

# Rosefield Solar Farm

## Habitat Regulations Assessment: No Significant Effects Report

Part 5.3

EN010158/APP/5.3  
September 2025  
Rosefield Energyfarm Limited

APFP Regulation 5(2)(g)  
Planning Act 2008  
Infrastructure Planning  
(Applications: Prescribed Forms  
and Procedure) Regulations 2009



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1.1. This document has been prepared on behalf of Rosefield Energyfarm Limited ('the Applicant') to report the findings of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening assessment, in relation to the Development Consent Order (DCO) Application for the construction, operation (including maintenance), and decommissioning of Rosefield Solar Farm (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.1.2. The assessment identifies any internationally designated nature conservation sites (e.g., Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites) within the potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development. It will determine whether any potential impact pathways between the Proposed Development and any of these European sites exist, through which Likely Significant Effects could occur.
- 1.1.3. The purpose of the assessment to provide the Competent Authority with such information as reasonably required for the purposes of an appropriate assessment or to enable it to decide if an assessment is required. Further details of the HRA process are provided in **Section 3**.
- 1.1.4. Based on proximity to the Proposed Development, the nearest European sites are 'Oxford Meadows' SAC and 'Chilterns Beechwoods' SAC, both located over 20km away from the Proposed Development. These sites and qualifying features are discussed in detail within this report.
- 1.1.5. The following terminology is used throughout this report:
- The 'Site' – is the area within the Order Limits; and
  - The Proposed Development – is the Solar Photovoltaic (PV) development including all infrastructure, cables and Solar PV modules.

## 1.2. The Order Limits

- 1.2.1. The location of the Proposed Development is shown on **ES Volume 3, Figure 1.1: Location Plan [EN010158/APP/6.3]**. The Proposed Development would be located within the Order Limits (**Figure 1.2: Order Limits [EN010158/APP/6.3]**) within which the Proposed Development can be carried out.

## 2. The Proposed Development

### 2.1. The Site

- 2.1.1. The Proposed Development is located within the administrative boundary of Buckinghamshire Council, with a central grid reference SP 73100 23777. The Site covers c. 675 hectares (ha), and comprises mainly arable fields, interspersed with hedgerows, small woodland blocks, ponds and farm access tracks. Several minor watercourses run adjacent to the Order Limits, including the Claydon Brook and tributaries, alongside small field drains and ditches that run parallel to numerous field boundaries.
- 2.1.2. The Site is situated in a rural area, surrounded by a network of farmland interconnected by hedgerows, pockets of woodland, ditches and small streams. The village of East Claydon is 415m to the west of the Site and the village of Granborough is 1.6km to the east.

### 2.2. The Proposed Development

- 2.2.1. The Proposed Development comprises the construction, operation (including maintenance), and decommissioning of Solar PV development and energy storage, together with associated infrastructure and an underground cable connection to the existing National Grid East Claydon Substation.
- 2.2.2. The Proposed Development would include a generating station with a total exporting capacity exceeding 50 megawatts ('MW'). The Proposed Development is described in full in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010158/APP/6.1]**.
- 2.2.3. The principal components of the Proposed Development include:
- Solar PV development consisting of:
    - Ground mounted Solar PV generating station. The generating station would include Solar PV modules and mounting structures; and
    - Balance of Solar System (BoSS) which comprises: Inverters; Transformers; Switchgear; Combiner Boxes; and cabling.
  - A project substation (the 'Rosefield Substation') compound comprising: Transformers; Switchgear; reactive power compensation bays; disconnectors; circuit breakers; busbars; control equipment; lightning surge arrestors; building(s) including office, control, functions, material storage, material laydown areas and welfare facilities; firewalls; fencing and acoustic fencing; a security cabin; parking as well as wider monitoring, maintenance and emergency equipment;
  - A Main Collector Compound and two Satellite Collector Compounds comprising: Switchgear; Transformers; ancillary equipment; operation

(including maintenance) and welfare facilities; material storage; material laydown areas; fencing and acoustic barriers; and security cabins;

- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) compound comprising: batteries and associated Inverters; Transformers; Switchgear, ancillary equipment and their containers; office, control and welfare buildings; fencing and acoustic fencing; monitoring, maintenance and emergency systems; air conditioning; electrical cables; fire safety infrastructure; operation (including maintenance) security facilities; material storage; and material laydown areas;
- Interconnecting Cabling Corridor(s) to connect the Solar PV modules and the BESS to the Satellite Collector Compounds and Main Collector Compounds to the Rosefield Substation;
- A Grid Connection Cable Corridor to connect the Rosefield Substation to the National Grid East Claydon Substation via 400kV cabling;
- Ancillary infrastructure works comprising: boundary treatment; security equipment; lighting; fencing; landscaping; internal access tracks; works to facilitate vehicular access; earthing devices; earthworks; surface water management; utility connections and diversions; and any other works identified as necessary to enable the Proposed Development;
- Green and blue infrastructure, recreation and amenity works comprising: landscaping; habitat management; biodiversity enhancement; the creation of permissive footpaths; and works to permanently divert four PRow Footpaths in five instances;
- Site-wide operational monitoring and security equipment; and
- Highways infrastructure improvements and safety works comprising: minor junction improvement works; road widening; passing places; and works to facilitate vehicular access to the Site.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Legislation and planning policy

- 3.1.1. This report has been prepared in accordance with the guidance on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Habitat Regulation Assessments **[Ref. 1]**.
- 3.1.2. Article 6 of the Habitats Directive **[Ref. 2]** states that an assessment is required to test if a plan or project proposal could significantly harm the designated features of a Natura 2000 site (known as a 'European site' in the UK). The requirements of the Habitats Directive are transposed into English law by means of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), often referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations' **[Ref. 3]**. This type of assessment is therefore generally known as a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).
- 3.1.3. Natura 2000 sites form a network of areas designated to conserve natural habitats and species that are rare, endangered, vulnerable, or endemic within the European Community. The Habitats Regulations provide for the designation of sites for the protection of habitats and species of international importance. These sites are called as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). They also provide for the classification of sites or the protection of rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory species within the UK and internationally. These sites are called Special Protection Areas (SPAs) (classified under Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds; the 'Birds Directive') **[Ref. 4]**. SACs and SPAs together form part of the UK's National Sites Network (NSN).
- 3.1.4. In addition, any proposals affecting the following sites also require an HRA as these are protected by UK Government policy: proposed SACs; potential SPAs; Ramsar wetland sites both listed and proposed (Designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance); and areas secured as sites compensating for damage to a European site.
- 3.1.5. The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) **[Ref. 5]** states:

*"The highest level of biodiversity protection is afforded to sites identified through international conventions. The Habitats Regulations set out sites for which an HRA will assess the implications of a plan or project, including Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.*

*As a matter of policy, the following should be given the same protection as sites covered by the Habitats Regulations and an HRA will also be required:*

- (a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;*
- (b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and*
- (c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on any of the other sites covered by this paragraph”.*

3.1.6. The Habitats Regulations require that, where the Proposed Development is likely to have a likely significant effect (LSE) on any such site, alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, an appropriate assessment (AA) is carried out to determine whether or not the Proposed Development will have an adverse effect on the integrity (AEoI) of the Site in view of that Site’s Conservation Objectives. In this report, the following steps are referred to as the HRA:

- **Stage 1: Screening** is the first stage of the process and identifies the likely significant effects upon a European site of a project (either alone or in combination). Mitigation cannot be taken into consideration at this stage of the HRA. If the screening exercise concludes that LSE cannot be ruled out, then an Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2 of the process, see below) must be undertaken. It is important to note that the burden of evidence is to demonstrate, on the basis of objective information, that there will be no significant effect. If the effect may be significant, or is not known, that would trigger the need for an Appropriate Assessment.
- **Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment** examines the implications of the effects of the proposals for the Site’s conservation objectives (alone and in combination). At this stage, it needs to be determined, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, whether or not there will be adverse effects on the integrity of the Site. This stage also includes the development of mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any possible impacts.
- **Stage 3: Derogations** is the process which examines where AEoI of a European site cannot be ruled out, a proposal may be able to go ahead through a derogation under the Habitats Regulations. There are 3 legal tests which must be met and each needs to be passed for a derogation to be granted:
  - Test 1: Assessment of Alternative Solutions;
  - Test 2: Consideration of Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI);
  - Test 3: Compensatory Measures.

## 3.2. Conservation objectives

3.2.1. The conservation objectives for a Natura 2000 site are intended to represent the aims of the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive in relation to that site. Measures taken under the Habitats Directive should be designed to maintain or restore habitats and species of European

importance at favourable conservation status (FCS). The conservation objectives of a site set the standards that must be met if the features of the Site (i.e., habitats and species) are to be at FCS.

- 3.2.2. The conservation status of natural habitats is defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive as follows **[Ref. 3]**:

*“The sum of influences acting on a natural habitat and its typical species that may affect its long-term natural distribution, structure and functions as well as the long-term survival of its typical species.*

*The conservation status of natural habitats will be taken as favourable when:*

- *Its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing;*
- *The species structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future;*
- *The conservation status of its typical species is favourable as defined in Article 1.”*

- 3.2.3. The conservation status of a species is defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive as follows **[Ref. 3]**:

*“The sum of the influences acting on the species concerned that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its population.*

*The conservation status of species will be taken as favourable when:*

- *Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;*
- *The natural range of the species is neither being reduced for the foreseeable future;*
- *There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.”*

- 3.2.4. In order to meet the conservation objectives of a site, the integrity of the Site must be maintained. Deterioration or disturbance is assessed against the conservation status of species and habitats concerned. The integrity of a site is the coherence of its ecological structure and the functioning of its ecological systems, the features for which the Site is designated (habitats and/or species), and the ability of the Site to meet its conservation directives. An adverse effect is therefore defined as something that impacts the Site's features, either directly or indirectly, and results in disruption or harm to the ecological structure and functioning of the Site



and/or affects the ability of the Site to meet its conservation objectives across all parts of the Site.

- 3.2.5. The purpose of the HRA process is to demonstrate whether or not there will be an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site, in light of its conservation objectives. The following sections provide a summary of relevant information that may be used by the competent authority to determine whether a significant adverse effect on a qualifying site is likely, and therefore whether a statement to inform an Appropriate Assessment is required.

### 3.3. Ecological baseline

- 3.3.1. A full ecological baseline for the Proposed Development is given within **ES Volume 2, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010158/APP/6.2]** and supporting appendices (**ES Volume 4, Appendices 7.1-7.17 [EN010158/APP/6.4]**). It should be noted that there will no loss of habitat or other interest features associated with the two European sites identified, and given the distance involved over 20km away) impacts are considered highly unlikely.
- 3.3.2. The following surveys have been referenced and reviewed to inform the HRA screening:
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken in September 2021 and February 2022 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.1: Preliminary Ecological Assessment (2022) [EN010158/APP/6.4]**);
  - Bat preliminary roost assessment undertaken in March 2022 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.2: Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment Report (2022) [EN010158/APP/6.4]**);
  - Wintering bird surveys undertaken October 2021-March 2022 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.3: Wintering Bird Survey Report (2022) [EN010158/APP/6.4]**);
  - Breeding bird surveys undertaken March-June 2022 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.4: Breeding Bird Survey Report (2022) [EN010158/APP/6.4]**);
  - Great crested newt environmental DNA survey undertaken in May 2022 and April 2023 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.5: Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index and Environmental DNA Report (2023) [EN010158/APP/6.4]**);
  - Badger survey undertaken December 2021-March 2022 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.6: Badger Survey Report (2022) - Confidential [EN010158/APP/6.4]**);
  - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken in June, July, August, October 2023, January and May 2024 and April 2025 (see **ES Volume**

**4, Appendix 7.7: Preliminary Ecological Assessment (2025) [EN010158/APP/6.4]);**

- Hedgerows Regulations survey undertaken in June, July, August and October 2023, January and May 2024 and April 2025 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.7: Preliminary Ecological Assessment (2025) [EN010158/APP/6.4]);**
- Arable (non-crop) plant survey undertaken in June 2023 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.7: Preliminary Ecological Assessment (2025) [EN010158/APP/6.4]);**
- River condition assessment survey undertaken in September 2023 and April 2025 (to inform the BNG assessment) (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.17: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (2025) [EN010158/APP/6.4]);**
- Otter and water vole surveys undertaken in June and August 2023 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.8: Otter and Water Vole Survey Report (2023) [EN010158/APP/6.4]);**
- Aquatic preliminary surveys undertaken in June 2023 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.9: Preliminary Aquatic Survey Report (2023) [EN010158/APP/6.4]);**
- Bat activity surveys undertaken July 2022-September 2023 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.10: Bat Activity Survey Report (2024) [EN010158/APP/6.4]);**
- Wintering bird surveys undertaken November 2023-February 2024 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.11: Wintering Bird Survey Report (2024) [EN010158/APP/6.4]);**
- Breeding bird surveys undertaken March-July 2024 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.12: Breeding Bird Survey Report (2024) [EN010158/APP/6.4]);**
- Arboriculture surveys undertaken April-June 2024 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.13: Arboricultural Impact Assessment [EN010158/APP/6.4]);**
- Bat preliminary roost assessment undertaken in November-December 2024, January 2025 and April 2025 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.14: Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment Report (2025) [EN010158/APP/6.4]);**
- Badger survey undertaken in November-December 2024, January 2025 and April 2025 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.15: Badger Survey Report (2025) [EN010158/APP/6.4]);** and  
Paired static detector surveys undertaken in October 2024 and May 2025 (see **ES Volume 4, Appendix 7.16: Paired Static Bat Detector Survey Report (2025) [EN010158/APP/6.4]).**

## 4. Stage 1: HRA Screening

### 4.1. Protected sites potentially affected by the proposals

- 4.1.1. A search for designated sites was originally undertaken in 2021, followed by updated searches to include additional areas added to the Order Limits in 2025. The searches were used to inform the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and phase 2 ecology reports for the Proposed Development and to inform this report.
- 4.1.2. There are no European sites within 20km of the Proposed Development. There are two European sites within 30km of the Site:
- 'Oxford Meadows' SAC, located c. 25km south west of the Site; and
  - 'Chilterns Beechwoods' SAC, located c. 27km south east of the Site.
- 4.1.3. As these are the closest European sites to the Proposed Development, these have been considered in this screening exercise for Likely Significant Effects. Note that given the nature of the Proposed Development and the likely potential impact pathways, 10km is considered a robust Zone of Influence for the likely effects of the Proposed Development both alone and in-combination, therefore considering European sites within 30km is considered to be extremely precautionary.
- 4.1.4. The locations of these European sites in relation to the Site are shown in **Figure 1**. Descriptions of these European sites and their qualifying features are provided below, based on information from Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) website **[Ref. 6]**; MAGIC Interactive Map Application **[Ref. 7]** and relevant site citations, reviewed in May 2025.
- 4.1.5. There are three nationally protected statutory designated nature conservation sites within 2km of the Site:
- Sheephouse Wood SSSI – adjacent to Parcel 1 and 1a;
  - Finemere Wood SSSI – adjacent to Parcel 2; and
  - Grendon and Doddershall Woods SSSI – 1.4km south west of Parcel 1a.
- 4.1.6. In addition, Ham Home-cum-Hamgreen Woods SSSI is located 3.2km south west of the Order Limits and the impact risk zone boundary for this SSSI intersects with the Order Limits.
- 4.1.7. The nationally designated sites, detailed above, are not European sites and therefore do not require screening for Likely Significant Effects within this HRA No Significant Effects Report. Potential impacts on nationally designated sites are addressed within **ES Volume 2, Chapter 7**:

## **Biodiversity [EN010158/APP/6.2] and ES Volume 2, Chapter 17: Cumulative Effects [EN010158/APP/6.2].**

### **4.2. Oxford Meadows SAC (Site reference number: UK0012845)**

- 4.2.1. Located approximately 25km from the Site, situated on the floodplain of the River Thames to the west and north west of the city of Oxford, Oxford Meadows SAC is designated for its *Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis)* habitat, for which it is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. It is also designated for Creeping Marshwort (*Apium repens*), for which it is the only known outstanding locality for this plant in the United Kingdom.
- 4.2.2. Oxford Meadows includes vegetation communities that are perhaps unique in reflecting the influence of long-term grazing and hay-cutting on lowland hay meadows. Oxford Meadows has benefited from the survival of traditional management, which has been undertaken for several centuries, and so exhibits good conservation of structure and function. Port Meadow is the largest of only two known sites in the UK for Creeping Marshwort [Ref. 8], [Ref. 9], [Ref. 10].

### **4.3. Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (Site reference number: UK0012724)**

- 4.3.1. Located approximately 27km from the Site, Chilterns Beechwoods SAC is broken up into a number of separate sites, stretching in a band to the south and south east of the Site, between Watlington in Oxfordshire and Dagnall in Buckinghamshire. The SAC is designated for the Annex I habitats *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests (Beech forests on neutral to rich soils), for which it is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom; and *Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia)* (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone), for which the area is considered to support a significant presence. It also hosts the Annex II invertebrate species stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.
- 4.3.2. The Chilterns Beechwoods represent a very extensive tract of *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests in the centre of the habitat's UK range. The woodland is an important part of a grassland-scrub-woodland mosaic. A distinctive feature in the woodland flora is the occurrence of the rare plant coralroot (*Cardamine bulbifera*) [Ref. 11], [Ref. 12], [Ref. 13].
- 4.3.3. The screening assessment for the above two Sites is presented within **Table 1** and **Table 2** respectively.

Table 1: Screening of 'Oxford Meadows' SAC

'Oxford Meadows' SAC		
Qualifying Features	Impact	Assessment
<b>6510 Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)</b>  <b>1614 Creeping Marshwort <i>Apium repens</i></b>	Hydrological effects – pollution and human-induced changes to hydraulic conditions	<p>Oxford Meadows SAC is designated for its lowland hay meadows habitat and the presence of the rare plant species Creeping Marshwort. Both of these features depend on the unique hydrological conditions of the Site which is regularly flooded by the adjacent River Thames. Changes in the flow of the river or groundwater could result in potential damage to the existing habitat or loss of the Creeping Marshwort colony.</p> <p>The Site is not hydrologically connected to the SAC, and as a result, in conjunction with the large distance of approximately 25km between the Site and the SAC, it is not considered that the Proposed Development will affect the hydrology of the SAC.</p> <p><b>No Likely Significant Effect identified.</b></p>
	Damage to qualifying habitats or species	<p>Due to the large distance between the Site and the SAC it is not considered that the Proposed Development will cause any direct damage to the habitats or species present at the SAC.</p> <p>Habitat surveys carried out at the Site did not identify any lowland hay meadow habitat or Creeping Marshwort. The plant is only known to be</p>

'Oxford Meadows' SAC		
Qualifying Features	Impact	Assessment
		<p>present at two locations in the UK of which the Proposed Development is not one. Therefore, it is not considered that the Proposed Development will affect any examples of the qualifying habitats or species outside of the SAC.</p> <p><b>No Likely Significant Effect identified.</b></p>
	Spread of invasive species	<p>Site conservation objectives for the Oxford Meadows SAC list the spread of invasive <i>Crassula</i> species as a significant threat to the SAC. Due to the large distance between the SAC and the Site, and the fact that no construction plant or landscaping associated with the Proposed Development will be closer than 25km, it is not considered that the Proposed Development would cause any spread of invasive species to the SAC.</p> <p><b>No Likely Significant Effect identified.</b></p>
	Air and hydrological pollution	<p>Due to the large distance between the Site and the SAC, the fact that the Site and SAC are not hydrologically connected, and the nature of works during the construction, operation (including maintenance), and decommissioning phases; there is not anticipated to be any significant impact pathways for air or water pollution emissions that may arise from</p>

'Oxford Meadows' SAC		
Qualifying Features	Impact	Assessment
		<p>the Proposed Development. Therefore, no direct or indirect effects from water, air or other pollution to the SAC.</p> <p><b>No Likely Significant Effect identified.</b></p>
	Increased human activities and recreational pressure	<p>The Proposed Development relates solely to the construction of a solar farm and associated infrastructure, with no other development types such as housing or recreation planned in association. As such, the Proposed Development will not lead to an increase in human activities (e.g., recreational activities) in the wider area surrounding the Order Limits. As such, increase recreational pressure and disturbance on any European sites does not represent a potential impact pathway from the Proposed Development.</p> <p><b>No Likely Significant Effect identified.</b></p>

Table 2: Screening of 'Chilterns Beechwoods' SAC

'Chilterns Beechwoods' SAC		
Qualifying Features	Impact	Assessment
<b>9130 <i>Asperulo-Fagetum</i> beech forests</b>	Damage to qualifying habitats or species	The Chilterns Beechwoods SAC is designated for its beech forest and calcareous grassland habitats, as well as for the presence of stag beetle. Due to the large distance of approximately 27km between the Site and the SAC it is not considered that the Proposed Development will cause any direct damage to the habitats or species present at the SAC.
<b>6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites)</b>		During habitat surveys undertaken within the Site, no <i>Asperulo-Fagetum</i> Beech forest or calcareous grassland were identified. Some areas of woodland within the Order Limits may provide suitable habitat for stag beetle, however these will not be directly affected by the Proposed Development and all woodland and the majority of hedgerows will be retained. Therefore, it is not considered likely that the Proposed Development will affect any examples of the qualifying habitats or species outside of the SAC.
<b>1083 Stag beetle <i>Lucanus cervus</i></b>		<b>No Likely Significant Effect identified.</b>
	Air and hydrological pollution	The Site Improvement Plan for Chilterns Beechwoods SAC lists 'impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition' as a threat to the qualifying habitats and species of the SAC. Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, and the likely ongoing management of the Site, it is unlikely that the Proposed



'Chilterns Beechwoods' SAC		
Qualifying Features	Impact	Assessment
		<p>Development would result in a change to the production of atmospheric nitrogen on the Site or the levels of nitrogen deposition at the SAC.</p> <p>The Site is not hydrologically connected to the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and given the large distance between the Site and the SAC; there is not anticipated to be any significant direct or indirect effects from water, air or other pollution to the SAC.</p> <p><b>No Likely Significant Effect identified.</b></p>
	Invasive non-native species and problematic native species	<p>The Site Improvement Plan for Chilterns Beechwoods SAC lists deer and grey squirrel populations as potential threats to the Beech forest habitats of the SAC. Deer and grey squirrel are likely to be present on the Site. Due to the distance of the Site from the SAC, the nature of the Proposed Development, and the likely ongoing management of the Site there is not anticipated to be any effect on the local populations, or the populations at the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC of deer or grey squirrel.</p> <p><b>No Likely Significant Effect identified.</b></p>
	Increased human activities and recreational pressure	<p>The Proposed Development relates solely to the construction of a solar farm and associated infrastructure, with no other development types such as housing or recreation planned in association. As such, the Proposed Development will not lead to an increase in human activities (e.g.,</p>

'Chilterns Beechwoods' SAC		
Qualifying Features	Impact	Assessment
		<p>recreational activities) in the wider area surrounding the Order Limits. As such, increase recreational pressure and disturbance on any European sites does not represent a potential impact pathway from the Proposed Development.</p> <p><b>No Likely Significant Effect identified.</b></p>

## 5. In-combination Assessment

- 5.1.1. There are several other development proposals in the local area (as detailed in **ES Volume 2, Chapter 17: Cumulative Effects [EN010158/APP/6.2]**, and summarised in **Table** below). The most prominent of these is the HS2 high speed rail development which passes to the west of the Site. Although the route of HS2 passes close (c. 19 km) to the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, mitigation requirements and obligations for HS2, which have been developed in consultation with Natural England, will likely reduce the potential for any direct impacts on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. Likewise, East West Rail DCO: Bedford to Cambridge and Western improvements passes along the boundary of Oxford Meadows SAC, however mitigation requirements and obligations for this development, will likely reduce the potential for any direct or indirect impacts. As outlined above, no impacts are anticipated from the Proposed Development on either of the two European sites and no cumulative impacts are envisaged. There are also no impacts anticipated from any of developments assessed in **ES Volume 2, Chapter 17: Cumulative Effects [EN010158/APP/6.2]** and detailed in **Table 3** given the distances between these applications and the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and Oxford Meadows SAC and mitigation proposals.
- 5.1.2. A full review of cumulative impacts on nationally designated sites and other ecological receptors is presented in **ES Volume 2, Chapter 17: Cumulative Effects [EN010158/APP/6.2]**.

Table 3: Short list of other existing/approved developments

No. in the long list	Application reference	Planning regime	Brief description	Distance from the Order Limits (km)	Proximity to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (km)	Proximity to Oxford Meadows SAC (km)
1	23/03875/APP Appeal ref. 25/00013/REF	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	East Claydon BESS. Development of a BESS, connected directly to the national grid with associated infrastructure including access, drainage, and landscaping.	Within Order Limits	19.5	29.9
2	25/01297/APP	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	East Claydon Greener Grid Park. Construction of a greener grid park comprising energy storage and grid balancing equipment and associated infrastructure including access, drainage, landscaping and other incidental works.	Within Order Limits	21.2	29.9
3	19/00983/APP	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Tuckey Solar Farm. Ground mounted solar farm, ancillary infrastructure and associated works including the diversion of public rights of way and landscape planting.	In inner circle	20.9	30.6

No. in the long list	Application reference	Planning regime	Brief description	Distance from the Order Limits (km)	Proximity to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (km)	Proximity to Oxford Meadows SAC (km)
5	Hybrid Bill	High Speed Rail Bill	High Speed Rail 2 ('HS2').	Inner circle and beyond	19.7	23.8
7	CM/0016/21	Town and County Planning Act 1990	Calvert Solar Farm. Application for the construction of solar array/solar park comprising of ground mounted solar PV modules and associated works including: Distributor Network Operator (DNO) switching station, the Applicant switching station, battery containers, general storage container, access track, fencing, security cameras and cabling for a temporary period of 35 years at Calvert Landfill Site.	Partially in inner circle	16.8	22.8
8	25/00013/DCO	Planning Act 2008	East West Rail DCO: Bedford to Cambridge and Western improvements.	1.0	18.2	Adjacent to the boundary
9	25/01865/APP	Town and Country	Longbreach Solar Farm. Erection of a solar farm and creation of new vehicular access, new footpath,	1.2	18.2	29.6

No. in the long list	Application reference	Planning regime	Brief description	Distance from the Order Limits (km)	Proximity to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (km)	Proximity to Oxford Meadows SAC (km)
		Planning Act 1990	substation compound, customer substation, inverters, CCTV Tower, storage containers, perimeter fencing, car parking and associated ancillary development.			
11	21/A2851//NON Appeal ref. 22/00125/REF	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Grendon Prison. Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access, layout, and scale for the construction a new category C prison (up to 67,000 sqm GEA) within a secure perimeter fence together with access, parking, landscaping and associated engineering works.	1.6	20.9	22.0
13	25/00883/AOP	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Demolition of existing buildings and commercial redevelopment with residential development, including affordable housing, along with associated access and infrastructure.	1.7	21.4	32.1
14	24/00407/APP	Town and County	Erection of 10 no. dwellings and associated green infrastructure.	2.6	22.8	33.4

No. in the long list	Application reference	Planning regime	Brief description	Distance from the Order Limits (km)	Proximity to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (km)	Proximity to Oxford Meadows SAC (km)
		Planning Act 1990				
16	25/01567/AOP	Town and County Planning Act 1990	Outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the development of up to 24 dwellings, open space, sustainable drainage and associated works.	4.2	24.2	20.8
19	22/03873/F Appeal ref. APP/C3105/W/24/3353069	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Padbury Brook Solar Farm. Installation and operation of a renewable energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with a switchgear container, inverter/transformer units, Site access, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.	6.9	28.7	21.2

No. in the long list	Application reference	Planning regime	Brief description	Distance from the Order Limits (km)	Proximity to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (km)	Proximity to Oxford Meadows SAC (km)
20	24/03004/APP	Town and County Planning Act 1990	Hybrid application for the redevelopment of the Site comprising outline planning permission, with all matters reserved except access, for a drive thru restaurant (Use Class E(b)/Sui Generis) and EV charging hub and full planning permission for an office building (Use Class E(g)(ii)) and a day nursery (Use Class E(f)) with associated landscaping, parking and access arrangements.	7.0	25.6	36.3
21	21/04112/OUT Appeal ref. 22/00039/REF	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Outline application for the erection of up to 65 dwellings, including up to 8 live-work dwellings (use class sui generis), public open space, access, infrastructure and demolition of existing buildings (all matters reserved except principle means of access from Station Road).	8.1	27.2	17.7
22	24/03426/AOP	Town and Country	Outline application (all reserved apart from access) for approx. 220 residential dwellings, pre-	8.2	29.3	31.9



No. in the long list	Application reference	Planning regime	Brief description	Distance from the Order Limits (km)	Proximity to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (km)	Proximity to Oxford Meadows SAC (km)
		Planning Act 1990	school/nursery, SuDS and open space off Bourton Road, Buckingham, MK18 7R.			
<b>24</b>	24/00949/F	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Siting of battery storage facility; substation for the connection of the BESS to the grid; ancillary equipment; security fencing; landscaping and vehicular access alterations.	9.0	26.8	19.3
<b>25</b>	21/03558/OUT	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Outline application for residential development for up to 250 dwellings including affordable housing and ancillary uses including retained Local Wildlife Site, public open space, play areas, localised land remodelling, compensatory flood storage, structural planting and access.	9.4	27.6	16.1
<b>26</b>	24/03259/F	Town and Country	The erection of two Use Class B8 floorspace units (with ancillary office floorspace (Use Class E(G(i))) with	9.5	25.6	15.3

No. in the long list	Application reference	Planning regime	Brief description	Distance from the Order Limits (km)	Proximity to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (km)	Proximity to Oxford Meadows SAC (km)
		Planning Act 1990	associated infrastructure including: a building for the use as an energy centre (details of the energy generation reserved for future approval); loading bays; service yards; external plant; bin stores, vehicle parking (HGV, lorry, car and motorcycle); cycle parking, amenity areas, landscaping including permanent landscaped mounds; sustainable drainage details. Demolition of three vacant agricultural building (and two smaller structures) to the north east corner of the Site. Access from the existing Symmetry Park estate road.			
27	21/01224/OUT	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Outline planning application for Automotive Experience Quarter comprising Commercial, Business and Services uses (Class E), Light Industrial (Class B2), Local Community and Learning Uses (Class F) and vehicle circuits (Sui	9.6	28.9	17.5

No. in the long list	Application reference	Planning regime	Brief description	Distance from the Order Limits (km)	Proximity to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (km)	Proximity to Oxford Meadows SAC (km)
Generis) with all matters reserved aside from that of access).						
28	25/00439/SCOP	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	EIA scoping opinion for a proposed residential-led development.	9.7	30.1	18.0
31	23/01610/OUT	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Outline application (matters of access to be considered, with matters of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping reserved) cross boundary with Buckinghamshire LPA (application reference 23/02180/AOP) for a Sustainable Urban Extension comprising residential development of up to 1,265 dwellings (Use Class C3), a mixed-use local centre (Class E(a) Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food, E(b) Sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises, E(c) provision of: E(c)(i) Financial services, E(c)(ii)	9.9	22.9	39.6

No. in the long list	Application reference	Planning regime	Brief description	Distance from the Order Limits (km)	Proximity to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (km)	Proximity to Oxford Meadows SAC (km)
			professional services (other than health or medical services), or E(c)(iii) Other appropriate services in a commercial, business or service locality, E(e) Provision of medical or health services (except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner), E(f) Creche, day nursery or day centre (not including a residential use)), sui-generis hot food takeaway, a care home/extra care provision, community and commercial uses, a primary school, vehicle accesses from and a link road between the A421 and H6 Childs Way, diversion of existing PROW and new pedestrian and cycle access points and routes, car and cycle parking, open space, sports provision, play areas, landscaping, plant, earthworks and ground remodelling, demolition of existing buildings, electrical substations, and associated			

No. in the long list	Application reference	Planning regime	Brief description	Distance from the Order Limits (km)	Proximity to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (km)	Proximity to Oxford Meadows SAC (km)
			infrastructure works. EIA development.			
32	22/03384/AOP	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Littleton Green. Hybrid application to comprise: Part A – Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved (except for 2 principal points of access) for a residential development of up to 535 dwellings; primary school; commercial units; mobility hubs; parking; upgraded vehicular access onto A41 and Quainton Road; vehicle accesses; cycle and pedestrian accesses; a community hub including residential care and retail; associated landscaping, parkland and woodland, ecological and environmental enhancements/habitat creation; green and blue infrastructure. Part B – A full planning application for an Energy Park development comprising a solar PV array, a wind turbine, an electric vehicle charging	3.5	14.2	24.6

No. in the long list	Application reference	Planning regime	Brief description	Distance from the Order Limits (km)	Proximity to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (km)	Proximity to Oxford Meadows SAC (km)
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station, a substation, roundabout connecting to the A41 including new access roads and associated infrastructure.

## 6. Conclusion

- 6.1.1. Likely pathways for potential Likely Significant Effects have been considered, however, given the distance from the Order Limits and the nature of the designated features no impact pathways have been identified and none have been assessed to provide a risk of Likely Significant Effect to Oxford Meadows SAC or Chilterns Beechwoods SAC when the Proposed Development is considered alone and in-combination. As such, an Appropriate Assessment is not considered necessary.

## 7. References

- **Ref. 1:** Guidance Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Habitats Regulations Assessments (March 2025). Available online: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-on-habitats-regulations-assessments#full-publication-update-history>
- **Ref. 2:** Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01992L0043-20130701>
- **Ref. 3:** The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Available online: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents>
- **Ref. 4:** Council of the European Communities. (2009). Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (codified version). Official Journal of the European Communities, 20 (2009), 7-25.
- **Ref. 5:** Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023). Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1). Available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1>
- **Ref. 6:** Joint Nature Conservation Committee. European and Internationally designated site locations and citations. Available online: <https://jncc.gov.uk/>
- **Ref. 7:** Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. 'Magic' interactive map. Available online: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>
- **Ref. 8:** JNCC (2025) *Oxford Meadows SAC*. Available online: <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0012845>
- **Ref. 9:** Natural England (2014) *European Site Conservation Objectives for Oxford Meadows SAC (UK0012845)*. Available online: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5815888603250688>
- **Ref. 10:** Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Oxford Meadows (SIP163). Available online: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4942743310696448>
- **Ref. 11:** JNCC (2025) *Chilterns Beechwoods SAC*. Available online: <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0012724>
- **Ref. 12:** Natural England (2014) *European Site Conservation Objectives for Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (UK0012724)*. Available online:

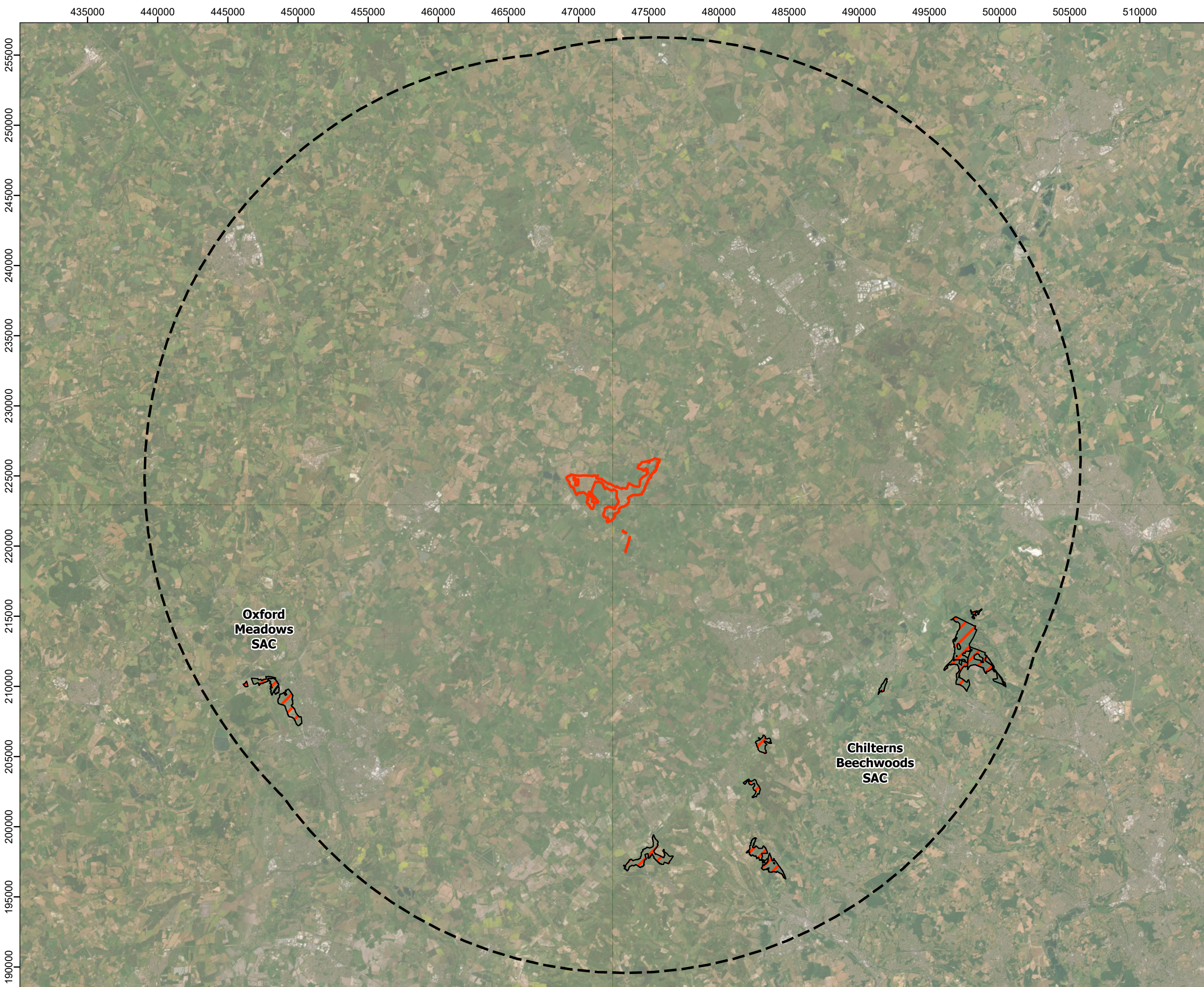


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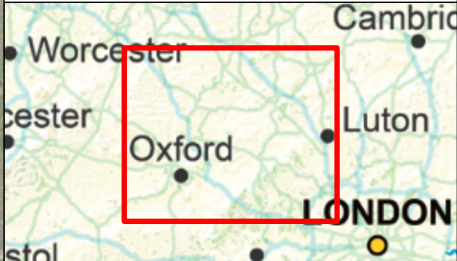
- **Ref. 13:** Natural England (2014) *Site Improvement Plan: Chilterns Beechwoods (SIP045)*. Available online:  
<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6228755680854016>

# **Figure 1 – Location of designated sites in relation to the Proposed Development**





- Legend:
- Order Limits
  - 30km buffer
  - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

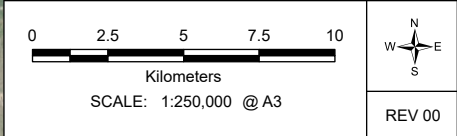


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Rosefield Solar Farm



TITLE: Figure 1:  
Location of Designated Sites in relation  
to the Proposed Development







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