Statutory Guidance and Wiltshire Council's other policies in relation to Discharge Rate Management and Control.
- **Fire suppression –** The applicant must detail how potentially contaminated fire suppression flows / runoff will be captured, stored, tested and ultimately disposed of such that there is not an increased flood or pollution risk to sensitive receptors.

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The table below stipulates the information typically required at each application stage. Provision of the correct information will expedite the processing of applications by the drainage team.

Pre-app	Outline	Full	Reserved matters	Discharge of conditions	Document to be submitted
✓	✓	✓			Flood Risk Assessment / Statement
✓	✓	✓			Drainage Strategy / Statement & sketch layout plan
	✓				Preliminary layout drawings
	✓				Preliminary "Outline" hydraulic calculations
	✓				Preliminary landscape proposals
	✓				Ground investigation report (for infiltration)
	✓	✓			Evidence of third party agreement for discharge to their system (in principle/ consent to discharge)
		✓		✓	Maintenance program and on-going maintenance responsibilities
		✓	✓		Detailed development layout
		✓	✓	✓	Detailed flood & drainage design drawings
		✓	✓	✓	Full Structural, hydraulic & ground investigations
		✓	✓	✓	Geotechnical factual and interpretive reports, including infiltration results
		✓	✓	✓	Evidence of measures to prevent pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface waters
		✓	✓	✓	Drawings showing conveyance routes for flows exceeding the 1 in 100 year plus climate change
		✓	✓	✓	Detailed landscaping details
		✓	✓	✓	Discharge agreements (temporary and permanent)
		✓	✓	✓	Development Management & Construction Phasing Plan

APPENDIX 10 – NATURAL ENGLAND

Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping consultation (Regulation 15 (4) of the Town and Country Planning EIA Regulations 2017): Request for a formal Scoping Opinion under Part 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 – 3MW solar array and ancillary development

Location: Land north of the A303, Chicklade, Salisbury, SP3 5SS

Thank you for seeking our advice on the scope of the Environmental Statement (ES) in the consultation dated 09 December 2025, received on 09 December 2025.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

A robust assessment of environmental impacts and opportunities based on relevant and up to date environmental information should be undertaken prior to a decision on whether to grant planning permission. Annex A to this letter provides Natural England's advice on the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed development.

Further guidance is set out in Planning Practice Guidance on [environmental assessment, natural environment and climate change](#).

Should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment then, in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Natural England should be consulted again.

Please note that Natural England must be consulted on Environmental Statements.

Please send any new consultations or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Samuel Norton
Consultations Team

CTD...

Annex A – Natural England Advice on EIA Scoping

General Principles

[Schedule 4](#) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, sets out the information that should be included in an Environmental Statement (ES) to assess impacts on the natural environment. This includes:

- A description of the development – including physical characteristics and the full land use requirements of the site during construction and operational phases
- Expected residues and emissions (water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation etc.) resulting from the operation of the proposed development
- An assessment of alternatives and clear reasoning as to why the preferred option has been chosen
- A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development including biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land, including land take, soil, water, air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation, cultural heritage and landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors
- A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment – this should cover direct effects but also any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium, and long term, permanent and temporary, positive, and negative effects. Effects should relate to the existence of the development, the use of natural resources (in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity) and the emissions from pollutants. This should also include a description of the forecasting methods to predict the likely effects on the environment
- A description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment
- A non-technical summary of the information
- An indication of any difficulties (technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered by the applicant in compiling the required information

Further guidance is set out in Planning Practice Guidance on [environmental assessment](#) and [natural environment](#).

Cumulative and in-combination effects

The ES should fully consider the implications of the whole development proposal. This should include an assessment of all supporting infrastructure.

An impact assessment should identify, describe, and evaluate the effects that are likely to result from the project in combination with other projects and activities that are being, have been or will be carried out. The following types of projects should be included in such an assessment (subject to available information):

- a. existing completed projects;
- b. approved but uncompleted projects;
- c. ongoing activities;
- d. plans or projects for which an application has been made and which are under consideration by the consenting authorities; and
- e. plans and projects which are reasonably foreseeable, i.e. projects for which an application has not yet been submitted, but which are likely to progress before completion of the development and for which sufficient information is available to assess the likelihood of cumulative and in-combination effects.

Environmental data

Natural England is required to make available information it holds where requested to do so.

National datasets held by Natural England are available at <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/data/default.aspx>.

Detailed information on the natural environment is available at www.magic.gov.uk.

Natural England's SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a GIS dataset which can be used to help identify the potential for the development to impact on a SSSI. The dataset and user guidance can be accessed from the [Natural England Open Data Geoportal](#).

Natural England does not hold local information on local sites, local landscape character, priority habitats and species or protected species. Local environmental data should be obtained from the appropriate local bodies. This may include the local environmental records centre, the local wildlife trust, local geo-conservation group or other recording society.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

General principles

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (paragraphs 192-196) sets out how to take account of biodiversity and geodiversity interests in planning decisions. Further guidance is set out in Planning Practice Guidance on the [natural environment](#).

The potential impact of the proposal upon sites and features of nature conservation interest and opportunities for nature recovery and biodiversity net gain should be included in the assessment.

Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) is the process of identifying, quantifying, and evaluating the potential impacts of defined actions on ecosystems or their components. EclA may be carried out as part of the EIA process or to support other forms of environmental assessment or appraisal. [Guidelines](#) have been developed by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

Local planning authorities have a [duty](#) to conserve and enhance biodiversity as part of their decision making. Conserving biodiversity can include habitat restoration or enhancement. Further information is available [here](#).

Designated nature conservation sites

International and European sites

The development site is within or may impact on the following European/internationally designated nature conservation site(s):

- Chilmark Quarries Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Mottisfont Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

European site conservation objectives are available at <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/6490068894089216>

The ES should thoroughly assess the potential for the proposal to affect nationally and internationally designated sites of nature conservation importance, including marine sites where relevant. European sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) fall within the scope of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations').

In addition paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that potential SPAs, possible SAC, listed or proposed Ramsar sites, and any site identified or required as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitat (European) sites, potential SPAs, possible SACs and listed or proposed Ramsar sites have the same protection as classified sites (NB. sites falling within the scope of regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 are defined as 'habitats sites' in the NPPF). Under Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations, an appropriate assessment must be undertaken in respect of any plan or project which is (a) likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and (b) not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site. The consideration of likely significant effects should include any functionally linked land outside the designated site. These areas may provide important habitat for mobile species populations that are qualifying features of the site, for example birds and bats. This can also include areas which have a critical function to a habitat feature within a designated site, for example by being linked hydrologically or geomorphologically.

Should a likely significant effect on a European/Internationally designated site be identified (either alone or in-combination) or be uncertain, the competent authority (in this case the Local Planning Authority) may need to prepare an appropriate assessment in addition to the consideration of impacts through the EIA process. Further guidance is set out in Planning Practice Guidance on appropriate assessment

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment>

This should also take into account any agreed strategic mitigation solution that may be being developed or implemented in the area to address recreational disturbance, nutrients, or other impacts.

Nationally designated sites

The development site is within or may impact on the following **Site of Special Scientific Interest**:

- Fonthill Grottoes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and paragraph 186 of the NPPF. Further information on the SSSI and its special interest features can be found at www.magic.gov.

Natural England's SSSI Impact Risk Zones can be used to help identify the potential for the development to impact on a SSSI. The dataset and user guidance can be accessed from the [Natural England Open Data Geoportal](#).

The Environmental Statement should include a full assessment of the direct and indirect effects of the development on the features of special interest within the SSSI and identify appropriate mitigation measures to avoid, minimise or reduce any adverse significant effects. The consideration of likely significant effects should include any functionally linked land outside the designated site. These areas may provide important habitat for mobile species populations that are interest features of the SSSI, for example birds and bats. This can also include areas which have a critical function to a habitat feature within a site, for example by being linked hydrologically or geomorphologically.

Regionally and Locally Important Sites

The ES should consider any impacts upon local wildlife and geological sites, including local nature reserves. Local Sites are identified by the local wildlife trust, geoconservation group or other local group and protected under the NPPF (paragraph 192 and 193). The ES should set out proposals for mitigation of any impacts and if appropriate, compensation measures and opportunities for enhancement and improving connectivity with wider ecological networks. Contact the relevant local body for further information.

Protected Species

The conservation of species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

is explained in Part IV and Annex A of Government Circular 06/2005 [*Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System*](#).

The ES should assess the impact of all phases of the proposal on protected species (including, for example, great crested newts, reptiles, birds, water voles, badgers and bats). Natural England does not hold comprehensive information regarding the locations of species protected by law. Records of protected species should be obtained from appropriate local biological record centres, nature conservation organisations and local groups. Consideration should be given to the wider context of the site, for example in terms of habitat linkages and protected species populations in the wider area.

The area likely to be affected by the development should be thoroughly surveyed by competent ecologists at appropriate times of year for relevant species and the survey results, impact assessments and appropriate accompanying mitigation strategies included as part of the ES. Surveys should always be carried out in optimal survey time periods and to current guidance by suitably qualified and, where necessary, licensed, consultants.

Natural England has adopted [standing advice](#) for protected species, which includes guidance on survey and mitigation measures. A separate protected species licence from Natural England or Defra may also be required.

District Level Licensing for Great Crested Newts

District level licensing (DLL) is a type of strategic mitigation licence for great crested newts (GCN) granted in certain areas at a local authority or wider scale. A [DLL scheme for GCN](#) may be in place at the location of the development site. If a DLL scheme is in place, developers can make a financial contribution to strategic, off-site habitat compensation instead of applying for a separate licence or carrying out individual detailed surveys. By demonstrating that DLL will be used, impacts on GCN can be scoped out of detailed assessment in the Environmental Statement.

Priority Habitats and Species

Priority Habitats and Species are of particular importance for nature conservation and included in the England Biodiversity List published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Most priority habitats will be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites. Lists of priority habitats and species can be found [here](#). Natural England does not routinely hold species data. Such data should be collected when impacts on priority habitats or species are considered likely.

Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land. Sites can be checked against the (draft) national Open Mosaic Habitat (OMH) inventory published by Natural England and freely available to [download](#). Further information is also available [here](#).

An appropriate level habitat survey should be carried out on the site, to identify any important habitats present. In addition, ornithological, botanical, and invertebrate surveys should be carried out at appropriate times in the year, to establish whether any scarce or priority species are present.

The Environmental Statement should include details of:

- Any historical data for the site affected by the proposal (e.g. from previous surveys)
- Additional surveys carried out as part of this proposal
- The habitats and species present

- The status of these habitats and species (e.g. whether priority species or habitat)
- The direct and indirect effects of the development upon those habitats and species
- Full details of any mitigation or compensation measures
- Opportunities for biodiversity net gain or other environmental enhancement

Ancient Woodland, ancient and veteran trees

The ES should assess the impacts of the proposal on any ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, and the scope to avoid and mitigate for adverse impacts. It should also consider opportunities for enhancement.

Natural England maintains the Ancient Woodland [Inventory](#) which can help identify ancient woodland. The [wood pasture and parkland inventory](#) sets out information on wood pasture and parkland.

The [ancient tree inventory](#) provides information on the location of ancient and veteran trees.

Natural England and the Forestry Commission have prepared [standing advice](#) on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees.

Biodiversity net gain

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

Biodiversity Net Gain is additional to statutory requirements relating to designated nature conservation sites and protected species.

Proposals for mandatory biodiversity net gain should be in line with the Environment Act 2021 and supporting regulations. Further information on biodiversity net gain, including [draft Planning Practice Guidance](#), can be found [here](#)

The statutory [biodiversity metric](#), together with ecological advice, should be used to calculate the change in biodiversity resulting from proposed development and demonstrate how proposals can achieve a net gain.

The metric should be used to:

- assess or audit the biodiversity unit value of land within the application area
- calculate the losses and gains in biodiversity unit value resulting from proposed development
- demonstrate that the required percentage biodiversity net gain will be achieved

Biodiversity Net Gain outcomes can be achieved on site, off-site or through a combination of both. On-site provision should be considered first. Delivery should create or enhance habitats of equal or higher value. When delivering net gain, opportunities should be sought to link delivery to relevant plans or strategies e.g. Green Infrastructure Strategies or Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Opportunities for wider environmental gains should also be considered.

Landscape

Nationally Designated Landscapes

The development site is within or may impact on the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The NPPF (paragraph 189) provides the highest level of planning protection for these nationally

designated landscapes.

Public bodies have a duty to seek to further the statutory purposes of designation in carrying out their functions (under section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023). This duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

Consideration should be given to the direct and indirect effects on this designated landscape and in particular the effect upon its purpose for designation. The management plan for the designated landscape may also have relevant information that should be considered in the EIA.

Landscape and visual impacts

The environmental assessment should refer to the relevant [National Character Areas](#). Character area profiles set out descriptions of each landscape area and statements of environmental opportunity.

The ES should include a full assessment of the potential impacts of the development on local landscape character using [landscape assessment methodologies](#). We encourage the use of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), based on the good practice guidelines produced jointly by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment in 2013. LCA provides a sound basis for guiding, informing, and understanding the ability of any location to accommodate change and to make positive proposals for conserving, enhancing or regenerating character.

A landscape and visual impact assessment should also be carried out for the proposed development and surrounding area. Natural England recommends use of the methodology set out in *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2013* ((3rd edition) produced by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment and Management. For National Parks and AONBs, we advise that the assessment also includes effects on the 'special qualities' of the designated landscape, as set out in the statutory management plan for the area. These identify the particular landscape and related characteristics which underpin the natural beauty of the area and its designation status.

The assessment should also include the cumulative effect of the development with other relevant existing or proposed developments in the area. This should include an assessment of the impacts of other proposals currently at scoping stage.

To ensure high quality development that responds to and enhances local landscape character and distinctiveness, the siting and design of the proposed development should reflect local characteristics and, wherever possible, use local materials. Account should be taken of local design policies, design codes and guides as well as guidance in the [National Design Guide](#) and [National Model Design Code](#). The ES should set out the measures to be taken to ensure the development will deliver high standards of design and green infrastructure.

It should also set out detail of layout alternatives, where appropriate, with a justification of the selected option in terms of landscape impact and benefit.

Heritage Landscapes

The ES should include an assessment of the impacts on any land in the area affected by the development which qualifies for conditional exemption from capital taxes on the grounds of outstanding scenic, scientific, or historic interest. An up-to-date list is available at www.hmrc.gov.uk/heritage/lbsearch.htm.

Connecting People with nature

The ES should consider potential impacts on access land, common land, public rights of way and, where appropriate, the England Coast Path and coastal access routes and coastal margin in the

vicinity of the development, in line with NPPF paragraph 105. It should assess the scope to mitigate for any adverse impacts. Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIP) can be used to identify public rights of way within or adjacent to the proposed site that should be maintained or enhanced.

Measures to help people to better access the countryside for quiet enjoyment and opportunities to connect with nature should be considered. Such measures could include reinstating existing footpaths or the creation of new footpaths, cycleways, and bridleways. Links to other green networks and, where appropriate, urban fringe areas should also be explored to help promote the creation of wider green infrastructure. Access to nature within the development site should also be considered, including the role that natural links have in connecting habitats and providing potential pathways for movements of species.

Relevant aspects of local authority green infrastructure strategies should be incorporated where appropriate.

Soils and Agricultural Land Quality

Soils are a valuable, finite natural resource and should also be considered for the ecosystem services they provide, including for food production, water storage and flood mitigation, as a carbon store, reservoir of biodiversity and buffer against pollution. It is therefore important that the soil resources are protected and sustainably managed. Impacts from the development on soils and best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land should be considered in line with paragraphs 187 and 188 of the NPPF. Further guidance is set out in the Natural England [Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land](#).

As set out in paragraph 223 of the NPPF, new sites or extensions to sites for peat extraction should not be granted planning permission.

The following issues should be considered and, where appropriate, included as part of the Environmental Statement (ES):

- The degree to which soils would be disturbed or damaged as part of the development
- The extent to which agricultural land would be disturbed or lost as part of this development, including whether any best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land would be impacted.

This may require a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey if one is not already available. For information on the availability of existing ALC information see www.magic.gov.uk.

- Where an ALC and soil survey of the land is required, this should normally be at a detailed level, e.g. one auger boring per hectare, (or more detailed for a small site) supported by pits dug in each main soil type to confirm the physical characteristics of the full depth of the soil resource, i.e. 1.2 metres. The survey data can inform suitable soil handling methods and appropriate reuse of the soil resource where required (e.g. agricultural reinstatement, habitat creation, landscaping, allotments and public open space).
- The ES should set out details of how any adverse impacts on BMV agricultural land can be minimised through site design/masterplan.
- The ES should set out details of how any adverse impacts on soils can be avoided or minimised and demonstrate how soils will be sustainably used and managed, including consideration in site design and master planning, and areas for green infrastructure or biodiversity net gain. The aim will be to minimise soil handling and maximise the sustainable

use and management of the available soil to achieve successful after-uses and minimise off-site impacts.

Further information is available in the [Defra Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soil on Development Sites](#) and

The British Society of Soil Science Guidance Note [Benefitting from Soil Management in Development and Construction](#).

Air Quality

Air quality in the UK has improved over recent decades but air pollution remains a significant issue. For example, approximately 85% of protected nature conservation sites are currently in exceedance of nitrogen levels where harm is expected (critical load) and approximately 87% of sites exceed the level of ammonia where harm is expected for lower plants (critical level of 1µg) ¹¹. A priority action in the England Biodiversity Strategy is to reduce air pollution impacts on biodiversity. The Government's Clean Air Strategy also has a number of targets to reduce emissions including to reduce damaging deposition of reactive forms of nitrogen by 17% over England's protected priority sensitive habitats by 2030, to reduce emissions of ammonia against the 2005 baseline by 16% by 2030 and to reduce emissions of NO_x and SO₂ against a 2005 baseline of 73% and 88% respectively by 2030. Shared Nitrogen Action Plans (SNAPs) have also been identified as a tool to reduce environmental damage from air pollution.

The planning system plays a key role in determining the location of developments which may give rise to pollution, either directly, or from traffic generation, and hence planning decisions can have a significant impact on the quality of air, water and land. The ES should take account of the risks of air pollution and how these can be managed or reduced. This should include taking account of any strategic solutions or SNAPs, which may be being developed or implemented to mitigate the impacts on air quality. Further information on air pollution impacts and the sensitivity of different habitats/designated sites can be found on the Air Pollution Information System (www.apis.ac.uk).

Information on air pollution modelling, screening and assessment can be found on the following websites:

- SCAIL Combustion and SCAIL Agriculture - <http://www.scaill.ceh.ac.uk/>
- Ammonia assessment for agricultural development <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/intensive-farming-risk-assessment-for-your-environmental-permit>
- Environment Agency Screening Tool for industrial emissions <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/air-emissions-risk-assessment-for-your-environmental-permit>
- Defra Local Air Quality Management Area Tool (Industrial Emission Screening Tool) – England <http://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/laqm>

Natural England has produced '[Air pollution and development: advice for local authorities. How to assess sector-specific planning applications that could affect air quality on a protected site](#)'. This standing advice is to help planning authorities understand the impact on statutory protected sites from particular developments that emit specific air pollutants. The advice covers emissions of ammonia (NH₃), nitrogen oxides (NO, NO₂ or NO_x), nitrogen deposition, acid deposition and sulphur dioxide (SO₂).

The standing advice is Natural England's formal statutory advice and is a material consideration. It provides decision makers with the information needed to fulfil their statutory duties when making decisions on planning applications with potential air pollution impacts.

Water Quality

¹¹ [Report: Trends Report 2020: Trends in critical load and critical level exceedances in the UK - Defra, UK](#)

The planning system plays a key role in determining the location of developments which may give rise to water pollution, and hence planning decisions can have a significant impact on water quality, and land. The assessment should take account of the risks of water pollution and how these can be managed or reduced. A number of water dependent protected nature conservation sites have been identified as failing condition due to elevated nutrient levels and nutrient neutrality is consequently required to enable development to proceed without causing further damage to these sites. If your planning application is affected by Nutrient Neutrality, the ES needs to take account of any strategic solutions for nutrient neutrality or Diffuse Water Pollution Plans, which may be being developed or implemented to mitigate and address the impacts of elevated nutrient levels. These solutions or plans should be relevant to the specific planning consultation site. Further information can be obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Climate Change

The ES should identify how the development affects the ability of the natural environment (including habitats, species, and natural processes) to adapt to climate change, including its ability to provide adaptation for people. This should include impacts on the vulnerability or resilience of a natural feature (i.e. what's already there and affected) as well as impacts on how the environment can accommodate change for both nature and people, for example whether the development affects species ability to move and adapt. Nature-based solutions, such as providing green infrastructure on-site and in the surrounding area (e.g. to adapt to flooding, drought and heatwave events), habitat creation and peatland restoration, should be considered. The ES should set out the measures that will be adopted to address impacts.

Further information is available from the [Committee on Climate Change's \(CCC\) Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk](#), the [National Adaptation Programme \(NAP\)](#), the [Climate Change Impacts Report Cards](#) (biodiversity, infrastructure, water etc.) and the [UKCP18 climate projections](#).

The Natural England and RSPB [Climate Change Adaptation Manual](#) (2020) provides extensive information on climate change impacts and adaptation for the natural environment and adaptation focussed nature-based solutions for people. It includes the Landscape Scale Climate Change Assessment Method that can help assess impacts and vulnerabilities on natural environment features and identify adaptation actions. Natural England's [Nature Networks Evidence Handbook](#) (2020) also provides extensive information on planning and delivering nature networks for people and biodiversity.

The ES should also identify how the development impacts the natural environment's ability to store and sequester greenhouse gases, in relation to climate change mitigation and the natural environment's contribution to achieving net zero by 2050. Natural England's [Carbon Storage and Sequestration by Habitat report](#) (2021) and the British Ecological Society's [nature-based solutions report](#) (2021) provide further information.

Contribution to local environmental initiatives and priorities

The ES should consider the contribution the development could make to relevant local environmental initiatives and priorities to enhance the environmental quality of the development and deliver wider environmental gains. This should include considering proposals set out in relevant local strategies or supplementary planning documents including landscape strategies, green infrastructure strategies, tree and woodland strategies, biodiversity strategies or biodiversity opportunity areas.

APPENDIX 11 - HISTORIC ENGLAND

Historic England have now reviewed the Report and from the information given, we consider that there appears to be minimal impact on the historic environment.

We note that Archaeology and Heritage have been scoped out of the ES but that an Archaeological Assessment and Heritage Setting Assessment will be provided. We recommend that the local authority Historic Environment staff are consulted as they are best placed to advise on this and any other local historic environment issues and priorities.

We would expect an EIA or any planning application to contain an examination of the potential impacts upon all heritage assets likely to be affected, including designated heritage assets and their settings together with potential impacts on non-designated features of historic, architectural, archaeological or artistic interest, since these can also be of national importance and make an important contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of an area and its sense of place. This covers buildings, historic open spaces, historic features and the wider historic landscape including below-ground archaeology.

APPENDIX 12 - CLIMATE TEAM

Advice from Climate Team to Planning - PL/2025/09603 land N of A303, Chicklade - solar array scoping opinion

Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the relevant policies of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (ref: Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). Section 19 of this Act places a legal duty on development plan documents, taken as a whole, to include policies designed to secure development that contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

Development Plan:

At paragraph 1.3 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) key principles that underpin the strategy to help build more resilient communities are identified including:

- *“Working towards lowering Wiltshire’s carbon footprint through the appropriate location of development, and through renewable energy and sustainable construction.”*

Paragraph 1.10 states: ***“The overarching priorities are to help build and protect resilient communities through..... tackling the causes and effects of climate change”***

Paragraph 2.10 states: ***“Climate change is a central issue to be addressed by the WCS..... The basis of this strategy is to achieve sustainable patterns of development in order to reduce carbon emissions.”***

The WCS sets out that addressing climate change as a strategic objective stating at paragraph 3.5 that: ***“Climate change is possibly the greatest long-term challenge facing the world today.”***

Core Policy 42 sets out that the principle of stand alone renewable energy projects is acceptable and will be encouraged and supported. It sets a clear criteria-based framework to encourage greater investment by the renewable energy industry within Wiltshire.

At paragraph 1.3 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) key principles that underpin the strategy to help build more resilient communities are identified including:

- *“Working towards lowering Wiltshire’s carbon footprint through the appropriate location of development, and through renewable energy and sustainable construction.”*

Other material considerations:

The Council is carrying out a **Local Plan Review**. The direction of travel is reflective of wider strategic policy already adopted by Wiltshire Council, such as the [Wiltshire Climate Strategy, adopted February 2022](#). This builds on the Council’s February 2019 resolution to acknowledge a **climate emergency and subsequent commitment to also make Wiltshire Council carbon neutral by 2030**. Therefore, the review will likely develop a suite of replacement policies to further reduce Wiltshire’s contribution to climate change and foster better community resilience to impacts from climate change.

To further underline this the **Climate change act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019** raised the **duty of the Secretary of State to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 100% lower than the 1990 baseline** (previously 80%).

The **National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)** (NPPF) sets out the UK government's position on planning in England.

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states: *"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"* and paragraph 8 makes it clear that **mitigating and adapting to climate change is a core planning objective**.

Paragraph 152 states: *"The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.... It should **help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions**, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure."*

In support of national policy, the UK government has also produced planning practice guidance for England on Renewable and low carbon energy. This sets out technical issues affecting their siting, such as proximity to grid connection infrastructure, and criteria that should be addressed, in line with extant policy CP42 considerations.

National Policy Statements may be a material consideration in decision making on applications that fall under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. EN-3 sets out the need for a 5-fold increase in solar deployment by 2035 (up to 70 GW). It explains at 2.10.89 that solar farms have the potential to result in environmental gains (such as around biodiversity) and this should be encouraged. This might occur if the land was intensively managed.

In terms of the future national direction of travel the **10 Point Plan, Net Zero Strategy, Heat and Buildings Strategy** and the **Sixth Carbon Budget** are very clear. The intentions include:

- More renewable energy and storage technologies.

As set out above planning legislation establishes that **other material considerations** should be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. As such, these need to be kept in mind as developments are planned and formulated. Other material considerations may include other local planning policy and guidance, the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, UK government legislation or Written Ministerial Statements and national planning policy and guidance such as the National Planning Policy Framework.

Comments on the submission:

The climate team actively and strongly encourages developers of all scales to put the mitigation of and adaption to climate change as a golden theme to run through their development project. This will mean different things depending on the scale of the project, but to support the transition to a low carbon future, radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions over the existing status quo will be required. CP42 is the starting point here and this is positive and sets out support for renewable energy schemes subject to detailed considerations i)-vii).

The NPPF is also positive and sets out a context for the need for planning to support the radical reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Central to achieving this is the shift to renewable energy which in a location such as Wiltshire currently means significant solar PV development. It is important to consider that renewable energy generation has a positive public benefit and this needs to be considered in any planning balance against any detailed concerns, such as the setting of heritage assets.

Neither in local or national policy is there a requirement to demonstrate the need for the development. Nonetheless, there is a clear need for radical reductions in greenhouse gases to be achieved and planning needs to support this. Wiltshire Council commissioned Anthesis consultants to produce a detailed technical study of progress so far and a way forward in relation to the Council's declaration of a climate emergency.

The report is available on the Council's website entitled [Wiltshire Carbon Emissions Baselines and Reduction Pathways, March 2022](#). This should be considered in full and with the caveat that it is indicative of options and pathways to help reach carbon neutrality ambitions. So, the targets are simply indicative and not maximums. If we fall behind in some areas, then to reach the overall goal we will need to overachieve elsewhere. The SCATTER targets (ref: p65-66) exemplify this as they are indicative targets and show good progress with solar PV but that we are very far behind in terms of other renewables such as hydro and wind. The indicative pathway shows more renewables required and it is highly likely that we will need to far exceed that pathway to make up in other areas.

As such, the climate team would support these proposals as they will make a valuable contribution to providing more renewable energy whilst improving energy security. This will help address the Council's ambitions in terms of carbon neutrality and the legally binding net zero targets of the country.

APPENDIX 13 – CRANBORNE CHASE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

The complexities of the reserved matters and s73 application for the service station adjacent to this site, plus the SSEN consultations on the upgrading of the mains electricity supply to the site, have led to some thought about the locality.

The size of the site, 12ha, and its location within a National Landscape indicate that the EIA regulations do apply. It appears that the applicant has accepted that as the submitted report is 'scoping' and not 'screening'.

Looking at the documents supplied, the 2m high fencing and gates would be unusual and potentially visually intrusive in a landscape where agricultural fences / gates are more usually in the range of 1 -1.2m high and more visually porous.

The planning layout shows only part of the site laid out to PVs with no annotation regarding the use of the larger, northern, part of the site. BTW the base plan does not show the approved 'remake' of the service station which will involve significant excavation works and building construction, all of which constitute cumulative development in an EIA context.

The hedge on the plan does not currently exist so any assessment would need to recognise that that feature would take the greater part of a decade to have any meaningful screening or backdrop effect for the height of panels proposed. That extended period to achieve screening / backdrop is not acceptable in a nationally important and nationally designated landscape.

The arrays would be, in round figures, 2.5m high so any visibility assessments need to take that higher level into account and not simply the visibility of the current ground level.

The scoping report [paras 3.16, 3.17] does not provide any indication why a solar farm is needed at this location within a national landscape, a sensitive location.

Regarding Table 1, p12, section 2 of the report does NOT describe the purpose of the development.

Although the LUC Renewable Energy Report for Wiltshire has not been endorsed by the CCNL partnership, it is noticeable that the site falls within a zone of greatest sensitivity for 'small scale' solar.

In relation to 'Scoped In Topics', para 6.7 p19 appears to be significantly out of date in relation to NPPF references, and one wonders how much more of the report is simply cut and paste from earlier works. Furthermore, the assertion in 6.6 appears to disregard the biodiversity value of the agricultural soil.

Para 6.14 omits cumulative impacts and these do need to be included. Para 6.16 appears to omit changes to the appearance and character of the site and impacts of those changes on the appearance and character of the landscape context of the site. Those aspects should, of course, be included. Para 6.17 should explicitly include visual appearance.

As the CCNL Management Plan identifies, para 11.22, solar farms not only industrialise the landscape but also lead to a reduction in the area of productive farmland. It is not, in the opinion of CCNL, appropriate to scope out Agricultural Land Classification. The importance of assessing cumulative impacts is set out in policy PT3.

The scoping out of archaeology seems to be being proposed without reference to the Cranborne Chase Historic Landscape Characterisation and the Historic Environment Action Plans. It seems strange to scope out ecology merely on the basis that the site is an arable field. Great Bustards, for example, nest in fields of arable crops so a more rigorous approach to ecology is needed.

As I have commented to your colleague in relation to the parallel planning application, glint and glare are only considered in relation to aircraft and road traffic. The appearance of solar farms in the landscape is a matter of some significance in relation to their surface texture, tone, and colour. Elsewhere in this NL it is possible to perceive easily the alien appearance of a solar farm outside this designated area some 10 – 11 km away. It is, therefore, not appropriate to scope out glint and glare entirely, only in the context of aircraft.

As mentioned above, without reference to the Historic Landscape Characterisation and HEAPs it is too much of a presumption to state that Heritage should be scoped out.

The case for scoping out major Accidents and Disasters seems to be based, not unreasonably, on a lack of natural disasters. However there does not seem to be any consideration of the proximity of a major highway, A303, or the proximity of land and air forces training areas in and around Salisbury Plain for incidents that are not 'natural disasters'.

CCNL does, therefore, disagree with many aspects of Table 2 on p24 where many relevant issues are proposed to be scoped out of the EIA. Chapter 7 does, therefore, need to be amended accordingly. Furthermore, Chapter 7 should clearly demonstrate, with evidence, when mitigation would become effective. Despite the paragraph heading, para 7.8 does not set out significance criteria.

In the light of the above, CCNL does not agree with para 8.1.

I hope that is helpful to you.

Regards

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Cranborne Chase National Landscape, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



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