



Shinfield Studios Phase 3, Reading

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

On behalf of **Shinfield Studios Limited**

Project Ref: 333102014 | Rev: V1 | Date: July 2025

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1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report accompanies a request to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to adopt an EIA Screening Opinion in respect of the erection of film studio workshops, office space, a backlot for external filming, a compound area, with supporting access, parking, landscaping, attenuation and associated works at Shinfield Studios on land to the south of Cutbush Lane.
- 1.1.2 The Screening Report has been prepared by an EIA Competent Expert working for Stantec UK Ltd (Stantec), who are Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) qualified Corporate EIA Assessors and EIA Corporate Quality Mark registrants, on behalf of Lightsource BP (the 'Applicant').
- 1.1.3 This report reflects the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 'EIA Regulations'). In accordance with Regulation 6(1) of the EIA Regulations. It contains:
- A plan sufficient to identify the land (**Appendix A**).
 - A description of the Proposed Development, including in particular:
 - a description of the physical characteristics of the Proposed Development and, where relevant, of demolition works (**Section 2.2**); and
 - a description of the location of the Proposed Development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected (**Section 2.1**).
 - A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development (**Table 3.2**).
 - Where information is available, a description of likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment resulting from:
 - the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant (**Table 3.2**); and
 - the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water, and biodiversity (**Table 3.2**).
 - Such other information or representations relating to features of the Proposed Development and measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment (**Table 3.2** and **Section 2.3**).

1.2 Requirement for EIA

- 1.2.1 In order to determine whether the Proposed Development is 'EIA development', regard must be had to the legal requirements of, and legal thresholds in, the EIA Regulations and the policy guidance thresholds and advice in Section 4 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (various dates)¹.
- 1.2.2 EIA development is defined by the EIA Regulations as development:

¹ Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment>

“Likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location”.

1.2.3 EIA development falls into two Schedules of the EIA Regulations. EIA is mandatory for developments listed within Schedule 1. Schedule 2 developments require EIA if they would lead to likely significant effects on the environment.

1.2.4 In deciding whether a Schedule 2 development is EIA development, Regulation 5(4) states:

“Where a relevant planning authority ... has to decide under these Regulations whether Schedule 2 development is EIA development, the relevant planning authority ... must take into account in making that decision -

a) Any information provided by the applicant;

b) The results of any relevant EU environmental assessment which are reasonably available to relevant planning authority...; and

c) Such of the selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 as are relevant to the development.”

1.2.5 In order to allow WBC to determine the need for an EIA in this case, this report provides a description of the Site and Proposed Development (**Section 2**), and a completed EIA Screening Checklist (**Table 3.3**). A Site Location Plan is provided in **Appendix A**.

2 Site and Proposed Development

2.1 Site Description and Context

- 2.1.1 The Site comprises approximately 12.33 hectares (ha) of land at Cutbush Lane, Shinfield, Reading, RG2 9AA. See **Appendix A** for the Site Location Plan.
- 2.1.2 The Site is wholly located within the administrative boundary of WBC.
- 2.1.3 The Site comprises one parcel of land and is irregular in shape. The north of the Site is bound by Cutbush Lane. The northern portion of the Site (land south of Cutbush Lane) includes land associated with the previously consented Phase 1 of Shinfield Studios (WBC ref: 211841). The most western boundary borders Shinfield Grange; the Site is bound to the west by Shinfield Studios existing studios and workshops. The British Museum Archaeological Research Collection building borders the eastern boundary of the northern section of the Site. The remaining eastern and southern boundary are bound by agricultural fields.
- 2.1.4 The majority of the Site is comprised of undeveloped land. A proportion of the Site is brownfield with a collection of farm and light industrial buildings, compounds and hardstanding forming 'Oldhouse Farm' which includes the Grade II Listed buildings, known as Oldhouse Farmhouse and Oldhouse Farm Barn located within the Site.
- 2.1.5 The backlot of the Site, land to the south of Oldhouse Farm, has two temporary permissions for filming. The westernmost parcel is consented for filming until April 2026 (WBC ref: 243097). The eastern portion of the backlot is consented for filming purposes until 2027 (WBC ref: 222906).
- 2.1.6 The Site is located approximately 5.4 km to the south of Reading Train Station and 340 m to the south of the M4 at its closest point. To the immediate north, the previously consented Shinfield Studios television and film studios are situated. The existing studios were brought forwards by the Applicant (consented under WBC ref: 211841) and construction for Phase 1 began in 2021. The studios now form part of a wider commercial space hosting the Thames Valley Science Park which includes Sweegen food manufacturers and BioInteractions Limited.
- 2.1.7 In the surrounding area of the Site, the settlement of Earley is located to the north of the M4. This is predominantly populated with residential properties. To the west of the Site, Shinfield village is situated. Agricultural fields comprise the surrounding area to the south and east of the Site. There are two buildings situated in the eastern agricultural fields: Hall Farm owned by the University of Reading and the International Cocoa Quarantine Centre. Extending further east, Bearwood Lakes golf club and course is positioned approximately 3 km from the Site.

2.2 Environmental Baseline Conditions

Agricultural Land Classification

- 2.2.1 A review of the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) mapping identifies the Site as being a combination of urban and Grade 3 agricultural soil. Grades 1, 2 and 3a are considered to be best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural quality land. Grade 3b and below are not regarded as BMV agricultural quality land. The Site's ALC grading is undetermined Grade 3 and therefore it is not currently known if the Site is comprised of BMV soil.

Transport and Access

- 2.2.2 The Site will be accessed from the existing Shinfield Studio access off Cutbush Lane, along Oldhouse Lane. There are no other named highways bordering the Site; an unnamed single-lane track (Public Right of Way SHIN4) runs along the western boundary of the southern portion of the Site. The M4 is located 340 m to the north of the Site, running in an east-west direction.

- 2.2.3 As noted in the Phase 3 Transport Technical Note² document submitted alongside the pre-application, the Thames Valley Science Park is well located in terms of existing highway infrastructure and benefits from good connections to the local and strategic highway networks. Shinfield Studios and Thames Valley Science Park benefits from a high level of pedestrian and cycle connectivity and journeys by foot and cycle along the key desire lines to and from the site will be well catered for. There are 3m wide footway / cycleways located along the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road to the west of the Thames Valley Science Park, providing continuous connections over the M4 overbridge linking into the facilities at the Black Boy gyratory which then connects to footway and cycle routes that run along the B3270 corridor to the east and along the A327 corridor into Reading.
- 2.2.4 There are two Public Right of Ways (PRoW) located alongside the Site; PRoW Footpath SHIN3 runs along the southwestern corner of the Site. PRoW Footpath SHIN4 passes along part of the southern boundary. Both PRoWs connect from Cutbush Lane to the unnamed track to the south. The planned Loddon Long Distance Path routes is likely to route approximately 400 m further to the south-east.
- 2.2.5 The Site benefits from the 600 and Leopard 3 bus services which already route into the Thames Valley Science Park, providing a regular service to and from key destinations within Reading such as the rail station, town centre, the Royal Berkshire Hospital, and the University of Reading's main campus at Whiteknights. This service compliments other bus routes and services operating within the Shinfield and Lower Earley areas providing frequent access to Reading and Wokingham.

Air Quality

- 2.2.6 The Site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), according to the UK AQMA Map³. The nearest AQMA; Reading AQMA, is located approximately 1.5 km to the north of the Site. This was declared in 2009 due to annual exceedance of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

Noise and Vibration

- 2.2.7 Existing activities surrounding the Site are expected to generate an elevated background sound level. The M4 located approximately 340 m to the north of the Site, existing Shinfield Studios and general employment area of the Thames Valley Science Park are all anticipated to contribute to an elevated background sound level at the Site.
- 2.2.8 The acoustic consultant identified the following three noise sensitive receptors within proximity of the Site:
- Cutbush Manor, Cutbush Barn and Badger Cottage;
 - Grange Cottage; and
 - Residential Properties on Whitehorn, west of Shinfield Eastern Relief Road.
- 2.2.9 This assessment included a survey of the Site which found the surrounding baseline noise conditions to average between 39 and 61 dB.

Heritage and Archaeology

- 2.2.10 The Site does not contain any Scheduled Monuments, World Heritage sites, or Registered Parks and Gardens.

² Abley Letchford Partnership (2024). Phase 3 Transport Technical Note. ALB reference: A282-046/C.

³ AQMA's Interactive Map. Available from: <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/maps/>

- 2.2.11 The Site contains two Listed Buildings; Old House Farmhouse Grade II Listed Building (list entry: 1118136) and Barn approximately 50 metres south of Oldhouse Farmhouse Grade II Listed Building (list entry: 1136136).
- 2.2.12 The Heritage Assessment⁴ submitted alongside the pre-application outlines the regional historical value of the two Listed Buildings located within the Site. This outlines that the significance of the Listed Buildings is primarily the surviving historic fabric of the buildings, the relationship between the two buildings and the visual connection between the farmhouse, garden and the wider landscape to the east. The immediate setting of the concreted farmyard and modern agricultural buildings detracts from the significance of the listed buildings. The Heritage Assessment identifies that the Listed Barn is currently in poor structural condition and is not watertight.
- 2.2.13 There are an additional five Listed Buildings within a 1 km radius of the Site. These include:
- Cutbush Grade II Listed Building (list entry: 1118135) located approximately 270 m to the west of the Site;
 - Barn adjoining Cutbush Grade II Listed Building (list entry: 1136129) located approximately 280 m to the west of the Site;
 - Hall Place Farmhouse at NGR SU 7499 6819 Grade II Listed Building (list entry: 1135961) located approximately 520 m to the south of the Site;
 - Simonds Family Tomb 4 metres north of Old Church Grade II Listed Building (list entry: 1319095) located approximately 600 m to the south of the Site; and
 - Remains of Old Church at NGR SU 7495 6802 Grade II Listed Building (list entry: 1313014) located approximately 610 m to the south of the Site.
- 2.2.14 The closest Scheduled Monument to the Site is the Site of St Batholomew's Church (list entry: 1006975) located approximately 610 m to the south of the Site. There are no additional Scheduled Monuments located within a 1 km radius of the Site.
- 2.2.15 Bearwood College (list entry: 1000414) is the closest Registered Parks and Gardens to the Site, located approximately 1.9 km to the east of the Site. 2.6 km to the southwest of the Site, Swallowfield Park (list entry: 1000537) Registered Parks and Gardens is located.
- 2.2.16 The setting of the other heritage assets within a 1 km radius is unlikely to be affected by the Proposed Development, due to their distance from the site, the low-lying topography of the site, and a large number of intervening mature trees and woodland.
- 2.2.17 While no archaeological investigations have been undertaken for the overall Site specifically, archaeological reports have previously been produced for the temporary backlot application and under the Shinfield Studios wider site application (which included the Phase 1 site), which both cover significant portions of the Site. The backlot archaeological investigations were conducted in 2023 by Cotswold Archaeology and found no dating evidence or items of archaeological importance. The archaeological works for Shinfield Studios Phase 1 were conducted in 2021 by Wessex Archaeology and included the northern portions of the Site down to just above the Oldhouse farm buildings. These investigations found 'very little evidence of archaeological activity'.

⁴ Alan Baxter (2024). Oldhouse Farmhouse and Barn, Shinfield Studios Heritage Assessment.

Ecology and Arboriculture

- 2.2.18 There are no designated sites for nature conservation of national or local importance located within the Site boundary. There are no Ramsar sites or Special Areas of Conservation located within 10 km of the Site.
- 2.2.19 There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located within a 5 km radius of the Site. These are:
- Stanford End Mill and River Loddon SSSI located approximately 4.1 km to the southwest of the Site; and
 - Longmoor Bog SSSI located approximately 4.7 km to the southeast of the Site.
- 2.2.20 Other Statutory Designated Sites located within 10 km of the Site include:
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection area (SPA) located approximately 5.5 km to the south of the Site;
 - Lodge Wood and Sandford Mill SSSI located approximately 5.3 km to the north of the Site;
 - Bramshill SSSI located approximately 8.8 km to the south of the Site;
 - Hazeley Heath SSSI located approximately 8.9 km to the south of the Site;
 - Pincents Kiln SSSI located approximately 9.8 km to the west of the Site;
 - Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve (NNR) located approximately 10 km to the south of the Site.
- 2.2.21 Pearman's Copse Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is located approximately 520 m to the north west of the Site. A further five LNR's are located within a 5 km radius of the Site. This includes:
- Maiden Eriegh Park LNR located approximately 1.8 km to the north of the Site;
 - Highwood LNR located approximately 3.4 km to the north of the Site;
 - Swallowfield Meadow LNR located approximately 4.1 km to the southwest of the Site;
 - Longmoor Bog LNR located approximately 4.7 km to the southeast of the Site; and
 - The Marshes LNR located approximately 5 km to the southwest of the Site.
- 2.2.22 Due to the nature of the proposals and the distance between the Site and the abovementioned statutory designated sites, it is not considered that they would be affected by any biophysical changes generated by the proposals and they are therefore outside of the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the project.
- 2.2.23 In addition to the above, there are total of 14 designated LWSs within 2 km of the proposal that are not also covered by a statutory designation as detailed above. Of these, the nearest are:
- St John's Copse LWS, which is located to the northeast, around 25 m from the Site boundary at its nearest point. This is an area of woodland listed as Ancient and Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) on Natural England's Provisional Ancient Woodland Inventory (PAWI). It is considered that, given the nature of the development proposals and the distance between the site boundary and the copse, any potential impacts on this woodland can be addressed

through routine mitigation measures such as boundary treatments and a sensitive lighting strategy.

- Rushy Mead LWS, which is an area of wet and dry woodland located approximately 200m to the east of the Site. It is not considered that this LWS is likely to be subject to any impacts arising from the proposals given the nature of its sensitivities and the distance between it and the Proposed Development.
- Loddon River (part) LWS is located approximately 400m to the southeast of the Site, and the designation covers various aquatic habitats and species including the endemic Loddon Pondweed *Potamogeton nodosus* and a diverse fish assemblage. The site ultimately drains into the Loddon via a series of ditches and streams, but it is considered that the LWS and its downstream SSSI can be protected using routine measures within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and standard Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to clean surface water runoff and prevent pollution such as sediment or hydrocarbons from reaching the river.

2.2.24 In addition to the above, it is notable that the site is located within the Loddon Valley South Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). This BOA and its underlying documentation provide a helpful steer as to the nature conservation priorities in this area and will inform the approach that is taken by the proposals.

2.2.25 An Ecological Appraisal for the Site was conducted in 2023, building upon previous ecological survey work that has taken place across this area by EPR since approximately 1998. Since the Ecological Appraisal in 2023, additional surveys have been conducted to ensure information pertaining to potential ecological constraints and opportunities for ecological enhancements are as accurate as possible. The results of the ecological survey and assessment work will be presented in an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) Report that will accompany the planning application.

2.2.26 The Ecological Appraisal work found the Site to be comprised predominantly of buildings and hardstanding, as well as supporting a small area of Lowland mixed deciduous woodland, some modified grassland, other neutral grassland, arable farmland, a pond, a ditch, hedgerows and lines of trees (some of which are veterans or otherwise trees of ecological importance). Surveys within the Site or surrounding Zone of Influence (Zoi) to date include the following:

- Preliminary bat roost assessment: Buildings;
- A Ground-Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) for bat roost potential and daytime habitat assessment
- Great Crested Newt (GCN) eDNA surveys;
- Hazel Dormouse surveys;
- Badger surveys;
- Reptile surveys;
- Breeding birds;
- Overwintering birds;
- Habitat and botanical (including UK Habitat Classification and habitat condition assessment for Biodiversity Net Gain and veteran tree assessment);
- Bat activity transects;
- Bat emergence surveys of buildings; and

- Automated (static) bat detector surveys.

- 2.2.27 A combination of desk surveys and fieldwork found that the hedgerows and treeline form valuable features within the landscape, providing sheltering and foraging for local biodiversity as well as acting as green corridors to facilitate movement through the landscape. Surveys confirmed the presence of day roosts of Common Pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared bats in the two Listed Buildings located on the Site, with small roosts of Common or Soprano Pipistrelles also present in four other buildings. Multiple trees were also identified throughout the Site as having features suitable to support roosting bats. Survey work has also identified the presence of an assemblage of bats using habitats within the Zone of Influence that is of Local nature conservation importance [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] Breeding and overwintering bird interest within the Zone of Influence is mainly off-site associated with fields along the River Loddon and unlikely to be affected by the proposals. Great Crested Newts are not believed to be present in the area around the site, although more common species of amphibians will occur, and reptile presence is likely to be limited to the occasional transient Grass Snake (although none have been recorded for some years). It is envisaged that potential impacts on all ecological features can be addressed with tired and tested mitigation, which in the case of bats would be secured through a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) granted by Natural England, where required due to works on buildings containing bat roosts.
- 2.2.28 There are numerous trees located within and surrounding the Site. The trees located within the Site are predominantly located along the boundaries of the Site and centrally within the Site, to the north of Old House Farm and associated buildings. There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) in place at the Site and one Category B tree is proposed for removal to facilitate access for the Proposed Development. The arboriculture baseline is discussed further in the Arboriculture Assessment⁵ submitted with the pre-application. This presents the findings of a tree survey that will decide opportunities and constraints of the Proposed Development's design. The Arboriculture Appraisal found the need to retain high quality trees within proximity of the Proposed Development. However, the implementation of suitable buffers and reducing works in proximity to the trees, it is anticipated that the Proposed Development will have a limited arboricultural impact.

Landscape and Visual

- 2.2.29 The Site is not located within a National Park or National Landscape. The North Wessex Downs and Chilterns National Landscapes are located 9.4 km to the west and 8 km to the north respectively. The Site is located within the River Loddon Valued Landscape; identified within the Wokingham Valued Landscapes Assessments (2024)⁶ for its character and appearance, biodiversity, history, perceptual qualities, recreational value and associations.
- 2.2.30 As outlined in the 'Landscape and Visual Technical Note' attached, the Site has a moderate visual relationship with its agricultural context as although it is well enclosed in many directions by both woodland and built form, parts of the Site boundary cross open portions of field parcels. The technical document states that *"the Site is moderately representative of its agricultural context, including the River Loddon Valued Landscape, although much of the northern and western Site extents are characterised by built form, whereas the undeveloped fields exhibit characteristics similar to those of the wider rural surroundings"*. While there is a degree of tranquillity at the Site due to its proximity to rural areas, this is limited by the intrusion of traffic on the M4 and built forms within and adjacent to the Site.
- 2.2.31 The 'Landscape and Visual Technical Note' further discusses Site visibility. The majority of long-distance views of the Site are limited by the undulating topography of the Site and screening from tree belts and woodland. Near distance views from within the Site are available from private property, including the farmstead and the previous phases of the Shinfield Studios development. These views

⁵ FLAC (April 2022). Shinfield Studios, Phase 3: Baseline Tree Survey to BS5837:2012. FLAC ref: CC41-1001.

⁶ Wokingham Borough Council (2024). Valued Landscapes Assessment.

are anticipated to be partial, given the orientation of existing built form and the combination of the shape of the Site and its structural vegetation within and along its boundaries.

- 2.2.32 As PRoW Footpath SHIN4 which runs along the southwestern portion of the Site, direct views of the Site from the public are expected. Additionally, users of the highways within the northern extents of the Site will have direct views of the Site. Views for both are anticipated to be limited to short-term, glimpsed and partial views, which will become more heavily screened during the summer months by the predominantly deciduous vegetation.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 2.2.33 The River Loddon is located approximately 390 m to the southeast of the Site. Two unnamed tributaries of the River Loddon bisect the Site and flow in an easterly direction to the north of Oldhouse Farm. A ditch along the western side of the access road from Cutbush Lane is a tributary of the watercourse at the Oldhouse Farm. There are further tributaries to the Loddon beyond the Site boundaries.
- 2.2.34 The Environment Agency (EA) originally produced a flood model in 200, which still forms the basis of the published flood zone mapping. According to the UK Flood Map for Planning⁷, which was published in March 2025, the northern portion of the Site and part of the southern parcel are located within Flood Zone 1; land having less than a 1 in 1,000 (0.1%) annual probability of fluvial flooding. The central portion of the Site is located in Flood Zone 3 (>1% annual probability of fluvial flooding). The remainder of the Site is in Flood Zone 2 (0.1% to 1% annual probability of fluvial flooding).
- 2.2.35 Since 2008, modelling methods and practice have developed, and additional fluvial modelling has been completed for the River Loddon and its tributaries. There have also been some changes in relevant infrastructure both in flood defences and the wider highway network. These changes were considered in a more refined model produced by WBC – the 2021 SFRA Model which includes the current allowances for climate change uplift. This modelling was previously used following agreement with WBC and the EA for the design of the temporary backlot application (consented 2024, WBC ref: 222906). The 'Phase 3 Flood Risk and Drainage Review' (2024) utilises the 2021 SFRA Model to assess the Site's flood risk. This outlines very minor portions of the eastern boundary of the Site within Flood Zone 3 (>1% annual probability of fluvial flooding). The southern boundary of the Site borders Flood Zone 3 land. The Phase 3 Flood Risk and Drainage Review charts small portions of the southern section of the Site and across the central portion of the Site (in line with the positioning of the two unnamed tributaries) to be Flood Zone 2 land (0.1% to 1% annual probability of fluvial flooding).
- 2.2.36 On the basis of the more recent fluvial modelling of the River Loddon, the Site is partially in Flood Zone 3 (around the watercourse at Oldhouse Farm) and partially in Flood Zone 2 in the areas around Oldhouse Farm. The southern part of the Site remains in Flood Zone 1 although it is close to the Loddon floodplain.
- 2.2.37 According to the UK Surface Water Flood Risk Map⁸, which was published in January 2025, the majority of the Site is within an area with very low risk of surface water flooding, less than 0.1% annual probability. However, there are areas of high risk (3.3%) and medium risk (1% - 3.3%) predominantly associated with the two unnamed tributaries of the River Loddon and the area around Oldhouse Farm itself. Small portions of the northernmost part of the Site and the existing access road from Cutbush Lane to Oldhouse Farm are additionally at high risk of surface water flooding, though this is mainly associated with the ditch that runs down the side of the road.
- 2.2.38 EA mapping also shows the potential extent of flooding resulting from a reservoir breach and this is shown to affect most of the southern part of the site in the wet day scenario (reservoir breach occurring during a flood event) but the Site remains unaffected in the dry day scenario.

⁷ UK Flood Map for Planning. Available from: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/location>

⁸ UK Long Term Flood Risk Map. Available from: <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map>

- 2.2.39 Sewer Asset Records obtained from Thames Water indicate the presence of foul water sewers and manholes adjacent and within application boundary. A 250 mm gravity foul water sewer is present along the northwest boundary of the existing site before turning 90 degrees east, leaving the site into the British Museum site. A 300 mm rising main enters the site along its southern boundary passing through the site on a northeast alignment. The existing site does not appear to have any surface water drainage owned by Thames Water. The Site collects and drains all surface water via private drainage networks to the existing ditches across the Site.
- 2.2.40 According to BGS geological mapping⁹, the Site is entirely underlain by 'London Clay formation – clay silt and sand'. The Site is comprised of three superficial deposits:
- River Terrace Deposits, 1 – Sand and gravel;
 - Brickearth – clay, silt and sand; and
 - Alluvium – clay silt, sand and gravel.

Summary

- 2.2.41 In summary, whilst there are relevant sensitive receptors within the vicinity of the Site, the Site itself is not a sensitive area, as defined by Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations. It is not within, or partially within, nor does it contain, a SSSI, National Park, a property appearing on the World Heritage List, Scheduled Monument, National Landscape, or a European Site of Nature Conservation Interest¹⁰.

2.3 The Proposed Development

- 2.3.1 Full planning permission is being sought for the Proposed Development. The description of the Proposed Development is as follows:

'Full planning application for the erection of film studio workshops, office space, a backlot for external filming, a compound area, with supporting access, parking, landscaping, attenuation and associated works. Planning application and listed building consent for the external and internal alterations to Oldhouse Farm Barn, and change of use and internal alterations to Oldhouse Farm House from residential to office and demolition of existing buildings at Oldhouse Farm.'

- 2.3.2 The additional workshop and office space is sought in order to keep pace with demand from production companies and from an operational perspective, it is essential and critical that such additional workshop space lie at and adjacent to the Phase 1 site. It is also important for production companies based at Shinfield Studios to have access to a permanent backlot space to be used for film sets. The proposed permanent backlot will lie adjacent to the proposed workshops which, again, from an operational perspective is necessary for those production companies based on the Phase 1 site to have the space where film sets are constructed next to the area to which they will be used.
- 2.3.3 In addition, the proposals will deliver heritage benefits, namely the comprehensive repair of the dilapidated Grade II Listed Oldhouse Farm Barn; the use of the Grade II Listed Oldhouse Farmhouse as offices without any changes to its special interest; and the total removal of the detracting twentieth century buildings, hardstanding and replacement with high-quality new landscaping to improve the immediate setting of the two listed buildings. It should also be emphasised that such works to the Grade II Buildings, in particular the Grade II Listed Oldhouse Farm Barn is made possible due to the investment and business case for the proposed additional workshop and office studio space which, as indicated above, is required to support on-going operations at the Studios.
- 2.3.4 The Proposed Development will comprise of:

⁹ BGS Geology Viewer. Available from: <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>

¹⁰ As defined by Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

- Four workshops which will increase the current studio workshops capacity by up to 7,233 sqm.
- The workshops will vary in size from 825 sqm/ 8,880 sqft to 1,957 sqm /21,064 sqft.
- One of the workshops (Ref: W3D) currently benefits from a temporary permission (for a period of five years) under WBC planning reference 221363. As part of this Proposed Development, the Applicant proposes to make this workshop element permanent.
- Additional office space will be provided in the northernmost section of the Site, within a small portion of the car park consented for Shinfield Studios Phase 1, and in the southern portion of the Site within Oldhouse Farmhouse. The proposed office uses will be up to 2,078 sqm.
- The SSL office building (to the west of the Oldhouse Barn) is to be demolished with a new office building located in its place.
- The proposed backlot currently benefits from two resolution of grants. WBC planning reference: 222906 seeks temporary permission for a period of five years and covers the eastern portion of the backlot. On the western portion of the backlot, WBC ref: 243097 benefits from temporary permission until April 2026. As part of the Proposed Development, the Applicant proposes to make this element permanent.
- The existing light industrial buildings, compounds and hardstanding forming Oldhouse Farm will be removed and replaced with high quality landscaping which will improve the setting and be of heritage benefit.
- A storage compound area to the south of the British Museum site.
- The Proposed Development will retain and restore the Oldhouse Farm Barn Listed Building. Following restoration, this will be utilised as a multi-purpose events space for film related activities.
- Additionally, the Proposed Development will retain the Oldhouse Farmhouse Listed Building. This will be converted from a single residential dwelling into office space with only minor interior changes to the building. Similarly, this area of the Proposed Development will feature high quality landscaping to improve the setting of the Listed Building. There is a curtilage listed shed which is proposed for demolition however as discussed in further detail within the Heritage Statement, this shed has no historic significance.
- The Proposed Development will include the removal of one Category B tree to facilitate access arrangements for the Proposed Development. Typically, however, the Proposed Development will retain the existing trees and hedgerows at the Site.
- Extensive additional landscaping and appropriate buffers will be provided throughout the Site. Landscape screening and an earth mound will be incorporated as part of the design of the Proposed Development, most predominantly along the southern boundary of the Site.
- The Proposed Development will allow a minimum of 1 parking space per 61 sqm of the Proposed Development, in line with the approved previous phases at the Shinfield Studios site. A total of 113 additional parking spaces (including 14 disabled parking bays) will be provided by the Proposed Development. Electric vehicle charging points will also be provided in accordance with WBC, yielding a requirement for 5% of parking spaces to allow for an active charging point and 20% of parking spaces to allow for passive points.
- The Proposed Development will have a separated drainage system between foul and surface water. The foul water network will convey flows to the southeast corner of the proposed development, where a private package pump station is proposed. All new surface water networks are drained by gravity and the drainage networks pass through SuDS features including swales and filter trenches to provide the treatment.

- The carriageway along Oldhouse Lane will be widened to accommodate two-way working where possible as to avoid the location of existing trees. Where the carriageway cannot be widened along the southern section, vehicles would utilise the existing passing places to pass oncoming traffic.

2.3.5 The Proposed Development has been designed with effective screening, mitigation and enhancement opportunities. The site layout will utilise existing access points, avoiding hedgerow removal, and the layout of the built development will be guided by existing field boundaries. In this way, the Proposed Development will respect the character and appearance of the landscape as far as practicable.

2.4 Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

2.4.1 The Applicant is committed to delivering a Proposed Development which maximises environmental benefits and minimises adverse local impacts. Mitigation and enhancement measures will be provided in respect of all receptors in line with relevant legislation and policy. However, it is anticipated that those that are proposed for the construction phase would be of equal relevance and would be the minimum employed for the decommissioning phase.

Construction

2.4.2 Whilst the proposals are not yet finalised, the following mitigation measures are likely to be included. With those related to decommissioning subject to implementation at that time.

- A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be secured via condition. This will include:
 - The broad plan of the work programme including working hours and delivery times;
 - Details of prohibited or restricted operations (location, hours etc);
 - Protection of important trees, hedgerows and other natural features;
 - Details of proposed means of dust suppression, noise mitigation and measures to prevent mud from vehicles leaving the Site during construction;
 - Ecological management measures to ensure specific environmental sensitivities are appropriately mitigated during construction;
 - Contact during normal working hours and emergency details outside working hours;
 - Provision for reporting, public liaison, and prior notification of particular construction related activities;
 - The mechanism for the public to register complaints and the procedures for responding to such complaints;
 - Measures for the management of construction waste;
 - Details of the proposed routes for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) travelling to and from the Site;
 - The elimination of reversing, where possible;
 - Protection to the public; and
 - Adequate parking for off-loading storage areas.

- During design, construction and decommissioning, appropriate wayleave and easements will be adhered to for any identified utilities. Appropriate buffers will be maintained around retained trees during construction/decommissioning, informed by the Arboriculture Impact Assessment.

Operation

2.4.3 The following mitigation and enhancement measures have been identified for the operational phase and would form part of the planning application.

- As a minimum, 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) will be delivered, in line with the requirements of the Environment Act 2021.
- A Travel Plan will be implemented to limit the impact of the additional transport requirements of the Proposed Development.
- An External Lighting Assessment will be produced to reduce obtrusive light to nearby receptors.
- Where possible, on-site trees will be retained, particularly mature trees and those identified as being higher value. Any tree removal required will be met with proportionate replacement planting to offer compensation and reinstatement of arboricultural features.
- Biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures, including retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows and retention of trees where possible.
- Suitable corridors for bat movement through the Site will be created and maintained.
- Surface water run-off will be managed on site through the implementation of a Drainage Strategy, where appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will be utilised on the Site.
- A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be submitted with the planning application to demonstrate that the risk of flooding is not increased by the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will include several design principles, in line with the NPPF, to minimise flood risk to the Proposed Development, including locating vulnerable development and infrastructure outside of flood extents, incorporating watercourse buffer zones, and use of permeable access tracks.

2.4.4 Further information on the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures are set out within the EIA Screening checklist set out in **Table 3.3**.

2.5 Environmental Reports

2.5.1 It should be noted that the planning application will be supported by a suite of environmental assessments which will consider all potential adverse (and beneficial) environmental effects. The suite of technical documents that will support the application is as follows:

- Ecology (including BNG) Appraisal
- Transport Assessment & Travel Plan (including an Electric Vehicle parking strategy which will form part of the TA)
- CEMP
- Flood Risk Assessment /Drainage statement
- Utilities statement (including foul drainage)
- Energy/ Sustainability statement (Including BREEAM)

- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Landscape & Visual Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Economics Benefits Statement
- Archaeology Report
- Noise Assessment
- Ground Investigation/Contamination Report
- External Lighting Assessment
- Fire Strategy

2.5.2 The application would also be accompanied by the planning application drawings, including topographical survey and Planning Statement.

3 Screening Assessment

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 In determining whether the Proposed Development constitutes EIA development, consideration should be had to the following:

- Is the Proposed Development of a type listed in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations?
- If not, is it listed in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations?
- Is the Site located within a sensitive area as defined by the EIA Regulations?
- Does the Proposed Development meet any of the relevant thresholds and criteria set out in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations? and/or
- Would the Proposed Development lead to likely significant effects on the environment?

3.1.2 These points are explored further in this chapter with reference to the EIA Regulations and PPG.

3.2 Schedule 1 Projects

3.2.1 EIA is mandatory for projects listed in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations. Schedule 1 developments are typically large-scale projects for which significant effects would be expected, for example, new airports and power stations. The Proposed Development is not of a type listed in Schedule 1.

3.3 Schedule 2 Projects

3.3.1 EIA is discretionary for projects listed in Schedule 2. If the development proposed is of a type listed in Schedule 2 then it may be classified as EIA development depending on the location of the development (that is, if it is within a sensitive area) and/or whether it meets any of the relevant thresholds or criteria in Column 2 of Schedule 2. The Site itself is not a sensitive area as defined by Regulation 2(1) of the EIA Regulations (see **Section 2.2**).

3.3.2 The proposed development falls within Category 10 of Schedule 2, 'Infrastructure', sub section (b) 'urban *development projects*'. The exclusionary threshold set out in Column 2 of the table is that:

'(i) the development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development; or

(ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings; or

(iii) the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.'

3.3.3 Whilst the Site is not located within a sensitive area as defined by Regulation 2(1) of the EIA Regulations, as the Site is approximately 12.33 ha in size and is comprised of more than one hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development, the Proposed Development exceeds the area threshold. Accordingly, this screening request has been prepared to determine whether the Proposed Development would be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

3.3.4 To achieve this, Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations needs to be considered, as set out below.

3.4 Schedule 3 Criteria

- 3.4.1 Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations sets out selection criteria which relate to specific matters including the characteristics of the development, the location of the development and the characteristics of the potential impacts. These factors should be taken into account as part of the screening process and are set out below for reference:

Characteristics:

- the size and design of the whole development;
- the cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development;
- the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;
- the production of waste;
- pollution and nuisances;
- the risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge; and
- the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).

Location:

- The existing and approved land use;
- the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground; and
- The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:
 - Wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;
 - Coastal zones and the marine environment;
 - Mountain and forest areas;
 - Nature reserves and parks;
 - European sites and other areas classified or protected under national legislation;
 - Areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in EU legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered there is such a failure;
 - Densely populated areas; and
 - Landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

Potential Impact:

- the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- the nature of the impact;
- the transboundary nature of the impact;
- the intensity and complexity of the impact;
- the probability of the impact;
- the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;

- the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development; and
- the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

3.4.2 These criteria are considered in **Section 3.7** Screening Assessment: **Table 3.3** of this report, in relation to the proposed development.

3.5 Consideration of Cumulative Effects

3.5.1 Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations requires consideration of a Proposed Development cumulatively with other existing and / or approved development. Further guidance on the consideration of cumulative effects in the EIA screening process is set out in the PPG:

“...each application (or request for a screening opinion) should be considered on its own merits. There are occasions where other existing or approved development may be relevant in determining significant effects are likely as a consequence of a proposed development. The local planning authorities should always have regard to the possible cumulative effects arising from any existing or approved development.”

3.5.2 A search of WBC’s planning register¹¹ identified the approved developments shown in **Table 3.1**; these should be considered cumulatively in the EIA Screening process. A search radius of 5 km has been used.

Table 3.1: Cumulative Developments

Location & Planning Permission Ref.	Description of Development	Planning Status	Approximate Distance from Site
Land South of Cutbush Labe East, Shinfield 232833	Full application for the proposed Construction of a Collections, Digitisation & Research Centre with associated infrastructure and external works including car parking, SUDS basin and landscaping. Application is a potential departure from the local plan.	Approved September 2024.	160 m to the east of the Site.
Land at Cross Lanes Farm Reading Road Arborfield Reading RG2 9HP 223370	Screening Opinion application for an Environmental Impact Assessment for a proposed development of up to 450 homes (including 40% affordable housing) with main access from Swallowfield Road and secondary access from Reading Road, plus a green infrastructure network including a new SANG, open spaces, green corridors and play areas, and an integrated SuDS network.	Negative Screening Opinion November 2022.	1.4 km to the south of the Site
Land North Of Sheepbridge Court Farm Basingstoke Road Swallowfield RG7 1PT 232653	Full planning permission for a 25 ha solar farm for a temporary period of 40 years (EIA Development).	Approved March 2025	3.1 km to the southwest of the Site
Barkham Farms Barkham Wokingham RG40 4EX	Full application for EIA development for the proposed installation of a new 52ha solar farm for a temporary period of 25 years including underground grid connection between site and Electricity Distribution	Full Planning Permission granted	4.1 km to the southeast of the Site

¹¹ Tandridge District Council Planning Applications Map. Available from: https://tdcmaps.tandridge.gov.uk/myHouse/myHouse_map.html

211081	Centre, laying of internal access road, the erection of substation building security fencing and associated landscaping with approximately 3.4ha of tree planting for carbon sequestration.	January 2022	
Land located to the east of Watmore Lane/Maidensfield Winnersh 230208	Outline application with all matters reserved except access for the proposed erection of up to 234 dwellings.	Outline Planning Permission granted March 2024	4.5 km to the east of the Site
Hogwood Park Park Lane Finchampstead Wokingham RG40 4PT 220772	Application for a Screening Opinion for an Environmental Impact Assessment for a proposed erection of 140 residential dwellings including access road, garages and all associated parking, open space, play area and soft and hard landscaping.	Negative Screening Opinion April 2022.	4.6 km to the southwest of the Site
Land Adjacent to Blagrove Lane Wokingham 222306	Outline application, with all matters reserved except for access, for the proposed erection of up to 350 dwellings (Use Class C3) and care home (Use Class C2), with new accesses onto Barkham Road and Blagrove Lane, landscaping and onsite SANG, following demolition of outbuildings and agricultural buildings.	Outline Planning Permission granted May 2025	4.7 km to the east of the Site

3.6 (National) Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.6.1 The (National) Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) discusses EIA in Section 4. This text provides, amongst other things, central government advice and guidance to help to determine whether significant effects from a development proposal are likely. In general, the more environmentally sensitive the location, the lower the threshold will be at which significant effects are likely.
- 3.6.2 **Table 3.2** sets out the indicative criteria, thresholds and key issues to be considered in determining whether a development of this type is likely to be EIA development, as identified in PPG. This supplements the exclusionary thresholds in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations. The indicative criteria and thresholds should be considered in conjunction with the sensitivity of the Site, scale and nature of the Proposed Development, and the potential for likely significant adverse effects associated with the Proposed Development.

Table 3.2: National Planning Practice Guidance Indicative Screening Criteria¹²

Development type	Indicative criteria and threshold	Key issues to consider	Characteristics of the Proposed Development
Schedule 2 10(b) Urban development project	Environmental Impact Assessment is unlikely to be required for the redevelopment of land unless the new development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use, or the types of impact are of a markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination. Sites which have not previously been intensively developed: (i) area of the scheme is more than 5 hectares; or (ii) it would provide a total of more than 10,000 m ² of new commercial floorspace; or (iii) the development would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).	Potential increase in traffic, emissions and noise.	The Proposed Development will extend to 12.33 ha. Consideration of emissions to traffic, emissions, and noise are provided in Table 3.

¹² [eia-thresholds-table.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/90444/eia-thresholds-table.pdf)

- 3.6.3 The PPG sets out that measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment and to include these with the information required to inform the screening decision.

3.7 Screening Assessment

- 3.7.1 **Table 3.3** overleaf provides a review of all the above criteria and requirements and specifically addresses the Proposed Development. The matrix is the EIA screening checklist in Section 4 of the PPG.

Table 3.3: Planning Practice Guidance EIA Screening Matrix for Shinfield Studios Phase 3, Reading

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or N/A)	
1. Natural Resources				
1.1 Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the topography of the area?	Y	There will be minor physical changes to the topography of the Site to facilitate a level platform for construction of the buildings. During the construction phase soil would be excavated for foundations, drainage, utilities and access. Localised regrading will be undertaken to achieve development platforms, widening of highways and landscaping enhancements including a soil bund. There are no further proposed changes to the topography of the Site during the operation of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development is also intended to be permanent, so decommissioning is not anticipated for the foreseeable future.	N	While there will be alterations to the existing topography of the Site, these changes are expected to be minimal and predominantly temporary in nature (limited to construction). Therefore, no significant effects relating to topography are expected as a result of the Proposed Development.
1.2 Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources above or below ground such as land, soil, water, materials / minerals or energy which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Y	The construction of the Proposed Development will require the movement and management of topsoil to allow construction of the buildings and associated infrastructure. The Proposed Development will result in a minor loss of Grade 3 agricultural land during the construction phase. The construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development will use potable water as would be expected for an employment land use. Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, the operational phase of the Proposed Development is anticipated to require above the levels expected for employment land use.	N	Any potential effects during the construction phase would be mitigated using best practice measures set out within a CEMP, which will be secured through a planning condition, and implemented prior to commencement of works on the Site. The CEMP will include measures to minimise the consumption of natural resources, particularly those non-renewable (including topsoil, water and energy) where possible. It is generally considered that effects relating to agricultural land are generally considered to be significant when the threshold (sites + 20 ha) for the requirement for consultation with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) due to the loss of BMV agricultural land is exceeded. As the Site extends to 12.33 ha, significant effects to agricultural land are not anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will be designed to prevent any likely significant effects on natural resource consumption and include sustainable buildings methods where feasible to minimise the building's

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or N/A)	
				energy consumption including a renewable focused energy strategy. Sustainable water resource use will be applied in accordance with a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating. Therefore, no significant effects are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development.
1.3 Are there any areas on / around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, e.g. forestry, agriculture, water / coastal, fisheries, minerals?	Y	The Site is comprised of agricultural land, which as stated above is undetermined Grade 3 soil (good to moderate agricultural land). There is no designated forestry and there are no Tree Protection Orders (TPO's) located within the Site. It is proposed that one Category B tree will be removed within the Proposed Development. The Site does not contain any other important, high quality, or scarce resources that would be adversely affected by the Proposed Development.	N	It is generally considered that effects relating to agricultural land are generally considered to be significant when the threshold (sites + 20 ha) for the requirement for consultation with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) due to the loss of BMV agricultural land is exceeded. As the Site extends to 12.33 ha, and only a small proportion of this features agricultural land, significant effects to agricultural land are not anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development. During construction, the CEMP will include measures to avoid and minimise any significant adverse effects relating to water pollution and biodiversity. Where possible, on-site trees will be retained, particularly mature trees and those identified as being higher value. Any tree removal required will be met with proportionate replacement planting to offer compensation and reinstatement of arboricultural features. Appropriate root protection buffers will be maintained around retained trees during construction, informed by the Arboriculture Impact Assessment. Following these measures, it is considered that there will not be a significant adverse effect on any high quality or scarce resources during construction or operation.
2. Waste				
2.1 Will the project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Y	During construction, the Proposed Development will result in solid waste materials from the preparation and undertaking of works. During operation, minimal waste is anticipated to be generated by the Proposed Development and will mainly consist of food waste from those working at the studios.	N	Construction waste will be reused and recycled where possible. Any construction waste would be managed and disposed of in accordance with a CEMP (to be secured via condition), all applicable legislation, and best practice. Waste generated in the construction phase would be managed in line with the waste hierarchy; waste reused and recycled wherever possible, and landfill avoided. Operational solid waste would be disposed of in line with PCC's waste collection regime or collected by a private contractor in accordance with all applicable legislation. Significant quantities of operational waste is not anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development. Given the scale of the Proposed Development, and the mitigation measures identified above, significant quantities of construction or

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or N/A)	
				operational waste are not anticipated. Therefore, significant effects are not considered likely.
3. Pollution and Nuisances				
3.1 Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	Y	There will be temporary dust emissions associated with site preparations and vehicles during the construction phase. There will also be limited direct emissions from vehicle and plant exhausts on and accessing the Site. There would also be emissions (namely NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) associated with the operational phase of the Proposed Development due to vehicles travelling to and from the Site, including HGVs and light traffic for employees. The Proposed Development will not release any hazardous substances or toxic emissions to air.	N	Dust generation during the construction phase would be managed in accordance with standard best practice measures as recommended by the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM), such as wheel washing, installation of hard surface haul routes and application of dust suppressants which will be outlined in the CEMP. With these routine measures in place, any residual dust generation is not anticipated to generate significant adverse effects. During operation, emissions released from vehicles are not expected to increase significantly. A Travel Plan will be submitted with the planning application which will set out the measures to promote the use of sustainable transport modes rather than single occupancy vehicle movements which will also reduce the release of emissions. The Proposed Development is not considered to release levels of pollutants that would result in likely significant effects, following the implementation of standard mitigation measures. Therefore, significant effects are not considered likely.
3.2 Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Y	The potential exists for noise and vibration effects to result from the construction activities associated with the Proposed Development. Due to the Site's surrounding employment land uses and proximity to existing noise sources, significant adverse noise above existing ambient sound levels is not expected for prolonged periods. No temporary lighting will be installed in the construction phase, and there will need to be some operational lighting to support safe and secure operations at night. Any lighting would be sensitively designed to meet the obtrusive light limitations of Environmental Zone E3. Security cameras will be infrared. Operational noise is anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development. The baseline conditions on	N	During construction, noise, vibration and lighting effects will be managed in accordance with best practice measures, implemented through the CEMP and are not anticipated to generate significant adverse effects. The CEMP will be secured through planning condition; therefore significant effects are not anticipated during construction. A Noise Impact Assessment addressing the potential effects from new noise sources during operation (from operational traffic or new plant) and the identification of any mitigation measures will be submitted with the planning application. Further the acoustic consultant identified that the noise generated by the Proposed Development is not anticipated to be above existing noise conditions on the Site. Therefore, significant adverse noise effects above existing ambient sound levels are not anticipated.

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or N/A)	
		the Site are undeveloped land, however the existing noise climate on the site is also influenced by existing operational employment uses which surround the Site, as well as traffic on nearby roads including the M4 located to the north of the Site. The employment land use of the Proposed Development will not cause vibration during operation. No heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation will be caused or released during construction or operation of the Proposed Development. Lighting is anticipated within the Proposed Development, both internally and externally.		All external lighting and illumination would be designed carefully in accordance with relevant British Standards and target the obtrusive light limitations established by the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP). An External Lighting Assessment will be submitted with the application to ensure the external lighting of the Proposed Development will not generate significant effects. Therefore, operational significant effects as a result of new external lighting required for safety and security are not considered likely.
3.3 Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Y	A small portion of the Site is currently in agricultural use, and is not heavily developed, indicating that there is unlikely to be significant contamination on-site. During the construction phase, standard mitigation measures such as health and safety procedures for construction workers and the storing of chemicals or oils in appropriately bunded containers will be implemented. Hydrocarbons will be used as part of the construction phases of the Proposed Development. This would involve plant and vehicle fuel and lubricants. Their use will be controlled through the implementation of the CEMP and will not result in any significant adverse effects to land or water. The land uses proposed are not highly contaminative. It is not expected that there is a high risk of contaminants being released into the environment. Surface water run-off and foul water drainage will be managed on-site during the construction and operational phases, as detailed further in the Drainage Strategy and Utilities	N	Risk of pollution associated with construction (e.g. spills and leaks from vehicles) will be minimised using normal mitigation measures (such as use of spill kits) which would be set out in the CEMP (to be secured via condition). A Phase 1 Ground Conditions assessment will be undertaken, which will confirm the presence or absence of contamination. Albeit significant or heightened levels of contamination are not expected given the existing arable uses. If required, an appropriate scheme of mitigation or remediation will be implemented in accordance with standard best practice measures. Surface water run-off will be managed on-site during the construction and operational phases through the implementation of a Surface Water Drainage Strategy that will be submitted with the planning application. Given the above and the nature of the Proposed Development, it is considered that risk of contamination from the Proposed Development can be minimised through appropriate mitigation measures. Therefore, a significant effect is not considered likely.

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or N/A)	
		Statement that are being submitted with the planning application. On the basis of the above and further to the use of standard mitigation measures, the Proposed Development will not lead to contamination of land or water.		
3.4 Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage, e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	N	There are no known areas within or around the Site which are subject to pollution, environmental damage, or exceed existing legal environmental standards in any respect.	N/A	
4. Population and Human Health				
4.1 Will there be any risk of major accidents (including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge) during construction, operation or decommissioning?	N	During the construction activities, the contractor(s) will implement measures in accordance with Health and Safety legislation/requirements, and best practice to minimise the risks of accidents that could have adverse effects on people or the environment. All such measures will form part of the CEMP which would be secured by condition of the planning consent for the Proposed Development. There are no anticipated significant risks of accidents during operation as the Proposed Development will not involve users dealing with hazardous substances. Any such substances required to be used as part of the employment floorspace would be regulated with all applicable workplace health and safety legislation.	N/A	
4.2 Will the project present a risk to the population (having regard to population density)	Y	During the construction phase there may be increased dust and vehicle-related emissions as a result of construction traffic along local roads.	N	Dust and vehicle emissions during the construction & decommissioning phase would be mitigated by following best practice mitigation measures from IAQM (e.g. wheel washing, installation of hard surface

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or N/A)	
and their human health during construction, operation or decommissioning? (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)		As detailed in Section 3.3 of this Table, there is a risk of contamination associated with these activities, however it is considered that a significant effect is not likely following implementation of appropriate mitigation measures. During operation, the Proposed Development will be of a type and scale not anticipated to cause any significant effects on human health. Public access to the Site will be restricted by security fencing and security cameras. There will be operational traffic associated with the Proposed Development. This is not anticipated to generate any significant risks to human health from air pollution.		haul routes, application of dust suppressants and preventing vehicles from idling). These measures will be detailed within the CEMP (to be secured via condition). Any air pollution arising from construction would be limited, localised and temporary, so a significant adverse effect to human health is considered highly unlikely. The nature of the Proposed Development will not present a risk to the human health of the surrounding population. Hence significant effects to human health as a result of the Proposed Development are not anticipated.
5. Water Resources				
5.1 Are there any water resources including surface waters, e.g. rivers, lakes/ponds, coastal or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project, particularly in terms of their volume and flood risk?	Y	The Site features three tributaries of the River Loddon and a small pond. The 2021 SFRA Model shows that the Site is located primarily in Flood Zone 1, with areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 around Oldhouse Farm and the watercourses there. There is a potential for surface water flooding within the Site, primarily in the areas around Oldhouse Farm. The Proposed Development has been designed to ensure that impacts on these water features and flow routes are minimised and that existing flow regimes are maintained, ensuring no adverse impacts upstream or downstream. Built development is outside both the fluvial design event and the surface water flood design event, complying with NPPF and the sequential approach. Surface water run-off and foul water drainage will be managed on-site during the construction and	N	A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy report will be submitted with the planning application to demonstrate that the risk of flooding is not increased by the construction of the Proposed Development. At this stage, the following design principles are expected to be incorporated into the Proposed Development: ■ No built development will be located within Flood Zone 3; ■ Any vulnerable infrastructure will be located outside of the design fluvial flood extents where possible. Where this is not possible, then it will be located in areas of shallow flooding (0.3 m or less) and raised to 0.5 m on pads or plinths; ■ Designing watercourse crossing in accordance with the relevant EA guidance; ■ A separated drainage system between foul and surface water. The foul water network will convey flows to the southeast corner of the proposed development, where a private package pump station is proposed. All new surface water networks are drained by gravity and the drainage networks pass through SuDS features including swales and filter trenches to provide the treatment; ■ Surface storage successfully manage storm events up to the 1 in 100 year return period plus a 40% allowance for climate change

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or N/A)
		operational phases. The Proposed Development, if required, will involve the introduction of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) which will be designed to be appropriately treated, and flows will be restricted to greenfield run off rates. The SUDS will be implemented and maintained in accordance with the FRA and Drainage Strategy.	- No vulnerable infrastructure should be located in the areas of surface water flooding predicted to be greater than 0.6 m; - Vulnerable infrastructure located in areas of shallower predicted flooding will be raised on pads or plinths at least 0.5 m above the ground; and - Incorporation of suitable drainage design measures to ensure that discharge rates and water quality are controlled to appropriate standards prior to discharge to the water environment. This will ensure that the receiving water environment is not adversely affected by drainage and run off from the Site. Considering the above, it is considered that the Proposed Development is not likely to have a significant adverse effect on the volume and flood risk of local watercourses.
6. Biodiversity (Species and Habitats)			
6.1 Are there any protected areas which are designated or classified for their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, or any non-designated/non-classified areas which are important or sensitive for reasons of their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, located on or around the location and which could be affected by the project? (e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water-bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, undesignated nature reserves or parks. (Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local)).	Y	There are no statutory or non-statutory ecological designations on or adjacent to the Site. The nearest designated site to the Site is Stanford End Mill and River Loddon SSSI located approximately 4.1 km to the southwest of the Site. An Ecological Appraisal for the Site was first conducted in 2019, since then, additional surveys have been conducted to ensure potential ecological constraints and opportunities for ecological enhancements are as accurate as possible. The most recent Ecological Appraisal was carried out in October 2023 and updated species survey work is currently underway which will be presented in an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) Report that will accompany the planning application. Surveys confirmed the presence of roosts in the two Listed Buildings located on the Site and identified multiple trees throughout the Site as having features suitable to support roosting bats. Nine bat species were identified on Site and three species of amphibians were recorded within 2 km of the Site, none of which were Great Crested Newts (GCNs).	N At this stage, construction mitigation measures are likely to include: - Production of a LEMP with a particular focus on enhancement measures to improve the existing hedgerows and treelines; - Construction to be limited to daylight hours in the bat active period (April-October); - Any vegetation clearance or building work should be conducted during the period mid-September to February (inclusive), which is outside of the bird nesting season. If this is not possible and vegetation clearance/building work is required within the bird nesting season (March to mid-September, inclusive), a nesting bird check will need to be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist prior to commencement; and - Any security lighting during construction will be PIR activated and directed away from boundary features. No permanent lighting will be installed during the construction phase; and - Protection of boundary habitats during construction. Operational mitigation measures are likely to include: - Works which are likely to affect bat roosts must be undertaken under a European Protected Species License (EPSL) - Retention of existing hedgerows;

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or N/A)	
				- Retention of Listed Buildings and locations of known bat roosts - Suitable corridors for bat movement through the site will be created and maintained. Considering the above, no likely significant adverse effects on protected areas are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development.
6.2 Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be affected by the project?	Y	The surveys conducted over the past six years found the Site to be comprised of: lowland mixed deciduous woodland, some modified grassland, other neutral grassland, arable farmland, a pond, a ditch, hedgerows and lines of trees. The species of note found on the Site are discussed in section 6.1 above and in the Ecological Appraisal. Further information surrounding the flora and fauna located at the Site will be discussed in the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) Report that will accompany the planning application.	N	The mitigation measures to prevent significant impacts to the sensitive flora and fauna identified on the Site are outlined in 6.1 above. In cases where impacts to protected habitats, species or groups are assessed as both low magnitude and severity, precautionary measures, defined within CEMP can be produced to minimise these potential impacts. Construction phase ecological mitigation will be secured through the CEMP (to be secured via condition). The CEMP will detail any precautionary working measures for protected and notable species, to limit impacts on these species during the construction and decommissioning phase. To inform design and appropriate mitigation measures further surveys will be completed prior to submission of the application. In developing the design for the Proposed Development, the mitigation hierarchy will be followed whereby opportunities to avoid impacts on ecological features will be sought in the first instance. Where avoidance isn't feasible, impacts will be minimised through incorporating appropriate mitigation measures into the design and prior to / during construction. As a last resort, where impacts cannot be avoided or minimised through mitigation; appropriate compensation measures will be implemented to offset residual effects. At this stage, mitigation and enhancement measures are likely to include: - Retention of ditch habitats and provision of suitable buffers; - Appropriate buffers implemented to protect ponds; - Pre-commencement badger checks; - All hedgerows and trees to be retained where possible and appropriate buffer zones implemented;

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or N/A)	
				Retention of boundary features where possible. Details of the above ecological mitigation and enhancement measures will be provided on plans for approval and managed in line with the LEMP which will accompany the planning application. In particular, the LEMP should specifically detail ecological enhancement measures that improve the foraging potential of wildfowl species, particularly those that are associated with proximate designated sites. An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) will be undertaken and submitted with the planning application to demonstrate that there will be no likely significant adverse effects. At least 10% BNG will be delivered, in line with the requirements of the Environment Act 2021. Given the above, it is considered that the Proposed Development is not likely to have significant adverse ecological impacts, in EIA terms, after appropriate mitigation measures are implemented.
7. Landscape and Visual				
7.1 Are there any areas or features on or around the location which are protected for their landscape and scenic value, and/or any non-designated/non-classified areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project? Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	Y	The Site is not within a National Park or National Landscape. North Wessex Downs and Chilterns National Landscapes are located 9.4 km to the west and 8 km to the north respectively. Due to the Site's proximity of the existing human influence and the M4, the landscape is not considered to be of high scenic value. The relative containment of the Proposed Development, combined with the existing Shinfield Studios lowers the perceptual characteristics of the area.	N	There will be a change to the current arable use and therefore a visual change from agricultural practices. However, the Proposed Development is typical of the surrounding area and has no particular features of special or protected landscape value. There are no permanent or significant changes to the landscape, and the site topography and site levels would be largely unchanged. The LVIA submitted with the planning application will set out potential effects from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development, and identify appropriate mitigation measures to avoid likely significant adverse effects on the local landscape. Therefore, significant effects are not considered likely.
7.2 Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people? (If so, from where,	Y	As outlined in the 'Landscape and Visual Technical Note', the Site has a moderate visual relationship with its agricultural context, indicates that the Proposed Development will likely be visible to users of nearby PRow and users of surrounding highways.	N	The change is not expected to be out of character for the existing landscape surrounding the Site, including the already consented areas of Shinfield Studios and the M4. Detailed soft landscape plans will be submitted with the application to provide visual mitigation and

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or N/A)	
what direction, and what distance?)		The Landscape and Visual Technical Note outlines the majority of long-distance views of the Site are limited by the undulating topography of the Site and screening from tree belts and woodland. Near distance views from within the Site are available from private property, including the farmstead and the previous phases of the Shinfield Studios development and nearby PRoW. These views are expected to be partial and short-term.		integration of the Proposed Development into the wider landscape. This is alongside the retention of existing trees and hedgerows. There would be a visual change which inevitably has a degree of harmful visual impact. However, the effects are very localised and are not significant. With the implementation of mitigation measures it is considered that there will be no significant effects.
8. Cultural Heritage / Archaeology				
8.1 Are there any areas or features which are protected for their cultural heritage or archaeological value, or any non-designated classified areas and/or features of cultural heritage or archaeological importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project (including potential impacts on setting, and views to, from and within)? Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	Y	The Site does not contain any Scheduled Monuments or World Heritage sites, nor will the Site be visible from either Scheduled Monuments or World Heritage sites. The Site contains two Listed Buildings; Old House Farmhouse Grade II Listed Building (list entry: 1118136) and Barn approximately 50 m south of Oldhouse Farmhouse Grade II Listed Building (list entry: 1136136). The value of these Listed Buildings is not related to the area surrounding it.	N	The Site does not form part of the setting of the nearby heritage assets; Old Farmhouse Grade II Listed Building and Barn approximately 50 m south of Oldhouse Farmhouse Grade II Listed Building. The Proposed Development will retain and restore the Listed Buildings. The Heritage Assessment Statement assess the potential impact of the Proposed Development to the Listed Buildings to be positive due to the proposed improvement from the current condition. The embedded scheme mitigation would further minimise effects. Geophysical surveys will be undertaken to confirm the archaeological sensitivity of the Site. If required, standard archaeological mitigation measures (e.g. a watching brief) would be agreed as necessary with WBC, as informed by the geophysical surveys. The Site layout can avoid areas of greater archaeological sensitivity. The Proposed Development is however not anticipated to have any likely significant adverse effects on archaeology.
9. Transport and Access				
9.1 Are there any routes on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project? 9.2 Are there any transport routes on or around the	Y	The Site is predominantly surrounded by existing employment land uses. There are no recreation facilities that could be impacted by the Proposed Development. The PRoW Footpath SHIN4 runs around the southwestern portion of the Site. The PRoW is not anticipated to be severed or permanently impacted by the Proposed Development.	N	During construction, standard, best practice measures will be adopted to prevent any significant effects such as, loading and unloading of materials will occur within the Site and if necessary appropriate hoarding/fencing will be placed around the site's boundaries. These measures will be enforced through a CEMP. Additionally, a Transport Assessment will be submitted with the planning application to identify measures to mitigate significant adverse effects which may arise as a result of the operational phase of the Proposed Development.

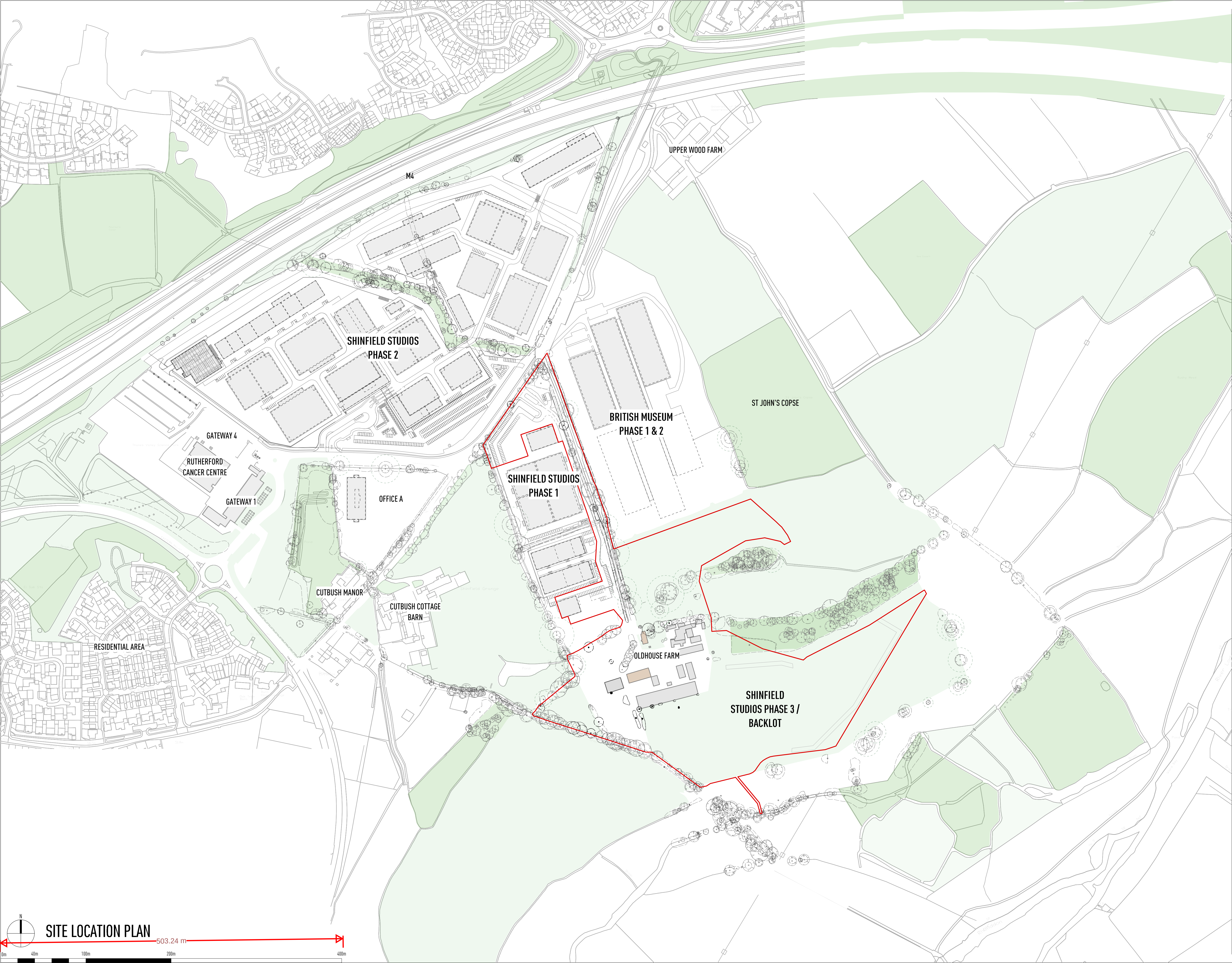
Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or N/A)	
location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?		Site access is proposed to be gained off Cutbush Lane. As the Proposed Development will require frequent vehicular movements within and to and from the Site, an increase of vehicles is anticipated surrounding the Site and the nearby highways.		Therefore, significant effects related to transport are not anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development. No diversions or closures to the nearby PRoWs are required to facilitate the proposed development. In the unlikely event that temporary closures are required to facilitate construction activities or safety reasons then local diversions would be provided, as agreed with the LPA on a temporary basis. Hence, significant impacts to surrounding public access are not anticipated.
10. Land Use				
10.1 Are there existing land uses or community facilities on or around the location which could be affected by the project? E.g. housing, densely populated areas, industry / commerce, farm/agricultural holdings, forestry, tourism, mining, quarrying, facilities relating to health, education, places of worship, leisure /sports / recreation.	Y	As outlined in Section 1.2 of this Table, the Site is undefined Grade 3 agricultural land. The land additionally features multiple farm buildings which will be removed as part of the Proposed Development. Due to the Site not exceeding 20 ha, significant effects to agricultural land are not anticipated. The Grade II Listed Oldhouse Farmhouse will be converted from a single residential dwelling into office space. It is proposed to refurbish the listed farmhouse without any external alteration. There are no other land uses or community facilities in the surrounding area which will be significantly impacted by the Proposed Development.	N	The Site is unspecified Grade 3 agricultural land, which is classified as being good to moderate agricultural land. As the Site does not exceed 20 ha any loss of agricultural land is not deemed significant. It is considered that the Proposed Development will not have significant effects in regard to loss of agricultural land. While the Proposed Development will result in a loss of a residential dwelling, this is not considered to be a significant impact due to this being a singular loss of residence, and the benefits and opportunities that these proposals will create are considered to far outweigh the loss of this residential dwelling. Therefore, significant effects are not expected as a result of the Proposed Development in relation to land uses and community facilities.
10.2 Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	N	No other plans for land uses on or around the location have been identified which could be affected by the Proposed Development as the development is in association with the already established Shinfield Studios.	N/A	
11. Land Stability and Climate				
11.1 Is the location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme /adverse climatic conditions, e.g.	N	The Site is not in a location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme / adverse climatic conditions.	N/A	

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or N/A)	
temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?		The Flood Risk Assessment will include allowances for climate change. The Site is not considered susceptible to any other hazards.		
12. Cumulative Effects				
12.1 Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in cumulation of impacts during the construction/operation phase?	Y	There are several existing and / or approved developments within 5 km of the Site, as identified in Table 1. There is potential for the Proposed Development to result in cumulative effects existing and / or approved developments, prior to the implementation of mitigation measures.	N	At this stage, it is not anticipated that the Proposed Development's contribution towards cumulative transport and visual effects would be significant. The Site is not visually within proximity of another Site to contribute cumulatively to views and any potential operational transport impacts will be mitigated through the implementation of the Travel Plan. Any potential cumulative effects regarding construction will be mitigated through the CEMP and CTMP. It is assumed that the other committed developments would have similar measures in place during their construction phases. As such, significant cumulative effects are considered unlikely.
Transboundary Effects				
13.1 Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects?	N	No	N/A	

4 Conclusion

- 4.1.1 The proposed development falls within Category 10 of Schedule 2, 'Infrastructure', sub section (b) '*urban development projects*'. The exclusionary threshold set out in Column 2 of the Schedule 2 table is that: "*i) The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development; or (ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings; or (iii) the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.*".
- 4.1.2 The Site itself is not a sensitive area as defined by the EIA Regulations; however it falls above the PPG indicative criteria and screening thresholds for Category 10 developments including more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development and being greater than 5 hectares in site area.
- 4.1.3 As set out in **Table 3.3**, none of the effects are considered to have the potential to be significant in the context of the EIA Regulations. All effects (significant or otherwise) would be minimised through careful Site design, best practice construction measures and by implementing appropriate mitigation. Several mitigation measures are expected to be secured by planning condition.
- 4.1.4 We look forward to receiving your Screening Opinion within the statutory three weeks as prescribed in the EIA Regulations.

Appendix A Site Location Plan



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Key Plan

Notes

- Planning Boundary
- Existing Shinfield Studios Buildings
- Existing & Proposed Green Spaces

PL4	18/08/2025	For Planning Application
PL3	10/07/2025	For Information
PL2	09/07/2024	Pre-App
PL1	30/11/2023	Issued for Pre-Application

Revisions

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Client	Shinfield Studios Ltd.	Project No.	0983
Project	Shinfield Studios Phase 3		

Drawing Title
Site Location Plan

Status	Drawn	Checked
PRELIMINARY	JH	JH
Scale	Date	
1:2500 @A1	NOV 2022	
Drawing Number	Revision	
0983_S-00	PL4	

