



3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This Chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) describes the Site and its surroundings, in accordance with Schedule 4 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. The description provided in this chapter is an overview. The technical chapters describe the Site in more detail, where this is relevant to establishing the environmental baseline for the individual assessments.

3.2 Site Location

- 3.2.1 The Site is shown edged in red on the submitted Site Location Plan, which is included as **Figure 1.1**. It comprises land at Body's Farm, to the east of Basingstoke Road, in the village of Spencers Wood.
- 3.2.2 The Site comprises land to the south and west of Spencers Wood. It is bound by residential development to the north, and by Basingstoke Road (B3349) to the south and west, with residential/commercial development extending beyond.
- 3.2.3 Agricultural land and an existing solar farm are present to the east of the Site.

3.3 Site Description

- 3.3.1 The site comprises agricultural land and is formed by a series of irregularly shaped fields, extending to approximately 39.26ha with gently undulating terrain.
- 3.3.2 There are well established hedgerow boundaries and several mature trees present across the site, none of which are subject to Tree Protection Orders.
- 3.3.3 There are no other features of interest within the site boundary. There is currently no public access to the site, and no Public Rights of Way affect the land.
- 3.3.4 Below ground, an Exolum Pipeline runs east to west, within and across the northern part of the Site.



3.4 Site Surroundings

- 3.4.1 Basingstoke Road runs along the western boundary of the Site, which is a main transport corridor towards the M4, the A33 and Reading. Basingstoke Road is also the arterial route through the built-up area of Shinfield, Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross.
- 3.4.2 The site is in a sustainable location, offering convenient access to local services and existing facilities both nearby and across the Greater Reading area. It is also close to key amenities, including Lambs Lane Primary School, Oakbank Secondary School, Swallowfield Medical Practice, Shinfield Medical Centre, several convenience stores, childcare facilities, public transport options, and a garden centre. Additionally, there are existing employment units immediately to the south of the site.
- 3.4.3 The land immediately to the south of the site is the subject of a planning application (reference 232653) for a new solar farm which has been recommended for approval. The proposed development includes landscape buffering, including Sustainable Alternative Green Space (SANG), Public Open Space and substantial tree planting.

3.5 Relevant Designations

- 3.5.1 The Site is located within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area 5km Linear Mitigation Zone, as designated under the European Commission Birds Directive, and the Stanford End Mill and River Loddon Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone.
- 3.5.2 Further, the site is located within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) for the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Burghfield. The DEPZ is the area where the Council needs to have planned, in detail, how it, along with many other responders, will respond in the event of a radiation emergency arising from the AWE site.
- 3.5.3 There are no designated or non-designated built heritage assets located within the site. However, within 1km of the Site, there are fifteen Listed Buildings (two Grade II* and remainder Grade II), one Registered Park and Garden (Swallowfield Park) and four non-designated built heritage assets.