Lime Down
Solar Park

Environmental Statement

Volume 1, Chapter 16: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation

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16.1 Introduction

16.1.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) presents the findings an assessment of the likely significant effects on socio-economics, tourism and recreation as a result of Lime Down Solar Park (hereafter referred to as 'the Scheme'). For more details about the Scheme, refer to **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

16.1.2 This chapter identifies and proposes measures to address the potential impacts and likely significant effects on socio-economics, tourism and recreation, during the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the Scheme.

16.1.3 This chapter should be read in conjunction with **ES Volume 1, Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact, Chapter 12: Cultural Heritage, Chapter 13: Transport and Access,** and **Chapter 18: Human Health [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

16.1.4 This chapter is supported by the following figures in **ES Volume 2 [EN010168/APP/6.2]**:

- **Figure 16-1: Study Areas for Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation**;
- **Figure 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Sites**; and
- **Figure 16-3: Long-Distance Recreational Routes**.

16.1.5 This chapter is supported by the following appendices in **ES Volume 3 [EN010168/APP/6.3]**:

- **Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information**;
- **Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables**; and
- **Appendix 16-3: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Summary of Non-Significant Effects**.

16.2 Consultation

16.2.1 A request for an EIA Scoping Opinion (Ref 16-1) was sought from the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate in July 2024. The issues raised in the Scoping Opinion are summarised and responded to within **ES Volume 3, Appendix 1-2: Scoping Opinion Responses [EN010168/APP/6.3]** which demonstrates how the matters raised in the Scoping Opinion are addressed in this ES. Matters where the scope of the assessment has been raised by the Planning Inspectorate are summarised in **Table 16-1** below.

Table 16-1: Planning Inspectorate Scoping Opinion Responses

ID	Summary of Matter	Response
ID 3.13.1	The Scoping Report proposes to scope out an assessment of socio-economic impacts during decommissioning (apart from employment) on the basis that these will be no more significant than those assessed for construction, and difficulties associated with providing a meaningful assessment of potential impact for a 2089 future baseline date. The Inspectorate acknowledges these potential limitations but does not agree that decommissioning can be excluded from the ES given that likely significant effects have been identified for the construction phase. The ES should provide information on the socio-economic impacts during decommissioning based on reasonable assumptions where likely significant effects may occur.	The Applicant has included the assessment of all socio-economic impacts at decommissioning as requested in Section 16.10 of this chapter. Assumptions on future baseline conditions for socio-economic receptors have been made on the most up-to-date existing baseline conditions and future baseline projections where available.
ID 3.13.2	The Scoping Report proposes to scope out an assessment of tourism and recreation impacts during the decommissioning phase on the basis that these will be short to medium term and no more significant than those assessed for construction. The Inspectorate does not agree that decommissioning can be scoped out at this stage given that likely significant effects on PRoW and heritage assets have been identified for the construction phase. The ES should provide information on tourism and recreation impacts during decommissioning based on reasonable assumptions where likely significant effects may occur.	The Applicant has included the assessment of all tourism and recreation impacts at decommissioning as requested in Section 16.10 of this chapter. Assumptions on future baseline conditions for tourism and recreation impacts have been made on the most up-to-date existing baseline conditions.
ID 3.13.3	The Scoping Report proposes to scope out an assessment of impacts to property value and crime for all project phases on the basis that there is little evidence that property value or levels of crime or safety are significantly affected by the development of solar farms. The Inspectorate agrees that significant effects are not likely in relation to crime and safety or	The Applicant notes these comments and has provided details of security infrastructure in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

ID	Summary of Matter	Response
	property value and is content to scope these matters out. The ES should provide details on security proposed during construction and operation (such as installation of security fencing, CCTV, and lighting).	
ID 3.13.4	The ES should provide the anticipated number of jobs proposed to be created for each of the phases of the Proposed Development and consider the potential impact of construction workers on capacity of local accommodation and services.	The Applicant notes these comments and has provided details of anticipated employment at construction, operation and maintenance, a peak replacement scenario, and during decommissioning. Assessment of impacts on accommodation required for each development stage has been included in Section 16.10 of this chapter.
ID 3.13.5	The ES should include a clear justification as to how the study areas for the socio economic, tourism and recreation assessment have been defined. The study areas and receptors should be depicted on corresponding figures to aid understanding. It should be clear how the selected study areas relate to the extent of the likely impacts from the Proposed Development.	The Study Areas for socio-economic, tourism and recreation have been set out and justified in Section 16.5 of this chapter. The Study Areas have also been depicted in **ES Volume 2: Figure 16-1** to **16-3 [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.
ID 3.13.6 to 3.13.7	The ES must include clear and appropriate figures to support the impact assessment. Figures should be of an appropriate scale and shading to allow each element on the figure to be clearly distinguishable and include clear keys/legends and labels. It would assist the reader if the red line boundary for the Proposed Development could be shown on this figure (showing the Southwest ITL1 region).	The Applicant notes these comments and has provided updated **ES Volume 2: Figure 16-1** to **16-3 [EN010168/APP/6.2]** to address matters of legibility and clarity.

16.2.2 Engagement has been undertaken with Wiltshire Council's Economic and Regeneration Team and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Officer, as these represent Wiltshire Council as one of the two host authorities on socio-economic, tourism and recreation matters. The points of discussion raised are summarised in **Table 16-2** below. Separate engagement with South Gloucestershire Council has not been undertaken due to the minimal extent of the Order Limits (two Highway Improvement Area) that lie within their administrative boundary.

Table 16-2: Summary of Engagement Undertaken

Consultee and Date	Issue/Topic	Response
Wiltshire Council Public Rights of Way 12 March 2025	**Discussion of Matters Raised in Statutory Consultation Response:** Representations from the British Horse Society to protect the condition and use of existing rights of way during all points of the Scheme's lifetime; Public rights of way management strategies; The potential for the Scheme to deliver new permissive access routes, upgrades to existing public rights of way, and improvements to public rights of way signage and furniture onsite and in the nearby area.	The Applicant confirms that existing PRoW are to be protected within the Scheme design with PRoW management strategies set out in the **Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths Management Plan (PRoW and Permissive Paths MP) [EN010168/APP/7.17]**. These are confirmed as embedded mitigation measures in Section 16.9 below. New permissive access routes have been included in the Scheme design, shown as Work No.10 on the **Works Plan [EN010168/APP/2.3]** and shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 3-4: Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan [EN010168/APP/6.2]**. These are considered as additional mitigation and enhancement measures in Section 16.11 below.
Wiltshire Council Economy and Regeneration 1 April 2025	**Discussion of Matters Raised in Statutory Consultation Response:** Concerns were raised regarding optimism of employment figures and whether or not jobs created in the supply chain will have a local benefit. Further work was deemed to be needed to reduce the impacts on PROWs, and on the impact on tourism and the benefits from increased biodiversity and carbon sequestration.	The Applicant has set out the assessment methodology and assumptions made in determining the extent of likely employment figures and local economic benefit in Section 16.4 to 16.6, and in the assessment in 16.10 below. The Applicant confirms that existing PRoW are to be protected within the Scheme design with PRoW management strategies set out in the **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]**. These are confirmed as embedded mitigation

Consultee and Date	Issue/Topic	Response
		measures in Section 16.9 below. A full assessment of tourism and recreation impacts has been undertaken and set out in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. The Applicant confirms that economic benefits relating to BNG and carbon credit systems have not been considered as part of this assessment. Environmental benefits from BNG and carbon sequestration are set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 7: Climate Change** and **ES Volume 1, Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity [EN010168/APP/6.1]**

16.2.3 Statutory consultation was held between 29 January 2025 and 19 March 2025. A full list of consultation responses in relation to socio-economic, tourism and regeneration matters are presented in the **Consultation Report Appendices [EN010168/APP/5.2]** submitted as part of the Application.

16.2.4 A further round of targeted consultation was undertaken between 3 June 2025 and 11 July 2025 following changes to the development boundary area of the Scheme presented in the PEIR and at Stage Two Statutory Consultation. Further detail regarding the targeted consultation is provided in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 1: Introduction [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

16.3 Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

16.3.1 A summary of applicable legislation, planning policy and other guidance documents relating to socio-economics, tourism and recreation pertinent to the Scheme is provided below.

16.3.2 Details of the legislation, policy, and guidance of relevance to the assessment of socio-economics, tourism and recreation is provided in in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]** and supported in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 5: Energy Need Legislative Context and Energy Policy [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

Legislation

16.3.3 Applicable legislation to inform the socio-economics, tourism and recreation assessment includes:

- Planning Act 2008 (Ref 16-2);
- Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (Ref 16-3); and
- Equality Act 2010 (Ref 16-4).

National Planning Policy

16.3.4 The National Policy Statements (NPS) that are relevant to the Scheme are:

- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (Ref 16-5) (specifically, Section 4.3 which sets out the general assessment principles for environmental effects, and Sections 5.11 and 5.13 which sets out generic impacts for recreational land use, and socio-economic impacts respectively);
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (Ref 16-6); and
- National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) (Ref 16-7).

16.3.5 The NPSs listed above came into effect on 17 January 2024. These NPSs set out the Government's energy policy for the delivery of nationally significant energy infrastructure, the need for new energy infrastructure, and guidance for the determination of an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO).

16.3.6 Consultation on updates to the NPS for Energy was undertaken between April and May 2025 (Ref 16-8), but it is not anticipated that the changes proposed are to be adopted until this DCO is submitted. The proposed changes to the NPSs for Energy are furthermore not likely to substantially change the considerations and assessment approach to assessment of socio-economic, tourism and recreation effects.

16.3.7 The relevant NPS requirements specifically relevant to socio-economics, tourism and recreation have been detailed further at paragraphs 1.2.4 to 1.2.18 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. This is supported by detailed indication of where in the ES the information is provided to address these requirements, provided in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 5-1: National Policy Statement Requirements [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

16.3.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) (Ref 16-9) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

16.3.9 Specific to socio-economics, tourism and recreation, the NPPF provides policy context at Chapter 6 for building a strong, competitive economy, Chapter 8 for the support and promotion of healthy and safe communities, and Chapters 15 and 16 for conserving and enhancing the natural environment and built and historic environment.

Local Planning Policy

16.3.10 Local planning policies that are relevant to the Scheme and socio-economics, tourism and recreation are:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy 2006 to 2026 (adopted January 2015) (Ref 16-10):
  - Core Policy 10: Spatial Strategy: Chippenham Community Area;
  - Core Policy 11: Spatial Strategy: Corsham Community Area;
  - Core Policy 13: Spatial Strategy: Malmesbury Community Area;
  - Core Policy 15: Spatial Strategy: Melksham Community Area;
  - Core Policy 34: Additional employment land;
  - Core Policy 36: Economic regeneration;
  - Core Policy 39: Tourist development;
  - Core Policy 40: Hotels, bed and breakfasts, guest houses and conference facilities;
  - Core Policy 41: Sustainable construction and low carbon energy;
  - Core Policy 42: Standalone renewable energy installations;
  - Core Policy 48: Supporting rural life;
  - Core Policy 49: Protection of rural services and community facilities;
  - Core Policy 52: Green infrastructure;
  - Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping; and
  - Core Policy 63: Transport strategies.
- 'Saved policies' from previous Local Development Plans:
  - North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011, adopted June 2006 (Ref 16-11);

  - West Wiltshire District Plan, First Alteration, adopted June 2004 (Ref 16-12); and
  - West Wiltshire Leisure and Recreation DPD, adopted January 2009 (Ref 16-13).
- Neighbourhood plans:
  - Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2038, adopted May 2024 (Ref 16-14);
  - Chippenham Without Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2036, adopted October 2023 (Ref 16-15);
  - Corsham Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2026, adopted November 2019 (Ref 16-16);
  - Great Somerford (incorporating Startley) Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2026, adopted November 2017 (Ref 16-17);
  - Hullavington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016 – 2026, adopted September 2019 (Ref 16-18);
  - Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2: 2020 – 2038, adopted August 2025 (Ref 16-19);
  - Seagry Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036, adopted May 2021 (Ref 16-20);
  - Sherston Neighbourhood Plan 2006 to 2026, adopted May 2019 (Ref 16-21); and
  - Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan: Volume I – Main Body, adopted February 2015 (Ref 16-22)
- Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy 2006-2026, adopted June 2009 (Ref 16-23);
- Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Development Control Policies Development Plan Document, adopted September 2009 (Ref 16-24);
- Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy 2006-2026, adopted June 2009 (Ref 16-25); and
- Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Development Control Policies Development Plan Document, adopted September 2009 (Ref 16-26).

16.3.11 The Order Limits includes two Highway Improvement Areas in South Gloucestershire Council's administrative area. Whilst this makes South Gloucestershire Council a host authority, local policy in regard to socio-economics, tourism and recreation has not been assessed in full as the likely

socio-economics, tourism and recreation effects relating to these parts of the Scheme are anticipated to be negligible in scale due to their minimal works and infrequent use. Nonetheless, strategic socio-economics, tourism and recreation objectives have been considered in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Emerging Local Planning Policy

16.3.12 The emerging Wiltshire Local Plan (Ref 16-27) is a proposed strategic planning document to update and replace the existing Wiltshire Core Strategy. The emerging plan is currently undergoing examination in public and is anticipated to be adopted no earlier than the third quarter of 2025. Due to the progressed nature of the policies therein, the emerging policies deemed to be of most relevance to socio-economic, and tourism and recreation factors are set out in Section 1.2 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

16.3.13 The Corsham Neighbourhood Plan and Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan are currently under review (Ref 16-28, Ref 16-29), with consultation held on pre-submission draft policies. With regard to socio-economics, tourism and recreation, only minor changes made to the policies are directly relevant to this assessment, and are set out **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Other Guidance

16.3.14 Other guidance documents relevant to the assessment of the impacts of the Scheme on socio-economics, tourism and recreation are set out below.

Local Strategy and Guidance

16.3.15 Local climate, economic and tourism strategies relevant to the Scheme have been considered as part of the assessment of socio-economic, tourism and recreation impacts. The strategy and guidance documents considered and explained further in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]** are:

- Wiltshire Climate Strategy 2022 – 2027 was published in February 2022 (Ref 16-30);
- Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan January 2016 (Ref 16-31);
- Swindon and Wiltshire Local Industrial Strategy 2020-2036, published March 2020 (Ref 16-32);

- Wiltshire and Swindon Destination Management & Development Plan 2015-2020 (Ref 16-33);
- Wiltshire Tourism Recovery Plan, March 2021 (Ref 16-34);
- Cotswolds Tourism Destination Management Plan 2022-2025 (Ref 16-35);
- West of England Local Industrial Strategy July 2019 (Ref 16-36); and
- Gloucestershire's Economic Strategy 2024-2034 (Ref 16-37).

National and Industry Guidance

16.3.16 As the professional accreditation body for the production of EIAs, the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) – formally the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) – provides guides for the production of environmental assessments (Ref 16-38), although, as of June 2025 has not published any specific guidance for assessment of socio-economic effects. ISEP does however host a collection of articles by professional bodies on the use of and publication of socio-economic assessments for EIA.

16.3.17 It is recognised in the industry that there is a widely varied approach to socio-economic assessments as a result of the significant scope of the assessment, variety in development impacts, and the lack of procedural guidance available directly relating to the technical production of socio-economic assessments (Ref 16-39). As such, measurements of baseline data sensitivity, and the significance of impacts from the development are reliant on professional judgement based on good practice and experience. As such, socio-economic impacts should consider socio-demographic and cultural receptors, local economic factors, as well as the accessibility and provision of local services (Ref 16-40, Ref 16-41). It is important that socio-economic assessments are not considered in isolation from other assessment areas in the EIA, as there are multiple overlapping factors, such as with transport, construction management, water and air quality, and human health assessment (Ref 16-42). Finally, assessments of social impacts should explain how adverse social impacts can be mitigated or how the predicted project benefits be secured (Ref 16-43).

16.4 Assessment Assumptions and Limitations

16.4.1 This assessment is based on baseline information available at the time of writing this chapter and the Scheme design as submitted for this DCO Application.

16.4.2 The methodology for socio-economics, tourism and recreation has considered the following assumptions:

- Reporting of baseline conditions is based on the most up-to-date publicly available datasets for each receptor as of 1 June 2025. Where data relies on

the 2021 Census, the potential impact upon the socio-demographic and economic environments as result of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated national lockdowns have been identified;

- Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdowns, baseline data on place of work, and usual commuting methods, and commuting distance have not been gathered from the 2021 Census. In the absence of more recent data of the same level of detail, impacts of the Scheme on working locations, commuting methods, and commuting distance are therefore not assessed;
- The assessment of accommodation impacts has been undertaken on the basis of existing or publicly proposed market housing stock, rental or temporary housing or accommodation stock, and serviced accommodation stock. No provision of new-build accommodation directly in relation to the Scheme is considered;
- The assumption of construction activities and workforce is based on a single Engineering Procurement Construction (EPC) model and collective experience from the Applicant team, from which the likely peak impacts and impacts lasting the length of the construction process have been derived. This assumption considers a reasonable worst-case scenario for socio-economic, tourism and recreation effects. Derivations of these peak and average activities and workforce have informed the worst-case peak replacement activities and workforce, and worst-case decommissioning activities and workforce;
- Where the assessment of socio-economic, tourism and recreation effects is reliant on baseline surveys and assessment relating to other technical subjects (landscape and visual, cultural heritage, transport and access). These are signposted as necessary.
- In-combination effects during the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases are based on assessments reporting on matters relating to transport and access, landscape and visual amenity, and cultural heritage within the ES. Where any of these topics record a likely significant effect on a receptor or group of receptors that have a likely pathway to have in-combination effects with regard to socio-economics, tourism and recreation, it is assumed as a worst-case that the effect could occur at the same time.

16.5 Study Area

16.5.1 The Study Area for socio-economic, tourism and recreation effects is split between socio-economic effects, and tourism and recreation effects, due to the substantial difference in the anticipated geographic areas associated with each

set of receptors in which the Scheme's impacts are anticipated to be experienced.

16.5.2 All Study Areas relating to socio-economics, tourism and recreation are based on the extent of the Solar PV Sites: Lime Down A, B, C, D, and E; their site access points, the Cable Route Corridor and its access points, and any construction compounds. The Order Limits also contains six offsite Highway Improvement Areas associated with Abnormal Indivisible Loads. These have not been considered in the designation of Study Areas in this chapter, due to their short-term and infrequent use making them unlikely to cause or influence the assessment of any significant effects to socio-economic, tourism and recreation receptors around them.

16.5.3 The primary Study Area for socio-economic effects comprises all electoral ward areas falling within 20 km of the Scheme, as set off from the outermost extent of the Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor. This is a near approximation of a 30-minute commuting distance from the Scheme, and has been judged as a reasonable assumption for the area in which employment and derived economic effects are anticipated to be greatest. This judgement is based on average commuting times in the South West, England, and Great Britain in 2023 ranging between 26 and 29 minutes for all commuters (Ref 16-44). Baseline conditions are to be determined at a district ward level where available, or at the wider district or unitary authority level where required. The 20 km Study Area falls within seven district and unitary authority areas: Bath and North East Somerset, Cotswold, Somerset[1], South Gloucestershire, Stroud, Swindon, and Wiltshire. Socio-economic baseline data has also been comparatively assessed against data for a Wider Study Area, defined as the South West (International Territorial Level 1) statistical region, and national data (England, Great Britian or the United Kingdom dependent on the scope of the dataset used). This has been done to determine how much the baseline conditions in the 20 km Study Area differ from regional and national rates, thus providing evidence for the determination of the sensitivity of socio-economic receptors in this assessment.

16.5.4 The Study Area for tourism and recreation effects comprises the Order Limits, and anywhere within 5 km of the Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor for nationally and regionally important tourism and recreation venues, and anywhere within 2 km of the Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor for locally important tourism and recreation venues. These distances have been considered appropriate based on the bare earth zones of theoretical visibility (ZTV) for the Scheme (as set out in **ES Volume 2, Figures 8-8-1** to **8-8-10 [EN010168/APP/6.2]**) and the respective level of importance of the assessed receptors to tourism and recreation.

[1] Somerset Council unitary authority was formed on 1 April 2023 by the merger of Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset, and Somerset West and Taunton. Mendip is the only of these former districts that the 20 km Study Area falls within, and will be used where data sources from prior to 2023 are used.

16.5.5 The 20 km Study Area, corresponding local authority areas and Wider Study Area for socio-economics, and the smaller 2 km and 5 km Study Areas for tourism and recreation are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 16-1: Study Areas for Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

16.6 Assessment Methodology

16.6.1 This section sets out the scope and methodology for the assessment of the impacts of the Scheme on the socio-economic, tourism and recreation environment.

16.6.2 The methodologies described in the following section have been developed in line with the relevant planning policy and appropriate industry guidance for assessing potential effects from the Scheme on socio-economics, tourism and recreation.

Assessment Scope

16.6.3 The scope of assessment is defined by that set out in Chapter 18: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation in the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report submitted to the Secretary of State on 16 July 2024 (Ref 16-1) and as defined by the Planning Inspectorate in their Scoping Opinion, 22 August 2024 (Ref 16-45).

16.6.4 Matters scoped into this assessment therefore comprise:

- Socio-economic impacts at all phases of the lifetime of the Scheme (construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases);
- Impacts on tourism and recreation all phases of the lifetime of the Scheme (construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases).

16.6.5 Matters scoped out, and therefore not assessed, are effects on property value and crime and safety. This scope has been agreed in the Scoping Opinion (Ref 16-45). As required in the Scoping Opinion, security and crime prevention measures are set out Section 16.9 below and as part of the description of Scheme elements at **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

16.6.6 The assessment scenarios that are being considered for the purposes of the EIA are:

- Existing Baseline 2023 to 2025, from which all future baseline scenarios can be compared;
- Construction phase from 2027 to 2029. This is based on the earliest possible construction commencement of the Scheme. The assessment will consider the full construction phase, and a ‘worst-case’ peak month of activities;

- Operation and maintenance phase from 2029 to 2089. The assessment will consider the operation and maintenance phase, and any peaks of activity attributed to the replacement of Scheme components, the greatest peak of which is for all Solar PV Panels and BESS Batteries to be replaced over a 12 to 24 month period. As a worst-case, a 12-month replacement period is considered in the assessment in Section 16.10 below as this is likely to generate the greatest magnitude of impacts. General operational maintenance and replacement of Scheme components such as broken and defective Solar PV Panels throughout the Scheme's operational lifetime are not assessed separately as the magnitude of impacts from these replacement events is anticipated to be lower than the peak replacement scenario; and
- Decommissioning 2089 to 2091. This would be the latest period in which decommissioning of the Scheme would commence and has been based on the anticipated 60-year operational period for the Scheme. Decommissioning is estimated to take up to 24 months.
- A future baseline scenario wherein the Scheme does not go ahead.

16.6.7 The assessment of socio-economic, tourism and recreation effects will therefore be grouped in Section 16.10 to set out likely significant effects during construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases.

16.6.8 The assessment of impacts on accommodation will consider two scenarios during construction, the assumed peak replacement period, and decommissioning:

- The potential worst-case need for the accommodation of the entire peak inbound workforce in private rental accommodation, and the likely impact thereof in displacing existing residents in need of temporary accommodation in the 20 km Study Area; and
- The potential worst-case need for accommodation of the entire peak inbound workforce in serviced accommodation instead of private rental accommodation, and the likely impact as a result of displacement of visitors utilising serviced accommodation in the 20 km Study Area.

Sources of Information

16.6.9 In the preparation of this chapter, the following sources of published information have been used. Alongside the data collected for baseline assessments, data from the relevant local authorities will be used to assess how the Scheme will affect the socio-economic environment, and tourism and recreation receptors.

- 2021/2022 United Kingdom Census[2]:
  - Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2021;
  - Scotland's Census 2022;
  - Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Census 2021;
- ONS Annual Population Survey;
- ONS Local Authority and National Population Projections;
- Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG): Indices of Multiple Deprivation Map App;
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID): Fingertips Public Health Data web tool;
- ONS: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings;
- ONS Business Register and Employment Survey;
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Stat-Xplore web tool;
- Communities Northern Ireland Statistics;
- Local Enterprise Partnership strategic economic documentation;
- Tourism and visitor information:
  - Visit Britain;
  - Visit England;
  - Visit Wiltshire;
  - Cotswolds Tourism;
- OpenStreetMap;
- OS Explorer Map;
- Google Maps and Google Earth;
- Long Distance Walkers Association;
- The Ramblers Association;
- Cycling UK; and
- Sustrans.

[2] Datasets for Scotland and Northern Ireland are included where used to supplement datasets for England and Wales, or Great Britain to provide a complete a UK-wide national baseline.

16.6.10 Please refer to Section 16.14 at the end of this chapter for a full list of references.

Impact Assessment Methodology

Sensitivity of Receptors

16.6.11 The sensitivity of the receptors identified in this chapter is assessed by understanding measurable indicators of the receptor's present characteristics and considering this alongside the weighted importance of the receptor in local, regional, and national policy or strategic requirements together with professional judgment. For example, the sensitivity of number of jobs is likely to be determined from its local characteristics and how far it deviates from national trends, in consideration with the local policy requirements for the creation of new employment opportunities.

16.6.12 To ensure a consistent approach across the socio-demographic and economic receptors identified in this assessment, each receptor is measured by way of statistical analysis against national data at the local authority level to determine its sensitivity. Otherwise, sensitivity is determined based on professional judgement of the qualitative criteria set out in **Table 16-3** and **Table 16-4**.

16.6.13 The Scheme is likely to have impacts on socio-economic receptors at the local and regional level, and to a more minor extent, the national level. These effects are predominantly focused on economic impacts (particularly during construction), given the nature of the Scheme. Impacts on socio-demographic receptors are likely to be limited to those as a result of the anticipated construction workforce and employment and economic performance in the agricultural and tourism sectors, and the related indirect and induced effects on socio-demographic characteristics. The sensitivity of these receptors is assessed in accordance with **Table 16-3**.

Table 16-3: Sensitivity and Importance of Identified Socio-Economic Receptors

Sensitivity	Definition
High	Receptor is likely to experience direct and significant socio-economic effects with fundamental change to present characteristics. Accorded a high priority in local, regional or national economic regeneration policy. Receptor is of regional or national importance. Data for the receptor shows it is more than 2σ (standard deviations) from the national population mean or median.
Medium	Receptor is likely to experience some socio-economic effects, which may be indirect, but will materially change its present characteristics. Change relating to receptor has medium priority in local, regional and national economic and regeneration policy. Receptor is of significant local importance. Data for the receptor shows it is between 1σ and 2σ from the national population mean or median.

Sensitivity	Definition
Low	Minor socio-economic effects relating to receptor resulting in non-material changes to baseline conditions. Receptor is accorded a low priority in local, regional and national economic and regeneration policy. Receptor is of low importance. Data for the receptor shows it is less than 1σ from the national population mean or median.
Negligible	Receptor unlikely to experience any socio-economic effects or changes to baseline conditions. Receptor is not a priority at any level of economic or regeneration policy.

16.6.14 The Scheme is likely to have an effect on tourism and recreation receptors, albeit these are likely to be limited to those receptors that are directly affected by the location of the Scheme, such as PRoW, landscape visual receptors, and local heritage assets that rely on their setting for their value to the tourism and recreational economy. Assessment of these assets is made in consideration of the effects assessed in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact**, **Chapter 12: Cultural Heritage**, and **Chapter 13: Transport and Access [EN010168/APP/6.1]**. This ES assesses the sensitivity of receptors based on the metrics in **Table 16-4**.

Table 16-4: Sensitivity and Importance of Identified Tourism and Recreation Receptors

Sensitivity	Definition
High	Receptor is likely to experience significant direct and indirect tourism and recreation effects with fundamental change to present characteristics. Accorded a high priority in local, regional or national tourism and recreation policy. Receptor is of regional or national importance.
Medium	Receptor is likely to experience some direct and indirect tourism and recreation effects, that will materially change its present characteristics. Change relating to receptor has medium priority in local and regional tourism and recreation policy. Receptor is of significant local importance.
Low	Minor direct or indirect tourism and recreation effects relating to receptor resulting in non-material changes to baseline conditions. Receptor is accorded a low priority in local and regional tourism and recreation policy. Receptor is of low importance.
Negligible	Receptor unlikely to experience any tourism and recreation effects or changes to baseline conditions. Receptor is not a priority at any level of tourism and recreation policy.

Magnitude of Impact

16.6.15 The identification of key impacts has been determined through provision of a model of anticipated worker requirements for both construction and operation and maintenance arising from the Scheme by an accredited EPC contractor and specialist high voltage cable installation contractor. The information modelled provides a reasonable worst-case scenario with regard to the work required for the construction of the Scheme within the projected approximately two-year

construction phase. Furthermore, this model has been used to inform the worst-case peak replacement scenario activities and workforce, and worst-case decommissioning activities and workforce. This model has then been used to determine resultant impacts on socio-economic receptors, including agricultural and tourism employment and economic performance.

16.6.16 Impacts on tourism and recreation receptors have been determined through professional judgement and have been assessed in consideration of the anticipated impacts in associated topic chapters, such as transport, landscape, and heritage. These impacts have been used to determine the likely economic effect on the tourism and visitor economy.

16.6.17 The methodology for determining the impact magnitude is described below and has been determined by quantifying the predicted deviation from baseline conditions. This is considered with embedded mitigation, and then with additional mitigation. The magnitude of change is used for either beneficial or adverse impacts. As there is no standard methodology for determining how magnitude of impacts are calculated, professional judgement has been used to determine the criteria set out in **Table 16-5** and **Table 16-6** below.

16.6.18 The Scheme will provide a significant number of employment opportunities for direct and indirect sectors of the local and regional economy during construction. These will also have knock-on impacts on other socio-economic factors such as wages, unemployment, and deprivation as a result of increased access to employment. The magnitude of these impacts is quantified for the construction and operation and maintenance phases of the Scheme and estimated for the Scheme's decommissioning in accordance with the metrics set out in **Table 16-5**.

16.6.19 The Scheme is likely to impact on existing economic sectors within the 20 km Study Area for socio-economics as a result of competition for resources, labour force, and direct and indirect conflicts with economic sectors such as the agricultural economy and in the tourism and recreation economies. Economic impacts may occur where the location and visual impact of the Scheme affects the operation of businesses near to or adjacent to the Order Limits, and for which their location, landscape setting, and views are fundamental to their economic success.

Table 16-5: Magnitude of Change for the Identified Socio-Economic Receptor

Magnitude	Definition	Value of Change to Receptor
High	The total loss or major change/substantial alteration to key elements/features of the baseline conditions, such that the post-development characteristics will be fundamentally changed.	Change of more than or equal to 10%

Magnitude	Definition	Value of Change to Receptor
Medium	Loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features of the baseline conditions, such that post-development characteristics of the baseline will be materially changed.	Change of between 1% and 10%
Low	A minor shift away from baseline condition. As change arising from the loss/alteration will be discernible/detectable but not material. The post development characteristics of the baseline condition will be similar to pre-development conditions.	Change of between 0.1% and 1%
Negligible	Very little change from baseline conditions. The change will be barely distinguishable and approximating to a non-change situation.	Change of less than 0.1%
Neutral	No change from baseline conditions.	No change

16.6.20 The Scheme, being located on existing agricultural land, is not anticipated to directly impact on the use and accessibility of dedicated recreational spaces and tourist attractions. The Scheme will impact on PRoW which cross the Scheme's Order Limits during construction. This has been addressed in the **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]**, and as part of the emerging construction management strategy set out in the **Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) [EN010168/APP/7.12]**, both documents of which are secured by requirement in the **draft Development Consent Order (DCO) [EN010168/APP/3.1]** to ensure these features are retained and protected.

16.6.21 This chapter of the ES will therefore identify and assess the impact on key local tourism and recreational facilities including:

- Key tourist and visitor attractions of local, regional and national importance likely to be impacted by the Scheme;
- Locally and regionally important parks and nature reserves;
- PRoW and long-distance walking and cycling routes;
- Navigable waterways and waterbodies used for recreation;
- Recreation aviation centres;
- Recreational hubs for organised sports and youth sports and play likely to be impacted by the Scheme; and
- Equestrian businesses and facilities likely to be impacted by the Scheme.

16.6.22 The magnitude of impact on tourism and recreation receptors as set out in **Table 16-6** is a qualitative judgement and therefore not determined by a discrete or statistical value of change to a receptor.

Table 16-6: Magnitude of Change for the Identified Tourism and Recreation Receptor

Magnitude	Definition
High	The total loss or major change/substantial alteration to key elements/features of the baseline conditions, such that the post development characteristics will be fundamentally changed.
Medium	Loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features of the baseline conditions, such that post-development characteristics of the baseline will be materially changed.
Low	A minor shift away from baseline condition. As change arising from the loss/alteration will be discernible/detectable but not material. The post development characteristics of the baseline condition will be similar to pre-development conditions.
Negligible	Very little change from baseline conditions. The change will be barely distinguishable and approximating to a non-change situation.
Neutral	No change from baseline conditions.

Assessment of Significance

16.6.23 The degree of significance of effects, in respect of the assessment of the socio-economics and tourism and recreation environment, is determined using the matrix below in **Table 16-7**, taking into consideration both sensitivity to change and magnitude of impact to baseline conditions for each receptor.

16.6.24 Effects assessed to be moderate, major-moderate, or major, are deemed to be significant effects and are shaded in grey in **Table 16-7**.

Table 16-7: Effect Significance Matrix

Sensitivity / Magnitude	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	**Major**	**Major-moderate**	**Moderate**	Moderate-minor
Medium	**Major-moderate**	**Moderate**	Moderate-minor	Minor
Low	**Moderate**	Moderate-minor	Minor	Negligible
Negligible	Moderate-minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

16.6.25 The degree of significance of an effect can be described either as beneficial or adverse in nature, and temporally as being of short-, medium-, or long-term. These together with the level of significance should be used to determine which likely significant effects require additional mitigation measures to be

implemented in the further design, construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the Scheme.

16.7 Baseline Conditions

16.7.1 This section describes the baseline environmental characteristics for the Study Areas with specific reference to socio-economics, tourism and recreation.

16.7.2 The existing baseline conditions are predominantly derived from desk-based studies with information on the status and use of PRoW corroborated by field-studies undertaken by the Applicant.

16.7.3 Extended details of baseline conditions relevant to socio-economics, tourism and recreation is set out in Section 1.3 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]** and should be read alongside the following section below.

Existing Socio-Economic Baseline

Resident Population Size and Growth

16.7.4 The 20 km Study Area for socio-economics had a combined population of 728,300 in 2021 (Ref 16-46, Ref 16-47). The 20 km Study Area falls across seven local authority areas: Bath and North East Somerset, Cotswold, Mendip (former district in Somerset), South Gloucestershire, Stroud, Swindon, and Wiltshire. The population of the 20 km Study Area is approximately 12.8% of the population of the Wider Study Area (the South West ITL1 region), and 1.1% of the population of the United Kingdom (Ref 16-46, Ref 16-47, Ref 16-48, Ref 16-49).

16.7.5 Office for National Statistics 2018-based population projections (Ref 16-50) indicate that from 2021 up to the year 2027 (the earliest year for the beginning of the Scheme's construction phase), the population in the 20 km Study Area is anticipated to grow by approximately 4.2%. The rate across the 20 km Study Area is higher than the estimated growth rate for the Wider Study Area (+3.8%) but lower than the United Kingdom as a whole (+4.9%).

16.7.6 For the purposes of the EIA, the Scheme is anticipated to be decommissioned no later than the period 2089 to 2091. The national population of the UK is projected to grow by approximately 20.6% between 2021 and 2089 (Ref 16-51) generated almost entirely by population growth in England of 23.7%. Applying the latter estimate to the 20 km Study Area, it can be estimated that the population may reach approximately 901,000 in 2089.

Resident Population Age Demographics

16.7.7 As of 2021, the 20 km Study Area has an age profile that has a lower proportion of children under 15, and greater proportion of people over 65 than the national population age profile (Ref 16-52, Ref 16-53, Ref 16-54). By 2027, the 20 km Study Area is anticipated to show a very appreciable trough in population aged 20-39 years old, indicative of an exacerbated 'brain-drain' amongst young working age adults. Furthermore, an increased proportion of the population reaching or nearing retirement age by 2027 is projected, likely to increase pressure on services and recreational facilities to cater for this growing demographic.

16.7.8 National population projections indicate that by the end of the Scheme's operational lifetime (2089), the age profile of the UK is likely to be weighted towards increasingly older demographics within the population (Ref 16-51). The 2089 projections estimate that all 5-year age bands from 25 years old up to age 79 years old will contain between 5% and 6.5% of the population, with over 90s accounting for 3.9% of the population.

Resident Population Health Demographics

16.7.9 Resident population health and wellbeing baseline information is included in Section 18.7 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 18: Human Health [EN010168/APP/6.1]**. This explores baseline conditions for physical health, mental health and wellbeing, and other wider determinants of health that are not explored elsewhere in the ES.

16.7.10 Overall, the population of the 20 km Study Area is predominantly in better health than regional or national rates, and is less likely than the national average to be deprived of access to good health. This is demonstrated in local area health profiles in Table 18-6 in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 18: Human Health [EN010168/APP/6.1]** and Table 2 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 18-2: Human Health Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Deprivation

16.7.11 The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 provides the most up-to-date information regarding measures of population deprivation across England. Each of the local authority areas in the 20 km Study Area (as of 2019) rank between 170th and 279th most deprived of the 317 authority areas in England (Ref 16-55).

16.7.12 Whilst there are significant deprivation inequalities present within the 20 km Study Area, the Solar PV Sites fall within Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that are in the 30% least deprived neighbourhoods in England while the Cable Route Corridor falls within LSOAs that are in the 50% least deprived neighbourhoods in England (Ref 16-56).

Access to Housing and Accommodation

16.7.13 The affordability threshold for housing in England and Wales is defined by ONS as the median average house value being five times the average (median) workplace-based full-time earnings. In the year 2024, the average ratio of earnings to average house value was 7.71, while in the 20 km Study Area, the 2024 ratio ranged from 6.8 to 13.8 (Ref 16-57).

16.7.14 With regard to housing supply, each of the seven authorities across the Study Area for socio-economics is required to evidence a five-year supply of housing land (Ref 16-58, Ref 16-59, Ref 16-60, Ref 16-61, Ref 16-62, Ref 16-63, Ref 16-64). The most recent results show the authorities in the Study Area for socio-economics are unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing, with a projected supply of 31,745 units to a need of 37,938. Only Bath and North East Somerset, and Cotswold, are individually able to demonstrate a housing supply surplus.

16.7.15 The 2021 Census estimates that 16.4% (50,100) of households in the 20 km Study Area are in private rental accommodation (Ref 16-65). The English Housing Survey 2023 to 2024 indicates that across England, 10.4% of all private rented dwellings are vacant (Ref 16-66). Applying a very conservative estimate that the rate in the 20 km Study Area is half this proportion (5.2%), based on no sub-national information being available, and that not all vacant properties would be available for occupancy, this implies that there is an estimated 2,600 vacant private rental properties in the 20 km Study Area.

Skills and Qualifications

16.7.16 The proportion of the population between the ages 16 to 64 years old in the combined Study Area for socio-economics achieving no qualifications is 4.2%, which is somewhat lower than the regional rates for the Wider Study Area (4.7%) and the UK national rate (6.8%). Attainment of the equivalent of national vocational qualification (NVQ) Level 4 and higher qualifications has an overall rate of about 47.6%, compared to 46.1% in the Wider Study Area, and 47.2% across the UK (Ref 16-67).

Economic Activity, Employment and Income

Economic Activity Rate

16.7.17 The economically active population is defined as the members of the working age (16 to 64-year-old) population being in employment, and those who are seeking employment and are able for work. The December 2024 Annual Population Survey indicates that the 20 km Study Area (based on local authority level data) has an economic activity rate of 82.7% (Ref 16-68). Rates of economic activity since 2014 demonstrate that the 20 km Study Area have been relatively stable, and consistently higher than the trends for the Wider Study

Area, which itself has stayed consistently higher than the national trend for the UK (which have remained relatively consistent, albeit with a slight upward trend).

Unemployment

16.7.18 The June 2024 Annual Population Survey measures the unemployment rate as being the proportion of the economically active population who are not in active employment. National trends from 2014-2024 show unemployment has fallen from 6.4% in December 2014 to a low of 3.6% in 2022, with an interim rise to 5.1% in 2021 (Ref 16-69), likely as a result of economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. The trend in the Wider Study has largely tracked the national trend over the decade although at a consistently lower rate. Data for the 20 km Study Area shows the unemployment rate largely following the regional unemployment rate. Within the 20 km Study Area, the overall unemployment rate as of as of December 2024 is 3.2%, ranging substantially (from 1.5% to 6.0%) between the local authority areas for which data is available.

Employment Rate

16.7.19 Closely related to the rates of economic activity, the rate of residents in the 20 km Study Area between 16 and 64 years of age who are in employment has fluctuated, albeit generally increased, in the last 10 years. Growth in the employment market in the 20 km Study Area since 2014 has largely trended with the regional and national trends, although the employment rate has remained above national rates. From December 2014 to December 2024, the employment market in the 20 km Study Area has grown by 9.7% (equivalent to approximately 49,400 people) with the rate of employment increasing from 78.1% to 80.0% of the population aged 16-64 (Ref 16-70).

Wages

16.7.20 For residents within the 20 km Study Area, the approximated median annual gross salary for full-time workers (in 2024) was £38,000. This is higher than the median for the Wider Study Area, at £36,100, but closer to the UK median of £37,400 (Ref 16-71). Since 2014, approximated median annual gross wages for working residents in the 20 km Study Area have risen by approximately 39.8% (£10,800). Wage growth in the 20 km Study Area overall has performed slightly better than both the Wider Study Area (38.7%– £10,100) and nationally across the UK (37.5% – £10,200) in the decade 2014-2024 (Ref 16-71). It is noteworthy that Consumer Price Index (CPI) compared to 2014 is 135.6 in December 2024 (Ref 16-72), demonstrating that the costs of goods and services are on average 35.6% higher in 2024 than 2014.

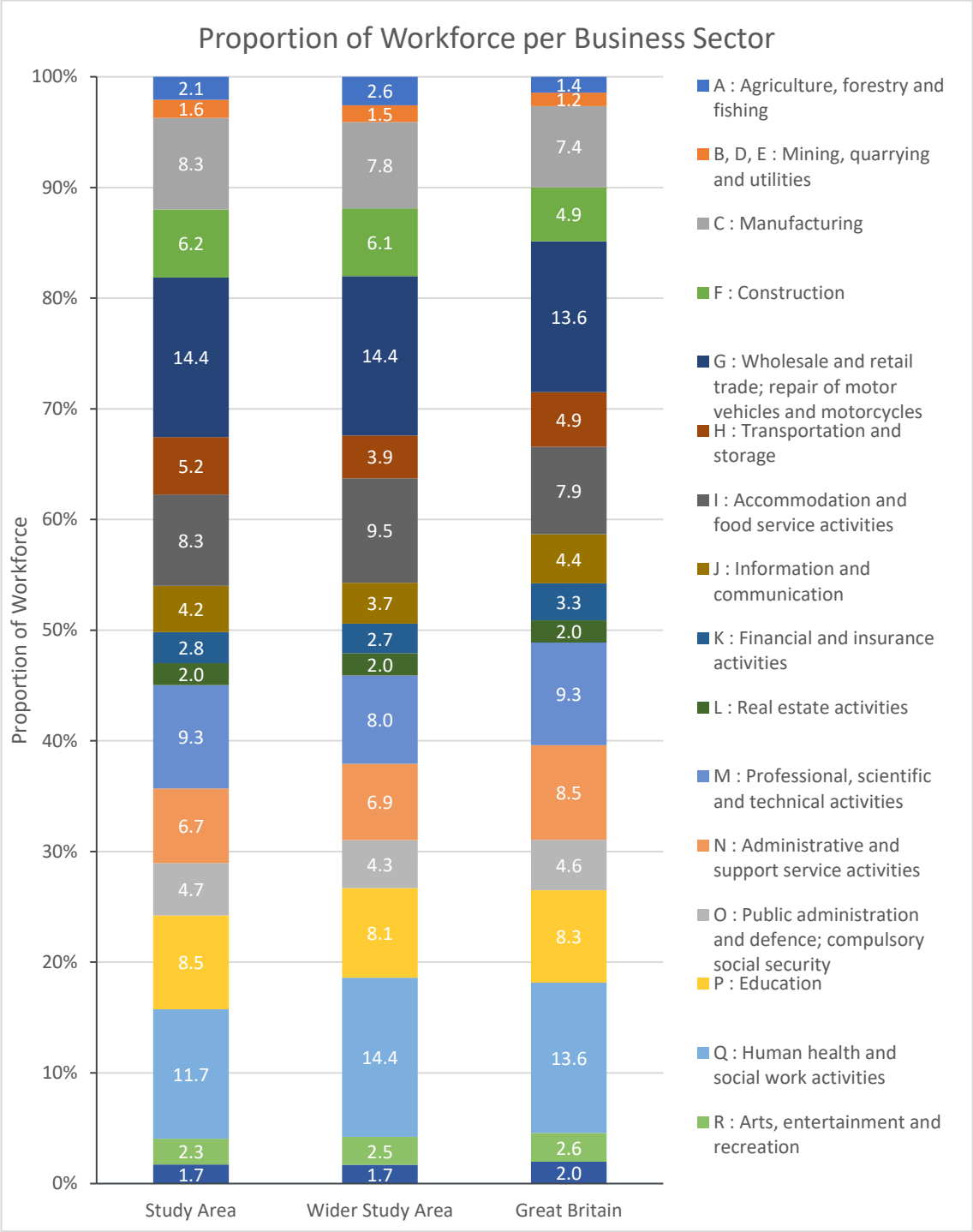
16.7.21 For workers within the 20 km Study Area, the approximated median annual gross salary for full-time employment (in 2024) was £36,000. This is lower than

the median average wage for residents in the 20 km Study Area. This is slightly higher than the average for workers in the Wider Study Area (£35,600) but marginally lower than the median for the UK (£37,400) (Ref 16-73). Since 2014, approximated median annual gross wages for full-time workers in the 20 km Study Area have risen by approximately 38.6% (£10,000). Median wages for workers have generally trajected upwards in the 20 km Study Area, largely following trendlines for the Wider Study Area (39.3% – £10,000) and for the UK (37.5% – £10,200) in the decade 2014-2024 (Ref 16-73).

Business Sector Workforce

16.7.22 The 2023 Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) documents a working population in the 20 km Study Area in 2023 of approximately 755,700, which constitutes approximately 27.8% of the working population of the Wider Study Area of 2,716,000 (Ref 16-74).

Plate 16-1: Proportion of Workforce per Business Sector



16.7.23 **Plate 16-1** above demonstrates the largest business sector by percentage of employed workforce in the 20 km Study Area (based on local authority level data) is wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (G) (14.4%), followed by human health and social work activities (Q) (11.7%), and professional, scientific and technical activities (M) (9.3%). These top three sectors are the same as the top three sectors nationally in Great Britain (G –

13.6%, Q – 13.6%, M – 9.3%), however contrasts somewhat to the Wider Study Area, wherein the third largest sector is accommodation and food service activities (I) (9.5%) rather than professional, scientific and technical activities (M).

Local Economy

16.7.24 The size of the local economy can be measured using Gross Value Added (GVA), which measures the value of goods and services in a given area. The most recent data for GVA available in Great Britain is from 2023. The Study Area for socio-economics – including all of Somerset as data for Mendip is not available at the former district level – had a GVA (balanced) of £73.6 billion, forming approximately 39.6% of the South West's GVA of £186 billion, with Great Britain having a GVA of £2.46 trillion (Ref 16-75, Ref 16-76).

16.7.25 By industry, the nominal and proportional split in GVA has been demonstrated in Table 5 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1 [EN010168/APP/6.3]**, comparing the values in the Study Area for socio-economics with the values and proportions for the Wider Study Area and Great Britain.

16.7.26 GVA per worker has been derived from total GVA by industry ONS data, compared against BRES data for the year 2023. Per worker across the Study Area for socio-economics, the 2023 GVA per head is approximately £76,500. This is somewhat higher than the GVA per worker across the Wider Study Area (£68,500) but consistent with the national rate for Great Britain (£76,400) (Ref 16-74, Ref 16-75, Ref 16-76). The GVA per worker varies considerably by different industrial sectors regionally, nationally, and within the Study Area for socio-economics, as set out in Table 6 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1 [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Tourism Economy

16.7.27 The 20 km Study Area for socio-economics falls across the area covered by five tourism and visitor strategy and data areas: Wiltshire and Swindon (Ref 16-77), the Cotswolds National Landscape (Ref 16-78), Gloucestershire (Ref 16-79, Ref 16-80), Somerset (Ref 16-81), and the West of England (Ref 16-82). Each of these areas has its own official tourism and visitors' information website. These identify key strategic aims for tourism and visitor growth across their respective areas, demonstrating the size of the tourism economy and key tourism and visitor destinations within and beyond the 20 km Study Area.

16.7.28 The most recent International Passenger Survey data shows that in the calendar year 2023, the UK received 38.0 million inbound visitors, 7% less than in 2019 (40.9 million), although more than 20% more than 2022 as a result of the tourism and visitor industry recovering following the COVID-19 pandemic. Spending by inbound visitors in 2023 reached £31.1 billion, some 17% more than the £28.4 billion spent in 2019 (Ref 16-83).

16.7.29 In England between 2022 and 2024, domestic tourism and visitors annually contributed approximately £84.4 billion to the economy through spending from an estimated 128 million domestic overnight trips and holidays, and more than 958 million day trips (Ref 16-84).

16.7.30 Forecasts for the year 2025 anticipate inbound visitor numbers and spending in 2024 may continue to increase from record highs in 2024, demonstrating impacts from the COVID pandemic have now functionally been reversed. However, the forecast recognises that ongoing economic pressures mean that spending is lower than pre-COVID levels in real terms, and future economic forecasting for the second half of the year is subject to political, economic, and climatic risks (Ref 16-85).

16.7.31 The tourism and visitor economy in the 20 km Study Area (as shown in Table 7 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]**) is driven predominantly by the domestic visitor market on overnight or day trips, with day trips by far contributing the greatest number of visits to any part of the 20 km Study Area. Inbound visitors from overseas form a smaller but important part of the visitor economy, notably due to the substantially higher spending per visitor from this group.

Tourism and Visitor Accommodation

16.7.32 The most recent census of accommodation stock in England is the Visit Britain Accommodation Stock Audit 2016. Although dated, this provides the most up-to-date publicly available information on the number of rooms available in the local authorities in which the 20 km Study Area is located. The local authority areas are estimated to host a total of 25,700 'serviced accommodation' rooms (Ref 16-86). The usual busiest months are July to September, with the busiest month in 2024 being July, where room occupancy peaked at 80% (Ref 16-87, Ref 16-88). Applying a conservative buffer to this to ensure a worst-case visitor occupancy is assessed, there is a remaining conservative minimum of 10% of rooms (approximately 2,570) available for use by temporary workers within the local authority areas immediately surrounding and including the 20 km Study Area.

16.7.33 The 20 km Study Area itself covers 46.8% of the population areas of the included local authorities, and therefore it can be reasonably assumed that a likely maximum of 12,000 serviced accommodation rooms are likely to be located within the 20 km Study Area. Of these, up to an estimated 1,200 could be available for use by construction workers.

Tourism and Recreation

16.7.34 The Order Limits are located near to a number of tourism attractions and recreation sites, ranging from those of local to international importance. Full

tables of all recreational receptors identified in the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas for tourism and recreation, described in more detail, are set out in Section 2 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]** and shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Sites [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

Visitor Attractions

16.7.35 Within the 5 km Study Area for regionally, nationally and internationally important tourism and recreation receptors are the Cotswolds National Landscape and Westonbirt Arboretum, both nationally important tourism sites, as well as Badminton House and Malmesbury Abbey, both of which are regionally important tourism locations due to their heritage value.

16.7.36 The 5 km Study Area is also host to two internationally significant annual events: the annual Badminton Horse Trials, an internationally important equestrian sports competition – one of only seven international equestrian events designated the highest Concours Complet International Five Star level (Ref 16-89). Badminton House is located approximately 3.7 km to the east of Lime Down C, with the Badminton Horse Trials held in the parkland to the northwest of the House. The Horse Trials are held in the first half of May each year.

16.7.37 Charlton Park Estate, located 6.5 km northeast of Lime Down B, D, and E, but within 1 km of the Order Limits (due to the inclusion of a Highway Improvement Area at the A429 Festival Way roundabout), has hosted the World of Music, Arts and Dance (WOMAD) festival annually each July up to 2024 (Ref 16-90). In November 2024 it was announced that WOMAD 2025 was not being held, and that WOMAD 2026 would not be hosted at Charlton Park (Ref 16-91). A new venue has not been announced as of 1 June 2025 and, as such, has not been assessed in this ES.

16.7.38 Within the 2 km Study Area for tourism and recreation lie a large number of locally important tourism destinations, predominantly historic churches and villages with conservation areas, historic houses, small museums, and local heritage, arts, and retail locations.

16.7.39 The Study Areas for tourism and recreation cover a notable number of parks and nature reserves that serve as visitor attractions or spaces for recreation. These include the regionally important Badminton Park, associated with Badminton House and the Badminton Horse Trials, and Corsham Park, associated with Corsham Court, both within the 5 km Study Area. In the smaller 2 km Study Area for locally important attractions lie a small number of nature reserves, fields, and areas of woodland (such as Corston Nature Reserve and West Yatton Down) that provide recreation opportunities for locally-based people.

Public Rights of Way and Recreational Routes

16.7.40 The Order Limits and near surroundings within the 2 km Study Area host a substantial network of PRoW and small number of documented permissive footpaths, which form important local recreational walking, wheeling and riding routes between the villages in the immediate vicinity (Ref 16-92). The local network of PRoW is shown on the **Public Rights of Way Plan [EN010168/APP/2.5]**. These routes are important to the local population for personal health and wellbeing, and for local amenity. Those that fall within, or immediately adjacent to, the Solar PV Sites, or are directly impacted by Cable Route Corridor and HGV Access Routes, are likely to be most affected, and as such are described in Table 2-4 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

16.7.41 The 5 km Study Area is also host to a number of long-distance recreational routes of regional or national importance, open for a range of users, making use of the substantial PRoW network. These include locally organised routes such as the White Walls Way developed by the local Malmesbury Area Pathfinders group(Ref 16-93), and Athelstan Pilgrim Way developed by the North Wiltshire Mission Area (Ref 16-94), as well as long-distance routes documented by nationwide bodies such as the National Trails (Ref 16-95), those marked on official Ordnance Survey maps, registered by the Long Distance Walkers Association (Ref 16-96), and administered by Sustrans (Ref 16-97). Long-distance recreational routes are described in Table 2-5 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]** and shown in **ES Volume 2, Figure 16-3: Long-Distance Recreational Routes [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

Recreation Venues and Facilities

16.7.42 The 2 km Study Area includes only a limited number of local waterways navigable for recreational use or available for fishing. The River Avon is navigable for small unpowered craft to the west of Chippenham, and in Melksham, where the two local sailing and canoeing clubs are based. Additionally, Pockeridge Lakes in Corsham, and Silverlands Lake in Lacock are open as dedicated fishing locations, with the higher River Avon at Malmesbury also advertised for fishing, albeit beyond the 2 km Study Area. More than 4 km south of the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation is the regionally important Kennet and Avon Canal, which is a popular route for users in powered craft and canal boats. The towpath of the Kennet and Avon Canal is also a regionally important recreational walking and cycling route.

16.7.43 The area within the 2 km Study Area also hosts a number of locally important formal recreational sports facilities. These include local level cricket, tennis, bowling and football grounds in many of the towns and villages within this area. More niche facilities for shooting and karting can also be found within the 2 km Study Area. Within 5 km of the Scheme are a small number of regionally

important sports venues, including Chippenham and Manor House golf clubs, Chippenham Town Football Club stadium, and the Castle Combe Race Circuit.

16.7.44 Recreational aviation centres within the 5 km Study Area are limited solely to private airstrips, none with paved surfaces. Those within the 5 km Study Area can be found at Badminton, Craymarsh, Langley House, and Wadswick.

16.7.45 Within the 2 km Study Area there are a small number of recreational play and informal sport areas in local villages and settlements for children and youths. These include those with informal sports pitches, formalise play areas, and a small number of other facilities such as skateparks. This includes a number of play areas for children in local villages such as in Sherston, Luckington, Seagry, Biddlestone, Coppershell (near Gastard), and Shaw. Smaller informal play areas are also located within some local housing developments including on the outskirts of Corsham and Melksham.

16.7.46 The 2 km Study Area also include a large number of equestrian centres, studs, and schools, including a number open to the public. These include a number of equestrian sites, such as those in Ladyswood, Corston, and Stanton St Quintin which are located immediately adjacent to the Solar PV Sites, or adjacent to parts of the equestrian-accessible PRoW network that is likely to be affected by the Scheme.

Landscape Character and Visual Setting

16.7.47 The Order Limits are predominantly set within agricultural land, which due to its existing use, is not in itself a key tourist attraction or destination. The land does however play an important role in providing a landscape context to the edge of the Cotswolds National Landscape, recreational use of walking and cycling routes, as well as for key attractions wherein their location is a key part of their desirability. The likely significant effects to the tourism economy and the use of recreational facilities are explored in this assessment, whilst landscape and visual impacts on PRoW, and key viewpoints are explored in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact [EN010168/APP/6.1]** and its supporting appendices and figures, and likely significant effects on local heritage assets are assessed in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 12: Cultural Heritage [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

Future Baseline

16.7.48 This section considers those changes to the baseline conditions, as described above, that might occur in the absence of the Scheme and during the time period over which the Scheme would be in place. The future baseline scenarios are set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: EIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

16.7.49 In the absence of the Scheme, it is considered that other than projected population increase and projected changes in the age demographic of the

population towards a more aging population, there will be no change to the future baseline for socio-economics and tourism and recreation. Details of future changes to employment, economic conditions, and the use of tourism and recreation destinations and facilities cannot be known at this stage. Without the Scheme, land use of the Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor is likely to remain predominantly in agricultural use. The baseline details as presented above therefore are considered to be the most appropriate to be applied in the absence of the Scheme.

16.8 Potential Impacts

16.8.1 Embedded mitigation measures being incorporated into the design and construction of the proposed Scheme are set out in Section 16.9 below. Prior to the implementation of any mitigation (embedded or additional), the Scheme has the potential to affect socio-economic and tourism and recreation, both positively or negatively, during construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases.

Construction

16.8.2 The construction of the Scheme is likely to require up to a peak of 692 temporary workers (as defined in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**), of whom up to 412 are estimated to relocate from across the UK to the Study Area. This is based on a peak of 280 workers in the Study Area already working in the 'Construction of utility projects' employment sub-sector. Resultantly, this inbound peak worker requirement may lead to a small level of temporary impact on the sociodemographic characteristics of the Study Area, most pertinently changes to the level of access to housing and accommodation where inbound temporary workers create additional competition for accommodation resource. The magnitude of these impacts is anticipated to be concentrated most during months of peak construction activity. Skills training associated directly with construction employment may also beneficially contribute towards local skills and qualification levels.

16.8.3 The primary socio-economic impacts likely to occur during the construction of the Scheme result from the likely increase in employment opportunities in the construction and utilities employment sectors. This is likely to induce positive impacts upon levels of economic activity, the local labour market, and lead to increased economic prosperity and income for workers in the Study Area, including through indirect and induced impacts from increased supply chain activity and increased spending. The construction of the Scheme is also likely to incur some negative impacts upon the localised agriculture and tourism industries as a result of the termination of active agricultural work on the Scheme, and potential loss of visitor spending due to amenity impacts from construction activities and displacement of visitors from serviced

accommodation in the scenario of serviced accommodation being used to accommodate all inbound workers during the construction peak.

16.8.4 Impacts upon the tourism and recreation environment are likely to be limited to those facilities and attractions immediately adjacent to the Scheme or directly impacted by Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) traffic associated with the construction of the Scheme (as assessed in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 13: Transport and Access [EN010168/APP/6.1]**). The Scheme's construction is likely to impact upon the visual amenity of visitor attractions and outdoor recreational facilities where there are line-of-sight visual changes to their surroundings, particularly where their landscape and visual context is important to their desirability, such as regionally important heritage locations. PRoW and long-distance recreational routes are particularly susceptible to impacts as there are a substantial number that interact with the Scheme. Construction activities are anticipated to negatively impact upon their use and desirability as a result of reduced visual amenity, and potential for users to have to interact with construction traffic. These effects have the potential to be significant where multiple types of impact are felt by regionally important recreational routes. These potential impacts are set out in Section 2 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]** and have been used to screen which receptors require full assessment.

Operation and Maintenance

16.8.5 The operational lifetime of the Scheme is anticipated to be 60 years and operational and maintenance activity on the Scheme is likely to be very low, with peaks only occurring during periods of infrastructure replacement. The greatest of these peaks is a replacement scenario in which all of the Scheme's Solar PV Panels and BESS Batteries are replaced during a single event.

16.8.6 As a result, socio-economic and socio-demographic impacts are not likely to be significant due to their small scale, or concentrated on temporary periods of peak activity. That notwithstanding, impacts on the agricultural and tourism sectors are anticipated to be continuous through the operational lifetime of the Scheme.

16.8.7 As during construction, impacts upon the tourism and recreation environment during operation and maintenance are likely to be limited to those facilities and attractions where the Scheme impacts upon the visual amenity of visitor attractions and outdoor recreational facilities, particularly where their landscape and visual context is important to their desirability, such as regionally important heritage locations. PRoW and long-distance recreational routes are particularly susceptible to impacts and there are a substantial number that interact with the Scheme. Those of the greatest level of importance and sensitivity may therefore experience significant effects. The placement of Scheme infrastructure, and the potential for near views from PRoW could affect their use and desirability as a result of reduced visual amenity.

Decommissioning

16.8.8 Impacts on the socio-economic, tourism and recreation environment during the Scheme's decommissioning are likely to be similar to (but no greater than) those experienced during construction due to the level of onsite employment, activity, and the number of workers likely to be required to be sourced from outside the Study Area. Decommissioning activities are likely to require 75 to 80% of the workforce required during the construction phase.

16.8.9 Socio-demographic impacts are likely to be somewhat greater due to the predicted aging of the resident population, and likely proportional reduction in the working age population in the UK over the operational lifetime of the Scheme. However, due to the assessed timescales for decommissioning (no later than 2089 to 2091), assumptions made on the likely level of effects on economic and tourism and recreation receptors will largely be made on the existing baseline conditions, as future baseline conditions cannot be reasonably predicted.

16.9 Embedded Mitigation

16.9.1 The Scheme has been designed, as far as practicable, to avoid and reduce impacts and effects on socio-economics, tourism and recreation through the process of embedding measures into the design. In addition, how the Scheme is constructed, operated and maintained, and decommissioned would be controlled in order to manage and minimise potential environmental effects (required as a result of legislative requirements and/or standard sectoral practices). These measures form part of the assessment of the likely significant effects.

16.9.2 The following embedded mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Scheme design with outline proposals and locations to be submitted with the DCO application. These measures are proposed to be secured through requirements in the **Draft DCO [EN010168/APP/3.1]** with reference to the following documents:

- **Design Principles and Parameters (DPP) [EN010168/APP/7.4]**;
- **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]**;
- **Outline OEMP [EN010168/APP/7.13]**;
- **Outline Decommissioning Strategy [EN010168/APP/7.14]**;
- **Outline PRoW and Permissive Paths MP [EN010168/APP/7.17]**;
- **Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) [EN010168/APP/7.18]**; and

- **Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) [EN010168/APP/7.22]**.

Construction

16.9.3 The following mitigation measures are embedded in the Scheme design:

- Construction is anticipated to take place across an approximate two-year period. The **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]** includes provision for the construction schedule for the Scheme to retain appropriate flexibility to be phased and staggered across the Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor to reduce impacts on environmental receptors. With specific regard to socio-economic, tourism and recreation receptors, this is therefore able to reduce the peak number of construction workers and movements or alter when this peak occurs in the construction phase;
- The **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]** requires all construction works on the Cable Route Corridor to be undertaken in line with relevant safety guidance and legislation for protection of workers and any members of the public to ensure impacts on tourism and recreation are minimised;
- The **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]** requires the construction contractor to provide support for construction workers to find suitable private rental accommodation, or hotels or other serviced accommodation, in locations where impact upon existing residents and visitors can be minimised. This should be implemented in consideration of when peak works are anticipated to be undertaken and during periods of peak accommodation demands for tourists and visitors;
- The Scheme design as set out in the **DPP [EN010168/APP/7.4]** provides embedded offsets and planting buffers from roads, PRoW, neighbouring buildings, and other tourism destinations to onsite infrastructure such as Solar PV Panels, 132 kV and 400 kV Substations, and BESS Area, to reduce the visual impacts on these receptors for tourism and recreational use during construction, as described in detail in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact [EN010168/APP/6.1]** and set out in the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]**;
- Measures to mitigate visual impacts from construction operations, lighting, and the location of construction equipment and construction compounds, are set out in the **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]** to reduce visual impacts on tourism and recreation facilities during construction. This will have a secondary benefit to the tourism economy within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas through reducing the level of impact on the desirability of the Scheme's surroundings;
- The **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]** and **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]** together will

help to control construction traffic movements, to the benefit of accessibility and desirability of PRoW; recreational use of highways; use, accessibility and desirability of recreation centres and facilities; and on the accessibility and desirability of local tourist attractions. The impact of fear and intimidation from construction traffic on vulnerable shared road users (such as pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders) is therefore managed through control of the routing and number of HGV movements set out in the **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]**.

- Where recreational receptors, principally PRoW, permissive routes, and regionally and nationally important walking and cycling routes are likely to be directly affected by the construction of the Scheme, the **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]**, **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]** and **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]** together will set out mitigatory measures to ensure effects on these receptors are minimised. Recreational routes crossing, or within, the Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor will be kept open during construction where practicable, with any crossing or traffic conflict points overseen by spotters or banksmen for HGVs. Where closures are deemed to be necessary, these will be prioritised for overnight work, will be temporary in nature and supported by appropriate amount of notice with closure times and dates clearly provided, and, if appropriate, suitable diversions provided for recreational routes. Any diversions to PRoW and other recreational routes will be temporary with original routing restored as soon as practicable, appropriately signed, and the duration and length of diversions will be optimised to minimise impacts on accessibility and use.

Monitoring

16.9.4 The **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]** will include monitoring requirements relating to the use, condition, and quality of the environment along PRoW during the construction of the Scheme. This will include regular inspections of PRoW within the Order Limits, including additional inspections for PRoW subject to onsite diversions or closures to ensure a suitable quality of surface, and any required diversion signage is in place. A Community Liaison Manager, whose appointment will be secured through the **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]**, will also be available for members of the public to report any concerns or issues with PRoW during construction and should report any concerns to the responsible construction site manager to oversee any investigative, and if required, remediation work.

Operation and Maintenance

16.9.5 The following mitigation measures are embedded in the Scheme design:

- The Scheme allows for continued income for eligible landowners by way of ground rent in place of the loss of income from agricultural use of the Solar PV Sites.
- The measures set out in the **Outline OEMP [EN010168/APP/7.13]** are used to control visual, accessibility, and operational and maintenance traffic impacts from the Scheme. Visual impacts from the Scheme are mitigated against in co-ordination with the measures set out in the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]**. These mitigation measures, such as noise attenuation, glint and glare mitigation, and landscape screening to residential and other sensitive receptors will help to reduce overall impacts on tourism and recreational receptors such as tourist attractions, recreation centres, and recreational routes in the proximity of the Scheme. General operational and maintenance traffic will be directed to using access and travel routes most appropriate for the vehicle type required.
- With regard to tourism and recreation impacts, the Scheme design is embedded with mitigation measures to minimise the visual impact of the Scheme, and to minimise the extent to which the Scheme affects the use of PRoW and other recreational routes;
- As set out during construction, the embedded visual mitigation includes designing the layout of the Sites to provide suitable buffers from roads, PRoW, and neighbouring tourism destinations as set out in the **DPP [EN010168/APP/7.4]**. These buffers, along with minimal on-site activity during general operation and maintenance, help to mitigate impacts on the durability of tourism receptors, and on formal recreational sport and youth play facilities near to or within view of the Scheme during its operational lifetime. Furthermore, proposed landscaping planting is likely to mature over the lifetime of the Scheme, which will mitigate effects of the Scheme on the surrounding landscape and amenity for residents and tourists.
- The routing of PRoW is retained by the Scheme design to ensure the use and connectivity of PRoW is maintained throughout the operational lifetime of the Scheme. Any diversions to PRoW and other recreational routes, if required during replacement activities, will be temporary with original routing restored as soon as practicable, appropriately signed, and the duration and length of diversions will be optimised to minimise impacts on accessibility and use.
- Peaks in operational and maintenance activity are anticipated to take place in association with replacement of Solar PV Panels and BESS Batteries. In these instances, embedded mitigation and best practice measures set out for construction will be reintroduced and implemented for these periods of peak activity on the Scheme.

Decommissioning

16.9.6 The following mitigation measures are embedded in the Scheme design:

- The decommissioning of the Scheme is likely to generate impacts upon socio-economic, tourism and recreation receptors that are of a similar but no greater magnitude than those anticipated to be generated during construction. As such, embedded mitigation measures set out for construction are also applicable to decommissioning and are to be implemented as set out in the **Outline Decommissioning Strategy [EN010168/APP/7.14]**.
- In addition, cable infrastructure may be left in situ with the cables extracted through joint bays to mitigate socio-economic impacts on agricultural users of the land along the as-built Cable Route.

Security

16.9.7 The Scheme features embedded security and crime mitigation measures primarily to prevent trespass, vandalism and theft of onsite infrastructure and equipment during the construction phase of the Scheme, and are secured through the **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]**, **Outline OEMP [EN010168/APP/7.13]**, and **Outline Decommissioning Strategy [EN010168/APP/7.14]** for the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the Scheme. Preparation of the relevant detailed management plan in accordance with each outline plan is secured by requirement in the **Draft DCO [EN010168/APP/3.1]**. Physical security infrastructure is described in Sections 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]** of this ES.

16.10 Assessment of Likely Impacts and Effects

16.10.1 This section considers the potential impacts outlined in Section 16.8 and, taking into account the committed mitigation measures as detailed in Section 16.9, assesses the potential for the Scheme to generate effects using the methodology as detailed in Section 16.6 subject to assumptions and limitations set out in Section 16.4, as assessed across the geographic Study Areas set out in Section 16.5.

16.10.2 All figures for numbers of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees are rounded to the nearest whole number. All figures for GVA to economic sectors are rounded to three significant figures. As such, some figures in the tables in the following sections may appear to not total due to rounding.

16.10.3 The assessment of likely significant effects is supported by the additional extended details set out in **Section 1.4** in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. Full tables of assessed

tourism and recreation receptors are set out in Section 3 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]**, with only summaries of overall significance of effects set out below.

Construction

16.10.4 The construction of the Scheme is anticipated to be undertaken over a two year period. Subject to the grant of consent of the DCO, the earliest construction may start is 2027 and will run until 2029. The Scheme retains flexibility for construction across the Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor to be undertaken in parallel or as a phased development.

Socio-Economics

Employment Generation

16.10.5 This section sets out the likely full-time and peak employment generated by the construction of the Scheme, from which the likely significant effects in paragraphs 16.10.12 to 16.10.24 have been assessed.

16.10.6 The projected two-year construction programme of the Scheme is anticipated to generate an estimated 268 full time equivalent (FTE) employees per annum, with the estimated on-site construction workforce expected to peak at approximately 692 total employees.

16.10.7 The 2023 BRES (Ref 16-74) indicates a total of 280 residents in the Study Area work directly in the '42.2: Construction of Utility Projects' industry. There may be need for specialist employment to be sourced from outside the 20 km Study Area where particular skillsets cannot be sourced locally. A precautionary judgement has been applied that a minimum of 25% of FTE employees are likely to need to be sourced from outside the Study Area. As such, a maximum 201 FTE (75% of the gross FTE employment requirement) can be sourced from within the Study Area. During peak construction activity, employment of up to 280 temporary workers from the Study Area equates to 40% of the gross peak employees required for construction. As such, an estimated 25% of the full-time economic and employment benefit (67 FTE employees) from the Scheme's construction, and up to 60% of the peak economic and employment benefit (412 peak employees) from the Scheme's construction, will be felt outside the Study Area (known as 'leakage').

16.10.8 The uplift in labour demand as a result of the employment opportunities arising from the Scheme cannot be treated simply as a net benefit as a result of 'displacement' in the labour market. The Homes and Communities Agency

Additionality Guide; 4th edition[3] (Ref 16-98), provides the most recent standards (or 'ready reckoners') for displacement. In this context, displacement refers to the workforce required for the Scheme coming from the Study Area being 'displaced from', or unable to work on, other similar developments also in the Study Area, thus reducing the extent of the net benefit to the labour market.

16.10.9 The scale of the construction workforce required for the Scheme is comparable to large-scale housing and business developments, which are not uncommon in the 20 km Study Area. However, the Scheme's construction is reliant on a more specialised subset of workers than housing and business developments. As a result, the likely impacts on the labour market are anticipated to be more concentrated in the '42.2: Construction of Utility Projects' sub-sector of the construction industry. Within this context, a 'medium' displacement factor of 50%, as defined by the HCA Additionality Guide, is considered appropriate. This factor is a good practice approach in the absence of specific local or industry-based information that might provide a defensible justification for a different level of displacement being used. As such, the net direct employment generated by the Scheme can be estimated as 134 FTE per annum during the construction phase.

16.10.10 In addition to the direct employment generated by construction, the Scheme is anticipated to support an estimated further 1.33 employees per direct FTE employee per annum through indirect and induced employment. Indirect employment is likely to be generated in the construction industry supply chains for site equipment, machinery and related skills such as earth working and security, while induced employment is anticipated to be generated through increased spending by employees and suppliers on local goods and services in the wider economy. This multiplier is based on the findings of the Centre for Economics and Business Research in their 2014 report for the Solar Trade Association (Ref 16-99).

16.10.11 Taking into account the direct, indirect, and induced employment generated by the Scheme, and the effects of leakage and displacement, the net employment figures during the construction of the Scheme are 234 FTE per annum in the Study Area (312 FTE per annum, total UK), and a peak of 326 jobs created in the Study Area (806 jobs in total UK). A full breakdown of FTE employment per annum and peak employment generate during the Scheme's construction have been provided in **Table 16-8** and **Table 16-9** below.

[3] The HCA Additionality Guide, 4th edition, was removed from official guidance as HCA – the Homes & Communities Agency – has been replaced by Homes England. No replacement like-for-like guidance has yet been published.

Table 16-8: FTE Employment per Annum as a Result of Scheme Construction

Category	20 km Study Area	Rest of UK	Total
Gross Direct Employment	201	67	268
Net Direct Employment (50% displacement)	100	33	134
Indirect and Induced Employment (net ×1.33)	134	45	178
Total Net Employment	234	78	312

Employment figures rounded to nearest whole number

Table 16-9: Employment Peak during Scheme Construction

Category	20 km Study Area	Rest of UK	Total
Gross Direct Employment	280	412	692
Net Direct Employment (50% displacement)	140	206	346
Indirect and Induced Employment (net ×1.33)	186	274	460
Total Net Employment	326	480	806

Employment figures rounded to nearest whole number

Socio-Demographic Effects

16.10.12 In assessing the worst-case scenario, it is prudent to assess the potential socio-economic impacts of approximately 412 gross peak employees from outside the Study Area temporarily relocating to within the Study Area (as in paragraph 16.10.7).

16.10.13 The Scheme's construction peak will bring a likely short-term, temporary uplift to the projected residential population of the Study Area. The short-term temporary uplift of 412 (0.054%) to the population in the Study Area therefore represents a short-term temporary negligible magnitude impact to a medium sensitivity receptor. Given the negligible magnitude and temporary and reversible nature of this impact, this is unlikely to have any predominant positive or negative bias to the projected population trend in the Study Area. Resultantly, this is an overall neutral effect to the Study Area.

16.10.14 Changes to the demographic profile of the Study Area on the basis of the projected additional population growth associated with the Scheme's construction peak are expected to be of a negligible magnitude impact, due to the negligible proportion of the anticipated total Study Area population (approximately 0.054%) consisting of inbound peak construction workforce. This change is likely to have a predominantly positive bias with regard to age and health demographics as a result of an increase in working-age people (thus negligibly improving existing population trends in which retirement-age and elderly population groups are growing most), and those who are likely to be in generally good physical health due the physical requirements of a large proportion of construction labour. As a result of being of medium sensitivity to change, there is a likely short-term temporary minor beneficial effect (not significant) to the population age demography in the Study Area.

16.10.15 As a result of being of low sensitivity to change, there is a likely short-term temporary negligible beneficial effect (not significant) to the self-assessed health demography in the Study Area.

16.10.16 The inbound construction workforce is anticipated to be majority male (based on 83.5% of jobs in the construction industry in the UK going to males (Ref 16-100)). However, the magnitude of this impact is unlikely to be perceivable at the 20 km Study Area level, is a short-term temporary impact, and is anticipated to have neither a positive nor negative bias with respect to changes to sex demography in the Study Area, so has not been assessed further.

16.10.17 As a worst-case scenario, the potential impacts of a peak 412 inbound employees (generated by gross peak direct employment from the rest of the UK) requiring temporary accommodation have been assessed. Access to housing and accommodation in the Study Area is of medium sensitivity to change.

16.10.18 Where inbound employees require temporary private rental accommodation, the proposed peak of 412 inbound employees is projected to occupy up to 15.8% of vacant private rental accommodation in the Study Area. This demonstrates that temporary workers can be accommodated in vacant rental stock without substantially increasing competition for private rental properties. This therefore implies no greater than a negligible magnitude impact on the local private rental accommodation market, and is thus a short- to medium-term temporary minor adverse effect (not significant).

16.10.19 Qualification attainment in the Study Area varies greatly dependent on location, and as such, skills and qualification attainment is a medium sensitivity receptor. The Scheme is likely to produce a modest number of skills and education opportunities, such as through construction apprenticeships, and as a result this is likely to have a negligible magnitude of impact on skills and qualification attainment in the Study Area. Therefore, the likely effect on skills and

qualification attainment in the Study Area is no more than a medium-term temporary minor beneficial effect (not significant).

Economic Effects (Employment and GVA)

16.10.20 The net direct employment generated by the Scheme during construction is anticipated to induce an uplift of £15.7 million GVA per annum to the Study Area. The Scheme is anticipated to induce a further uplift of £10.2 million GVA per annum more generally in the economy of the Study Area through indirect and induced economic benefits associated with the Scheme's construction. Beyond the Study Area, the leakage of economic benefit to the rest of the UK is estimated to be up to a further £7.95 million GVA per annum during the Scheme construction phase.

16.10.21 The Scheme is however anticipated to have an adverse effect on the agricultural industry in the Study Area. This is primarily as a result of a loss of employment of tenant farmers either wholly or partially displaced by the Scheme. The Scheme is estimated to lead to a reduction in up to 20 FTE jobs in the agricultural sector as a result of direct effects on farmers and indirect effects on suppliers, based on a scenario in which cessation of all agricultural employment on land within the Solar PV Sites has been applied. This is anticipated to be a negligible magnitude negative impact as this is a loss of approximately 0.08% of the sector's employment and GVA per annum in the Study Area.

16.10.22 The Scheme's construction is also anticipated to have a negative impact on tourism spending, albeit this is likely to be limited to within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas for tourism and recreation effects. Potential losses in tourism and visitor spending are assessed based on the assessment of tourism and recreation effects in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. Based on the likely magnitude of impacts to tourism and visitor receptors, and the current levels of employment in the areas most likely to be affected (Ref 16-74), the construction of the Scheme is anticipated to induce a worst-case reduction to employment and GVA per annum in tourism-dependent sectors of approximately 50 FTE jobs and £1.76 million in visitor spending per annum.

16.10.23 The accommodation sector, where not affected by losses due to reduced visitor spending, has potential to benefit from construction workers requiring temporary accommodation where serviced accommodation is preferred to private rental accommodation. In this instance, an uplift of between 5 and 30 FTE (dependent on average or peak accommodation need) is likely to be induced by increased occupancy of hotels.

Table 16-10: GVA per Annum as a Result of Scheme Construction

Economic Area	20 km Study Area Employment	GVA per worker	20 km Study Area GVA
Net Direct Scheme Employment	100	£156,674	£15,700,000
Indirect and Induced Scheme Employment (net ×1.33)	134	£76,501	£10,200,000
Agriculture (Direct and Indirect)	-20	£30,989	-£628,000
Tourism	-50	£35,240	-£1,760,000
Accommodation	5	£38,355	£186,000
Total Net Employment	169	n/a	£23,700,000

Employment figures rounded to nearest whole number, GVA figures rounded to three significant figures

16.10.24 The resultant changes to employment and GVA in the Study Area resulting from the Scheme, as shown in **Table 16-10** above, is therefore estimated to be an uplift of 169 FTE jobs per annum, generating £23.7 million GVA per annum in the Study Area during the Scheme's construction. Including economic benefit as a result of 'leakage', the Scheme is likely to generate a total GVA uplift of £31.7 million per annum during its construction. The uplift in employment represents an overall negligible positive impact to a low sensitivity receptor, thus having an overall medium-term temporary negligible beneficial effect (not significant) on the labour force in the Study Area. The resultant increase in economic performance within the Study Area is also negligible in magnitude, and as a result of the low sensitivity of economic prosperity, or local wages in the Study Area, the resultant effects are medium-term temporary negligible beneficial effect (not significant) to local economy and prosperity.

Tourism and Recreation

16.10.25 Whilst the economic impact as a result of the Scheme's potential effect on tourism has been references in the previous section, the Scheme is likely to have receptor-specific significant effects within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas for tourism and recreation as a result of direct and indirect impacts on visitor attractions and recreation venues. As discussed previously, these effects are likely to include visual impacts on individual receptors and on transport routes which could affect the desirability, enjoyment of, and use of some tourism and recreation facilities within the Study Areas. These facilities are identified in **ES Volume 2: Figures 16-2** and **16-3 [EN010168/APP/6.2]**. All identified receptors within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas have been screened on the likelihood of

experiencing any significant effects, with only those considered to be most likely to experience adverse effects assessed individually in Section 3 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Visitor Attractions

16.10.26 Within the 5 km Study Area, the immediate surroundings of the Scheme are host to a small number of nationally and regionally important tourism destinations that were screened as likely to experience adverse effects. Their respective sensitivities to changes are high and medium based on their importance. The greatest level of magnitude of impact on high-sensitivity receptors is anticipated to be negligible, resulting in up to a medium-term temporary moderate-minor adverse effect on the Cotswolds National Landscape and Badminton Horse Trials. There are therefore not significant effects. The overall effect on nationally and regionally important tourism destinations is a medium-term temporary moderate-minor adverse effect, which is not a significant effect.

16.10.27 The Scheme's 2 km Study Area also contains a number of localised attractions that have been screened as likely to experience adverse effects. These receptors are attributed a low sensitivity due to their localised importance. Impacts on these receptors are likely to be derived from effects on their landscape setting, their heritage value, and any construction traffic impacting upon access to these receptors or the enjoyment and use thereof. As such, the assessment of overall effect on these receptors considers the assessment outcomes as set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact**, **Chapter 12: Cultural Heritage**, **Chapter 13: Transport and Access [EN010168/APP/6.1]**. As a result, the assessment of locally important visitor attractions identifies impacts ranging from neutral to medium in magnitude, thus resulting in a maximum medium-term temporary **moderate-minor adverse effects** (not significant) to the most affected receptors, largely as a result of direct views on onsite or cabling works, and direct impacts from HGVs using access routes to or through the conservation areas and individual visitor attractions assessed. As a result of the embedded visual and transport mitigation measures set out in Section 16.9, the overall magnitude of impact on local visitor attractions is likely to be low, resulting in an overall medium-term temporary minor adverse effect (not significant) during the Scheme's construction.

16.10.28 Publicly accessible parks and nature reserves of regional importance in the 5 km Study Area, or of local importance in the 2 km Study Area, have been assessed for the Scheme's impact on their recreational value. These receptors respectively have medium and low sensitivities to changes. Subject to embedded mitigation measures, the Scheme's impacts are anticipated to range from negligible to medium in magnitude, thus resulting in a maximum medium-

term temporary moderate-minor adverse effect (not significant) to the most affected receptor: Corsham Park. The overall magnitude of impact on local parks and nature reserves is likely to be low, resulting in an overall medium-term temporary minor adverse effect (not significant) during the Scheme's construction.

Public Rights of Way and Recreational Routes

16.10.29 The Scheme's construction is likely to have direct impacts on a number of PRoW and long-distance recreation routes as a result of temporary use as construction accesses, any required diversions and closures, and as a result of the movements of construction goods and employee traffic. Embedded mitigation to limit impacts on these features are detailed in the **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]**, **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]**, and **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]**, secured through the **Draft DCO [EN010168/APP/3.1]**. This will include provision of suitable temporary diversions and notices of closures, and the provision of temporary management measures at HGV crossing points, such as signage and banksmen, to mitigate impacts upon PRoW users.

16.10.30 The local network of PRoW and permissive recreation routes is important to the local population for personal health and wellbeing, and for local amenity. Thus, the PRoW and permissive recreational routes network is of a medium sensitivity to effects. As a result of their regional and national importance, Long Distance Recreation Routes are of high sensitivity to effects from the Scheme.

16.10.31 As a result of the embedded mitigation measures, the greatest effects on the use, accessibility, and desirability of PRoW and permissive footpaths are medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effects**, as set out in Table 3-14 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. These are therefore **significant effects** to the seven PRoW and permissive footpaths identified as such. The overall impact of the Scheme on the 120 individual PRoW routes assessed is a medium-term temporary minor adverse effect, demonstrating that the Scheme is not anticipated to have a significant effect on the local and wider PRoW network.

16.10.32 The greatest level of effect on high sensitivity long-distance recreational routes as set out in Table 3-15 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]** is a medium-term temporary **major-moderate adverse effect** on the Palladian Way. This is therefore a **significant effect**. The resultant overall impact of the Scheme on long-distance recreational routes within the Scheme's 5 km Study Area is assessed to be a medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effect**. This is also a **significant effect**.

16.10.33 The local highway network also plays a substantial role as a recreational facility. Not only is the highway network itself used for recreational activity such as

walking, riding, and cycling, the rural highways are important links connecting the PRoW network to nearby settlements. Therefore, it is important for the local highway network to be considered as part of the assessment of effects on recreational routes. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 13: Transport and Access [EN010168/APP/6.1]** concludes that the construction impacts on the local highway will be temporary negligible for accidents and safety, severance, non-motorised user delay and hazardous loads, which is not significant, and temporary minor adverse residual effects on driver delay and pedestrian amenity, which is not significant. The resultant effect on the local highway network for recreational users is medium-term temporary minor adverse effect and therefore not significant.

Recreation Venues and Facilities

16.10.34 Waterways and bodies of water used for recreation and fishing are not anticipated to be impacted directly by the Scheme due to their distance from construction works on the Solar PV Sites, Cable Route Corridor, and Highway Improvement Areas, and the likely minimal number of views of construction activities or conflicts with construction traffic. Augmented ZTVs provided at **ES Volume 2, Figures 8-9-1** to **8-9-10 [EN010168/APP/6.2]** demonstrate these features are likely to experience no more than fleeting, intermittent, or long-distance views of the Scheme. As such, only the Kennet and Avon Canal has been assessed at users are anticipated to have distant views of cabling works in the Cable Route Corridor north of Whitley. The impact on users is negligible and therefore results in no more than a medium-term temporary minor adverse effect. This is not a significant effect.

16.10.35 Formal recreational facilities for organised sports have been identified and assessed in Table 3-17 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. The assessed organised sports facilities are anticipated to experience impacts ranging from negligible to medium in magnitude, whilst being of low and medium sensitivity depending on the sports grounds' respective local or regional level of importance and influence. The greatest significance of effects to any of the facilities are medium-term temporary moderate-minor adverse effects, which are not significant. This includes assessment of potential for direct impact on Whitley Golf Club where the Cable Route Corridor includes part of the tee-off area for Hole 2/11. Embedded safety measures will ensure Scheme construction workers and golf players are suitably separated by temporary barriers. Subject to detailed design of the finalised Grid Connection Cable routing, and in co-ordination with the operators of Whitley Golf Club, the tee-off areas for Hole 2/11 may if required be temporarily moved to ensure the use of the facility is not interrupted. In considering the overall significance of effect to the assessed organised recreational sports grounds across the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas (dependant on local or regional importance), the resultant significance of effect

to their recreational use is a medium-term temporary minor adverse effect (not significant).

16.10.36 No recreational aviation centres in the 5 km Study Area are assessed as likely to experience any individual effects from the Scheme. As a result, the effect to recreational aviation during construction is a neutral effect (not significant).

16.10.37 As outlined in the baseline conditions section, the 2 km Study Area of the Scheme plays host to a number of formal and informal recreational facilities, including those for recreational youth sports and children's play areas, of which 11 have been identified as likely to be impacted by the Scheme (as set out in Table 3-19 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]**). These recreational facilities for youths are located near to or on construction access routes, or routes likely to be affected by construction employment traffic, and therefore there is potential for accessibility to recreational facilities to be affected. None are expected to have direct, open views of any part of the Scheme. Given that these facilities are more likely to be used by children and youths, there is greater risk of reduced accessibility and desirability impacting safety, and health and wellbeing. As such, these facilities are of a medium sensitivity to changes. At worst, it can be anticipated that construction traffic has an up to medium-level impact on the accessibility of the local recreation area at Grittleton Village Hall, generating up to a medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effect** on this receptor. This is therefore a **significant effect**. When considering all eleven identified receptors together and the provision of embedded transport mitigation measures, the overall level of significance is anticipated to be a medium-term temporary minor adverse effect (not significant) on the accessibility of recreational facilities for children and youth groups.

16.10.38 The final group of assessed recreational facilities are equestrian facilities within the 2 km Study Area. These include private paddocks, manèges, riding schools, liveries and racing facilities. Private facilities are considered to be of local importance and therefore low sensitivity, whilst riding schools, liveries and studs, or equine care businesses are considered to be of medium sensitivity due to their prevalence and combined recreational and economic importance within the local area. The Scheme's construction is likely to impact on equestrian facilities by way of views impacting the desirability of the facilities for users, the potential for disruption and noise from construction to facility users and horses in paddocks, and the potential for HGV and construction traffic on local roads to impact on recreational use and access to the PRoW network for hacking. In considering the impact upon the recreational use of equestrian facilities with the implementation of embedded visual and traffic mitigation measures, these impacts are anticipated to range between neutral and high in magnitude, dependent on the proximity of the receptor to the Scheme, and the amount by which access to public hacking routes may be affected during construction. The greatest anticipated significance of effects are medium-term

temporary **moderate adverse effects**, which are therefore **significant effects** to these three individual receptors. Park Farm, Yatton Keynell is identified explicitly as the paddocks area is part of the Cable Route Corridor, and therefore is likely to experience direct interruption to its use during construction. When considering the overall impact on all equestrian facilities within the Scheme's 2 km Study Area, the level of significance is a medium-term minor adverse effect (not significant).

Operation and Maintenance

16.10.39 For the purposes of assessment, it has been assumed that the Scheme will commence operation and maintenance at the end of 2029. The operational life of the Scheme is anticipated to be no more than 60 years and decommissioning is therefore estimated to commence no later than 2089. A peak replacement scenario, consisting of the replacement of all onsite Solar PV Panels and BESS Batteries once during the Scheme's operational lifetime, over a worst-case 12-month working period, has been assessed as a discrete event. Maintenance and replacement in the form of ad hoc replacement of defective Scheme components has not been assessed separately as the likely effects are anticipated to be minimal and significantly lower than those during the peak replacement scenario.

Socio-Economics

Employment Generation

16.10.40 This section sets out the likely full-time and peak employment generated by the operation and maintenance of the Scheme, and the likely peak replacement scenario, from which the likely significant effects in paragraphs 16.10.44 to 16.10.55 have been assessed.

16.10.41 During its operational lifetime, outside replacement peaks, the Scheme is anticipated to require a gross 15 FTE employees per annum, albeit as set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**, none are anticipated to be permanently posted onsite, and a worst-case estimate of 4 FTE are anticipated to be employed from within the 20 km Study Area.

16.10.42 The Scheme is, as described in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**, likely to require the replacement of onsite infrastructure during the Scheme's estimated 60 year operational lifetime. To ensure the greatest likely significant effects are assessed, the workforce required to deliver a 'peak replacement scenario' of all Solar PV Panels and BESS Batteries being replaced over a 12-month window is assessed. The assumed replacement scenario is assessed as requiring a full-time workforce of 125 FTE employees, with a peak month requiring up to 360 gross on-site employees. The same assumptions relating to leakage, displacement and indirect employment at

construction (see paragraphs 16.10.7 to 16.10.10) have been applied during peak replacement works.

16.10.43 Employment benefits generated by the Scheme are subject to the application of displacement, and estimates for anticipated indirect and induced employment as has been done for construction. Taking this into account, the resultant long-term employment per annum generated during the operational lifetime of the Scheme are 32 FTE per annum in the UK, 8 FTE of which are from within the Study Area. This is set out in **Table 16-11**. During peak replacement activities, the average total net employment figures from the Scheme are 109 FTE jobs within the Study Area (146 FTE, total UK) and a peak of 245 short-term jobs created in the Study Area (419 short-term jobs in total UK). This is set out in **Table 16-12** below.

Table 16-11: Long-term FTE Employment per Annum as a Result of Scheme Operation and Maintenance

Category	20 km Study Area	Rest of UK	Total
Gross Direct Employment	4	11	15
Net Direct Employment (25% displacement)	3	8	11
Indirect and Induced Employment (net ×1.804)	5	15	20
Total Net Employment	8	24	32

Employment figures rounded to nearest whole number

Table 16-12: FTE and Peak Employment as a Result of Panel Replacement

Category	20 km Study Area		Rest of UK		Total	
	Full-time	Peak	Full-time	Peak	Full-time	Peak
Gross Direct Employment	94	210	31	150	125	360
Net Direct Employment (50% displacement)	47	105	16	75	63	180
Indirect and Induced Employment (net ×1.33)	62	140	21	100	83	239
Total Net Employment	109	245	36	175	146	419

Employment figures rounded to nearest whole number

Socio-Demographic Effects

16.10.44 As a result of the assumption that employment during the operational lifetime of the Scheme outside the peak replacement scenario is not likely to be permanently located onsite or posted within the Study Area for socio-economic effects, there are no anticipated inbound employees, and therefore no anticipated change in population as a result of the operation and maintenance of the Scheme. This therefore results in a neutral effect (not significant) on population growth, and a neutral effect (not significant) overall with regard to resident age, sex or health demographic profile.

16.10.45 With respect to the workforce associated with the peak replacement scenario of all Solar PV Panels and BESS Batteries being replaced in a 12-month period, an average of 31 FTE and a peak of 150 short-term gross direct employees are anticipated to come from outside the Study Area. This is a negligible magnitude increase in population, but is likely to result in a neutral effect as there is unlikely to be a notable beneficial or adverse bias to this effect. As during construction (see paragraph 16.10.14) changes to population demography during the peak replacement scenario are likely to consist of no more than short-term negligible magnitude changes, amounting to a short-term temporary minor beneficial effect on age demography, and a short-term temporary negligible beneficial effect on health demographics. Any changes to sex demographics are likely to result in a neutral effect as there is unlikely to be a notable beneficial or adverse bias to this effect. None of these are significant effects.

16.10.46 During the operational lifetime of the Scheme outside the peak replacement scenario, no inbound long-term employees are anticipated to require permanent accommodation in the Study Area as no employment is expected to be permanently located onsite. This therefore results in a long-term neutral effect (not significant) on access to housing and accommodation during the operation and maintenance of the Scheme.

16.10.47 To accommodate the peak inbound employment workforce of 150 short-term gross direct employees required for the peak replacement scenario, an estimated 5.7% of the 2,600 vacant private rental properties in the Study Area would be used. This would therefore have a negligible magnitude impact on the local private rental accommodation market. Due to the medium sensitivity of access to housing in the Study Area, this is a short- to medium-term temporary minor adverse effect (not significant).

16.10.48 Due to the limited number of long-term jobs, and the short-term nature of the peak replacement event, the Scheme is anticipated to produce no more than a negligible magnitude of skills and education opportunities (such as apprenticeships) during its operational lifetime, including during the peak activity period for when all Solar PV Panels and BESS Batteries are replaced.

Therefore, the likely effect on skills and qualification attainment in the Study Area is no more than a long-term minor beneficial effect (not significant).

Economic Effects (Employment and GVA)

16.10.49 The net direct employment generated by the Scheme is anticipated to create an uplift of £2.12 million GVA per annum, of which approximately £564,000 GVA per annum is anticipated to be generated in the Study Area. An additional indirect and induced uplift of £1.55 million GVA per annum, of which £388,000 is expected to be generated within the Study Area, is anticipated to be generated through indirect and induced economic benefits associated with the Scheme's operation and maintenance.

16.10.50 During the peak replacement scenario, the net direct employment from the Scheme is anticipated to generate an uplift of £7.34 million GVA in the Study Area, with an additional £2.13 million GVA elsewhere in the UK. Additionally, indirect and induced employment is likely to generate an additional £4.77 million GVA in the Study Area, and £1.59 million GVA across the UK.

16.10.51 As stated at paragraph 16.10.21, the Scheme is likely to result in a worst-case negligible magnitude long-term loss of up to 20 FTE agriculture sector jobs, resulting in a £628,000 GVA per annum loss to the Study Area throughout the operational lifetime of the Scheme. This is however likely to be more than repaid back into the same industry via working eligible landowners benefitting from ground rent from the Scheme.

16.10.52 During the up to 60-year operational lifetime of the Scheme is, there is likely to be a long-term adverse impact on tourism and visitor spending in the 5 km Study Area for tourism and recreation effects. Based on the likely magnitude of impacts to individual tourism and visitor receptors as assessed at paragraphs 16.10.57 to 16.10.71 against current employment in the areas affected, the operation and maintenance of the Scheme is anticipated to induce a likely reduction in in tourism-dependent employment of 11 FTE per annum. This therefore is equivalent to a loss of up to £395,000 in visitor spending per annum. During the 12-month period in which peak replacement activities occur, this is anticipated to temporarily increase to a loss of 16 FTE jobs and a loss of £547,000 in visitor spending while replacement works are ongoing.

16.10.53 The accommodation sector is unlikely to benefit greatly from any need for inbound workers requiring temporary accommodation during the operational lifetime of the Scheme other than on an ad hoc basis where a specialist worker may be required to travel to the Scheme from elsewhere in the UK. In this instance, the uplift is likely to be minimal to the economy in the 20 km Study Area. That notwithstanding, the peak replacement scenario may require an average 31 or peak 150 inbound workers to require temporary accommodation in serviced accommodation. This is likely to generate a modest uplift of between 2 and 11 FTE (dependent on average or peak accommodation need), and

£87,000 GVA minimum to the accommodation industry economy in the Study Area in the period peak replacement activities are being undertaken.

Table 16-13: GVA per Annum as a Result of Scheme Operation and Maintenance

Economic Area	20 km Study Area Employment	GVA per worker	20 km Study Area GVA
Net Direct Scheme Employment	3	200,463	£564,000
Indirect and Induced Scheme Employment (net ×1.804)	5	76,501	£388,000
Agriculture (Direct and Indirect)	-20	30,989	-£628,000
Other (Ground Rent)	n/a	n/a	£1,502,000
Tourism	-11	£35,240	-£395,000
Accommodation	1	£38,355	£31,000
Total Net Employment	-23	n/a	£1,460,000

Employment figures rounded to nearest whole number, GVA figures rounded to three significant figures

16.10.54 The resultant changes to long-term employment in the Study Area (as set out in **Table 16-13** above) is therefore estimated to be an annual loss of 23 FTE jobs per annum, largely driven by potential worst-case impacts on the agricultural industry. That notwithstanding, the Scheme is likely to generate an uplift of £1.46 million GVA per annum in the Study Area during the Scheme's operation and maintenance as a result of ground rent and indirect benefits (such as through supply chains and maintenance contracts). The changes in employment and economic performance in the Study Area are negligible in magnitude and thus the resultant effects are a long-term negligible adverse effect to economic activity and employment, and a long-term negligible beneficial effect to local economy and prosperity. These are not significant effects.

Table 16-14: GVA as a Result of the Peak Replacement Scenario

Economic Area	20 km Study Area Employment	GVA per worker	20 km Study Area GVA
Net Direct Scheme Employment	47	£156,674	£7,340,000

Economic Area	20 km Study Area Employment	GVA per worker	20 km Study Area GVA
Indirect and Induced Scheme Employment (net ×1.33)	62	£76,501	£4,770,000
Agriculture (Direct and Indirect)	-20	£30,989	-£628,000
Other (Ground Rent)	n/a	n/a	£1,502,000
Tourism	-16	£35,240	-£547,000
Accommodation	2	£38,355	£87,000
Total Net Employment	76	n/a	£12,500,000

Employment figures rounded to nearest whole number, GVA figures rounded to three significant figures

16.10.55 **Table 16-14** demonstrates that the 12-month peak replacement period is anticipated to create additional uplift to both employment and economic value, and as such is likely to lead to a short-term temporary negligible beneficial effect to economic activity and employment, and a short-term temporary negligible beneficial effect to local economy and prosperity. These are also not significant effects.

Tourism and Recreation

16.10.56 The proposed 60-year maximum operational lifetime of the Scheme is likely to induce long-term effects to tourism and recreation receptors in the localised 2 km and 5 km Study Areas, beyond the economic effects assessed above. These receptors are identified in **ES Volume 2: Figures 16-2** and **16-3 [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and assessed individually in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. The assessment of operational and maintenance effects also includes effects during the peak replacement scenario, wherein all Solar PV Panels and BESS Batteries are replaced in a 12-month period. This scenario is likely to somewhat increase the significance of effect in the short-term to some tourism and recreation locations as a result of increased views of works and due to HGV movements on the local highway network. These additional effects are only reported separately where there is a difference in level of significance between long-term operational and maintenance and short-term peak replacement work effects.

Visitor Attractions

16.10.57 The Scheme is not anticipated to directly impact upon the use, desirability and importance of nationally and internationally important tourism and visitor

attractions within the 5 km Study Area, such as the Cotswold National Landscape and annual Badminton Horse Trials, but may impact on their landscape settings. This effect will largely be mitigated by the implementation of embedded landscape mitigation measures, set to mature over the Scheme's operational lifetime. There is a low risk that the Scheme itself becomes a deterrent to visitors travelling to the area by virtue of subjective opinion on its appearance and changes to views of the landscape as seen when travelling between visitor destinations, however the risk of impact on these medium and high sensitivity tourism destinations themselves is negligible. As such, the anticipated impact on regionally and nationally important tourism destinations is negligible in magnitude albeit experienced over a long period, and as a result the expected overall effect will be a long-term moderate-minor adverse effect (not significant). These effects are not anticipated to be any greater in significance during the peak replacement scenario.

16.10.58 Among locally important tourism receptors of low sensitivity within the 2 km Study Area, the magnitude of impact ranges from neutral to medium, resulting in no greater than a long-term moderate-minor adverse effect (not significant) to the most affected receptor: Rodbourne Conservation Area. Locations along the Cable Route Corridor are unlikely to experience any further effects during the operational lifetime of the Scheme. Overall, the Scheme is anticipated to produce a long-term neutral effect (not significant) to the assessed locally important tourism and visitor attractions during the operational lifetime of the Scheme.

16.10.59 During the peak replacement scenario, it is anticipated that both the Rodbourne and Hullavington Airbase Conservation Areas may experience short-term temporary moderate-minor adverse effects (not significant), while the overall significance of effects to local tourism receptors is anticipated to be a short-term temporary negligible adverse effect (not significant).

16.10.60 Parks and nature reserves within the Scheme's Study Areas are anticipated to experience no greater than a long-term minor adverse effect (not significant) at any single receptor, and no greater than an overall long-term negligible adverse effect (not significant) during the Scheme's operational lifetime. These effects are not anticipated to change during short-term peak replacement works.

Public Rights of Way and Recreational Routes

16.10.61 The local network of PRoW and permissive footpaths is important to the local population for personal health and wellbeing, and for local amenity. Thus, the PRoW and permissive footpath network is of a medium sensitivity to impacts. As a result of their regional and national importance, most Long Distance Recreation Routes are of high sensitivity to impacts from the Scheme.

16.10.62 The Scheme, through its design and embedded mitigation set out in the **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]**,

preserves the routing and access of all existing PRoW and permissive recreation routes within the Order Limits throughout the operational lifetime of the Scheme except during planned replacement periods. Furthermore, embedded landscape mitigation, as controlled through the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]**, will establish and mature during the first 15 years of the Scheme's operational lifetime, providing long-term visual mitigation for PRoW users.

16.10.63 As a result of the embedded mitigation measures, the greatest effects on the use, accessibility, and desirability of PRoW and permissive footpaths during the operational lifetime of the Scheme, are long-term moderate-minor adverse effects to individual PRoW, and an overall long-term negligible adverse effect to the PRoW network. These are not significant effects although the greatest effects are strongly biased towards to PRoW near the Solar PV Sites rather than on the Cable Route Corridor.

16.10.64 During the assessed 12-month peak replacement scenario, increased on-site works are anticipated to create increased short-term effects to some PRoW, up to four of which are anticipated to experience short-term temporary **moderate adverse effects**. This is therefore **significant**. The overall significance of effect to the wider PRoW network is however not anticipated to increase to any greater than a short-term temporary negligible adverse effect, which is not a significant effect.

16.10.65 The greatest level of effects on high sensitivity long-distance recreational routes during the overall operational and maintenance phase are long-term **moderate adverse effects** to the Fosse Way, Palladian Way, and Wiltshire Way. These are therefore **significant adverse effects**. The overall significance of effect to the long-distance recreational routes assessed over the overall operational and maintenance phase of the Scheme is a long-term minor adverse effect (not significant).

16.10.66 During the assessed 12-month peak replacement scenario, additional non-significant effects are anticipated on the Cotswold Way National Trail and Macmillan Way due to increased HGVs on access routes. This is not however anticipated to increase the peak or overall significance of effect to long-distance recreational routes during the peak replacement scenario.

16.10.67 As during construction, the local highway network will continue to play a substantial role as a direct and supporting facilitator of recreational and active travel in rural areas. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 13: Transport and Access [EN010168/APP/6.1]** concludes that during the Scheme's operational lifetime, and during peak replacement activities, there will be significantly fewer HGV movements on the local highway network compared to the construction phase of the Scheme. As a result, accidents and safety, severance, non-motorised user and driver delay, pedestrian amenity, and hazardous loads, are likely to be negligibly affected during the Scheme's operational lifetime. The resultant effect

on the local highway network for recreational users is a long-term neutral effect and is therefore not significant. During the peak replacement scenario, HGV movements may have some level of effect on non-motorised user amenity through fear and intimidation on roads, albeit again significantly less than during construction. Applying a conservative judgement towards effects on non-motorised recreational highway users, this is therefore anticipated to have no greater than a short-term temporary minor adverse effect (not significant) to these users.

Recreation Venues and Facilities

16.10.68 As a result of the distances between the Solar PV Sites and identified recreation receptors, embedded mitigation to reduce outward visual impacts from the Scheme, and the negligible level of operational and maintenance activities anticipated within the Cable Route Corridor, the assessment of operational and maintenance effects as set out in Tables 3-16 to 3-20 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]** concludes the likely effects to recreational facilities are:

- Recreational use of waterways for navigation or fishing (within the 5 km Study Area): no impact – long-term neutral effect;
- Formal recreation facilities (within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas): neutral to negligible impacts as a result of views and decreased desirability for recreational use – greatest long-term negligible adverse effect, and an overall long-term neutral effect;
- Recreational aviation (within the 5 km Study Area): no impact – long-term neutral effect;
- Informal and youth recreation and play areas(within the 2 km Study Area): neutral to negligible impacts only – greatest long-term minor adverse effect with an overall long-term neutral effect; and
- Equestrian facilities (within the 2 km Study Area): range of neutral to low direct impacts due to passive nature of Scheme with greater impacts on the desirability and the use of PRoW for equestrian users – up to long-term moderate-minor adverse effect, with an overall long-term negligible adverse effect across the 2 km Study Area.

16.10.69 No long-term effects to recreational venues and facilities are significant effects.

16.10.70 Embedded mitigation to reduce effects during the peak replacement scenario are also anticipated to mitigate against any significant adverse effects to recreational facilities and attractions. Subject to implementation of this mitigation the assessment of peak replacement effects as set out in Tables 3-16 to 3-20 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor**

Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3] concludes the following likely significant effects to recreational facilities:

- Recreational use of waterways for navigation or fishing (within the 5 km Study Area): no impact – short-term neutral effect;
- Formal recreation facilities (within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas): neutral to low magnitude impacts due to views of the Solar PV Sites – greatest short-term temporary minor adverse effect with an overall short-term neutral effect;
- Recreational aviation (within the 5 km Study Area): no impact – short-term neutral effect;
- Informal and youth recreation and play areas (within the 2 km Study Area): up to low impacts only – resultant greatest short-term temporary moderate-minor adverse effect with an overall short-term negligible adverse effect due to increased HGV traffic on the local highway network; and
- Equestrian facilities (within the 2 km Study Area): neutral to low magnitude impacts due to views of the Scheme, and HGV movements impacting on hacking routes – resultant effects up to short-term temporary moderate-minor adverse effect, with an overall short-term temporary negligible adverse effect.

16.10.71 No short-term effects to recreational venues and facilities during the peak replacement scenario are anticipated to be significant effects.

Decommissioning

Socio-Economics

16.10.72 The decommissioning of the Scheme is anticipated to generate an estimated 75-80% of the level of employment of the construction phase, owing to the anticipated reduced labour requirements of decommissioning works. As such, it can be estimated that the decommissioning phase will employ up to a gross of 214 FTE employees per annum, based on a worst-case approximately two-year decommissioning timeframe. For the purpose of this assessment, this would produce a likely peak decommissioning workforce of 554 employees, however this peak may be higher if a shorter decommissioning timeframe is undertaken. Applying the same assumptions for likely inbound skill requirements, displacement, and rates of indirect and induced employment as result of the decommissioning activities for the Scheme, the resultant net employment and indirect and induced employment are set out in **Table 16-15** below.

Table 16-15: FTE and Peak Employment during Scheme Decommissioning

Category	20 km Study Area		Rest of UK		Total	
	Full-time	Peak	Full-time	Peak	Full-time	Peak
Gross Direct Employment	161	280	54	274	214	554
Net Direct Employment (50% displacement)	80	140	27	137	107	277
Indirect and Induced Employment (net ×1.33)	107	186	36	182	142	368
Total Net Employment	187	326	62	319	249	645

Employment figures rounded to nearest whole number

Socio-Demographic Effects

16.10.73 In assessing the worst-case scenario, it is prudent to assess the potential socio-economic impacts of approximately 274 temporary inbound employees from outside the Study Area relocating to within the Study Area during the peak of the decommissioning period. As during construction, this represents a negligible magnitude and temporary impact, which is unlikely to have a strong positive or negative bias on future population projections or trends, and therefore is likely to result in a neutral effect (not significant) overall.

16.10.74 The demographic profile of the Study Area during the decommissioning phase is likely to be reflective of national trends towards a more aging population, and as such is likely to be of a medium sensitivity to changes in age and health demographics. As during construction, this change is likely to have a predominantly positive bias with regard to age and health demographics as a result of an increase in working-age people (likely lower than the future median population age), and those who are likely to be in generally good physical health due the physical requirements of a large proportion of manual labour required for decommissioning infrastructure. As a result, age and health demographics in the Study Area are anticipated to experience a short-term minor beneficial effect (not significant).

16.10.75 Although future accommodation availability is unable to be reliably forecast for 2089, a 0.030% uplift in population in the Study Area as a result of peak decommissioning activities is not anticipated to generate greater than a negligible magnitude impact on the accommodation market. As these are temporary workers, this is most likely to impact on private rental accommodation. Attributing a medium sensitivity to access to accommodation as a receptor, due to current existing baseline barriers to accessing housing as

a reasonable worst-case assumption for future conditions, there may be up to a short- to medium-term temporary minor adverse effect (not significant) on access to private rental accommodation during the Scheme's decommissioning.

16.10.76 Skills and qualification attainment during decommissioning is likely to be a medium sensitivity receptor as a result of future reductions in young and working aged people joining the workforce, thus reducing the available skillset in the Study Area during decommissioning. As during construction, the decommissioning of the Scheme is likely to produce a modest number of skills and education opportunities, such as through apprenticeships, and as a result this is likely to have a negligible magnitude of impact on skills and qualification attainment in the Study Area. The likely effect on skills and qualification attainment in the Study Area is therefore a medium-term temporary minor beneficial effect (not significant).

Economic Effects (Employment and GVA)

16.10.77 Based on existing GVA per worker, and acknowledging that this may not be representative of economic value at the point of decommissioning, the net direct scheme employment of 80 FTE generated by the Scheme is anticipated to induce an estimated uplift of £12.6 million GVA per annum to the Study Area. Furthermore, the Scheme's decommissioning is likely to generate a further economic uplift through indirect and induced employment for suppliers, merchants, and those benefitting from increased spending by decommissioning workers. This is anticipated to generate an additional 107 FTE employment per annum in the Study Area, generating an estimated £8.17 million GVA per annum.

16.10.78 During decommissioning, the land would be restored to its original use and condition as far as practicable and returned to the landowner. As such, the (future) landowners would choose how the land is to be used and managed. In the event that the land is returned entirely to arable use, the approximately 20 FTE agricultural jobs directly and indirectly displaced by the Scheme could become available following completion of decommissioning activities. That notwithstanding, completion of decommissioning works will also mark the end of ground rent contracts to eligible landowners.

16.10.79 Decommissioning activities on the Scheme are likely to lead to negative impacts on the local tourism spending in a similar manner to those experienced during construction (as set out in paragraph 16.10.22), albeit with the significance of effect expected to be less than, or at worst, no greater than those during construction. Applying up to an 80% factor from construction assumptions, the estimated loss to tourism-dependent sectors during decommissioning works is anticipated to be up to 40 FTE workers, and a worst-case loss of £1.41 million in visitor spending per annum.

16.10.80 Following completion of decommissioning works, it can be assumed that the tourism industry will largely return to existing conditions as a result of the return of the land to agricultural activity. That assumption is caveated by not knowing what other changes may occur to the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas in the 60-year operational lifetime of the Scheme, and any beneficial or adverse legacy impacts as a result of the Scheme being in this location for a significant period of time.

16.10.81 The accommodation sector, where not affected by losses due to reduced visitor spending, has potential to benefit from decommissioning workers requiring temporary accommodation where serviced accommodation is preferred to private rental accommodation. In this instance, an uplift of between 4 and 20 FTE (dependent on average or peak accommodation need) is likely to be induced by increased occupancy of hotels. This is likely to generate an additional £149,000 GVA minimum to the economy in the Study Area during decommissioning works.

Table 16-16: GVA per Annum as a Result of Scheme Decommissioning

Economic Area	20 km Study Area Employment	GVA per worker	20 km Study Area GVA
Net Direct Scheme Employment	80	£156,674	£12,600,000
Indirect and Induced Scheme Employment (net ×1.33)	107	£76,501	£8,170,000
Agriculture (Direct and Indirect)	-20	£30,989	-£628,000
Tourism	-40	£35,240	-£1,410,000
Accommodation	4	£38,355	£149,000
Total Net Employment	131	n/a	£18,900,000

16.10.82 The resultant changes to employment and GVA in the Study Area, as shown in **Table 16-16** above, are therefore estimated to be an uplift of 131 FTE jobs per annum, generating £18.9 million GVA per annum in the Study Area during the Scheme's decommissioning. Including economic benefit as a result of 'leakage', the Scheme is likely to generate a total GVA uplift of £25.2 million per annum. As a result of current positive rates of employment rates, economic prosperity, or local wages, the overall workforce in the 20 km Study Area is of a good resilience and therefore low sensitivity to change. Acknowledging that this is based on existing baseline due to no ability to accurately forecast future baseline conditions in these circumstances, the negligible magnitude uplift in

employment and economic performance in the Study Area are anticipated to generate resultant effects that are medium-term temporary negligible beneficial effects (not significant) to economic activity and employment, and to local economy and prosperity.

Tourism and Recreation

16.10.83 The scale of works required for decommissioning is likely to be less than or no greater than that of the Scheme's construction phase, and as such, effects on tourism and recreation receptors during decommissioning are of a reduced, or no greater than equivalent, level of significance to those during the construction phase. That notwithstanding, following completion of decommissioning and the return of the land to the landowner, the surrounding area is likely to return to near baseline conditions prior to the construction of the Scheme.

Visitor Attractions

16.10.84 The decommissioning phase of the Scheme is likely to cause some level of impact to tourism and visitor attractions within the Scheme's 2 km and 5 km Study Areas. The significance of effect on these locations is anticipated to be less than or no greater than that at construction. As such, the following effects are predicted during the Scheme's decommissioning, none of which are likely to be significant effects:

- Nationally and regionally important visitor attractions – up to a medium-term temporary moderate-minor adverse effect on nationally and regionally important attractions;
- Locally important visitor attractions – up to a medium-term temporary moderate-minor adverse effect to some receptors, and an overall medium-term temporary minor adverse effect within the 2 km Study Area; and
- Parks and nature reserves – up to a medium-term temporary moderate-minor adverse effect to Corsham Park, and an overall medium-term temporary minor adverse effect within the 2 km Study Area.

Public Rights of Way and Recreational Routes

16.10.85 The local network of PRoW, permissive footpaths, and long-distance recreation routes around the Solar PV Sites, BESS Area, and onsite 132 kV and 400 kV Substations at Lime Down A-E are likely to experience similar impacts during decommissioning as during construction, as a result of onsite decommissioning activities and resultant HGV traffic on connecting access routes. The resultant likely significance of these effects is anticipated to be smaller than, or no greater than, those during construction.

16.10.86 As set out previously, embedded landscape mitigation, as controlled through the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]**, will be well-established and mature at the point of decommissioning, and therefore will go some way to providing

substantial visual mitigation for PRoW and recreational route users from onsite works.

16.10.87 The resultant significance of effects to PRoW and recreational routes is set out below:

- PRoW and permissive routes – there are assessed to be up to **moderate adverse effects** on six of the 120 assessed PRoW, primarily as a result of the need for medium-term diversions, or the use of the route for HGV access to the Solar PV Sites during decommissioning. These are therefore **significant effects**;
- PRoW and permissive routes – the overall effect on the PRoW network during the Scheme's decommissioning is anticipated to be a medium-term temporary minor adverse effect, which is not significant;
- Long-distance recreational routes –there is assessed to be up to a medium-term temporary **major-moderate adverse effect** to the Palladian Way, primarily as a result of the direct impacts from Lime Down D during decommissioning, and medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effects** to the Fosse Way, Long Path, and Wiltshire Way cycle route. These are therefore **significant effects**;
- Long-distance recreational routes – the overall effect on long-distance recreational routes during the Scheme's decommissioning is anticipated to be a medium-term temporary moderate-minor adverse effect, which is not significant.

16.10.88 Similarly, users of the public highway network within the 2 km Study Area are likely to experience a level of effect no greater than during the Scheme's construction, as a result of onsite decommissioning activities, and decommissioning HGV traffic. The resultant effect on the local highway network for recreational users is therefore up to a short-to medium-term temporary minor adverse effect (not significant).

Recreation Venues and Facilities

16.10.89 The assessment of likely significant effects on recreation during decommissioning is subject to the distances between the Solar PV Sites, BESS Area, and onsite 132 kV and 400 kV Substations at Lime Down A-E and identified recreation receptors, embedded mitigation to reduce outward visual impacts from the Scheme, and the reduced level of decommissioning activities anticipated to be required within the Cable Route Corridor. Therefore, the assessment of decommissioning effects as set out in Tables 3-16 to 3-20 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]** concludes the likely significant effects to recreational facilities are:

- Recreational use of waterways for navigation or fishing (within the 5 km Study Area): negligible impact – medium-term temporary minor adverse effect;
- Formal recreation facilities (within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas): neutral to medium impacts as a result of decommissioning activities – greatest medium-term temporary moderate-minor adverse effect, and an overall medium-term temporary minor adverse effect;
- Recreational aviation (within the 5 km Study Area): no impact – long-term neutral effect;
- Informal and youth recreation and play areas (within the 2 km Study Area): neutral to medium impacts – greatest medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effect** at Grittleton Village Hall. This is a **significant effect**;
- Informal and youth recreation and play areas (within the 2 km Study Area) – overall there is anticipated to be a medium-term temporary minor adverse effect; and
- Equestrian facilities (within the 2 km Study Area): range of neutral to medium direct impacts – resulting in up to medium-term temporary moderate-minor adverse effects, with an overall long-term minor adverse effect across the 2 km Study Area.

16.10.90 Embedded mitigation used to reduce effects during the construction, operation and maintenance, and replacement of onsite infrastructure is also to be introduced for decommissioning. With these implemented, these measures are anticipated to mitigate against the arising of most significant adverse effects to recreational facilities and attractions during the Scheme's decommissioning and site restoration.

16.11 Additional Mitigation and Enhancement

16.11.1 This section provides information of additional mitigation measures that will be applied in circumstances where the assessment of likely significant effects in Section 16.10 concludes that the Scheme will have a likely significant adverse effect on socio-economic, tourism and recreation receptors.

16.11.2 The mitigation measures set out in this section would allow the design, construction, operation and maintenance, and management of the Scheme to be adapted where feasible to manage adverse likely significant effects of the Scheme on the relevant receptors. These mitigation measures furthermore aim to reduce the impacts of the Scheme when considered cumulatively with other developments being built out over a similar timeframe in the same area.

16.11.3 Similarly, where beneficial effects are anticipated, a series of enhancement measures can be introduced where feasible to ensure the greatest beneficial effects can be generated and secured.

16.11.4 Mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed to be secured by requirements in the **Draft DCO [EN010168/APP/3.1]** with reference to the **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]**, **Outline OEMP [EN010168/APP/7.13]**, **Outline Decommissioning Strategy [EN010168/APP/7.14]**, **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]**, **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]**, **Outline Skills Supply Chain and Employment Plan (SSCEP) [EN010168/APP/7.20]**, and **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]**.

Additional Mitigation

Construction

16.11.5 The following additional mitigation measures for the construction phase of the Scheme have been identified and are proposed to be implemented where necessary.

16.11.6 To reduce the level of effect on PRoW, permissive routes, long distance recreational routes, and the recreational use of the local highway network, the **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]** and **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]** include further measures to target managing driver behaviours, the times vehicles arrive and leave each of the Sites or to reduce traffic volumes and effects overall. This includes:

- Providing additional signage to enforce preferred HGV and construction traffic routes particularly where non-compliance would cause adverse effects to tourism and recreation receptors; provide warning signs at points where PRoW and recreational routes cross construction traffic routes onsite; and
- Providing banksmen to control sensitive points on HGV routes, such as shared site entrances or where PRoW are also being used as HGV access points.

16.11.7 The **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]** furthermore contains specific measures for the diversion of footpath WT|GRIT|20 and bridleway WT|MALW|54, where access to Cable Route Corridor works east of Grittleton, and HGV access to Lime Down E are taken respectively. These diversions are proposed to reduce the number of instances in which PRoW users and construction traffic are in conflict, such as crossing points, or using the same route, to ensure PRoW users are not exposed to significant effects on their use of the PRoW or their health and safety.

16.11.8 These measures will mitigate against the majority of likely significant adverse effects to PRoW and permissive routes, reduce the greatest likely significance of effects on long distance recreational routes and to equestrian facilities, and

mitigate against likely significant effects on recreational waterbodies, formal organised sports facilities, and youth recreation and play areas.

Operation and Maintenance

16.11.9 The operational lifetime of the Scheme is estimated to be 60 years from the completion of the construction phase. For the purpose of assessment, it has been assumed that the Scheme will commence operation from 2029, with decommissioning estimated to commence no later than 2089.

16.11.10 In addition to embedded mitigation measures for the Scheme's operation and maintenance set out in the **Outline OEMP [EN010168/APP/7.13]** and **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]**, additional measures may be required during peak operational and maintenance periods: namely the replacement of Solar PV Panels and BESS Batteries. This may include the reintroduction of traffic management including banksmen at sensitive points on the highway network or at PRoW and recreational route crossing points. These will help to reduce peak effects on recreational receptors sensitive to traffic movements and mitigate against likely significant effects to long-distance recreational routes with the exception of the Fosse Way, which alone is anticipated to experience a residual **long term moderate adverse effect** throughout the Scheme's operation and maintenance phase, including during the peak replacement period. This is therefore a **significant residual effect**. The diversion of footpath bridleway WT|MALW|54, where HGV access to Lime Down E is taken, will be reintroduced as required for peak Solar PV Panel replacement activities as set out for construction. This diversion is proposed as required to ensure PRoW users are not exposed to significant effects on their use of the PRoW or their health and safety.

Decommissioning

16.11.11 Decommissioning activities on the Scheme are anticipated to affect socio-economic, tourism and recreation receptors to no greater than the same level of significance as those effects experienced during construction. Effects of the greatest level of significance are anticipated to result largely from the decommissioning of the Solar PV Sites, with likely comparatively reduced effects in the Cable Route Corridor. Mitigatory measures to be implemented are as set out in the **Outline Decommissioning Strategy [EN010168/APP/7.14]** (see Section 16.9 above). Additional mitigation measures including traffic management including banksmen at sensitive points on the highway network or at PRoW and recreational route crossing points will reduce effects on recreational routes and facilities sensitive to traffic movements as required at the time of implementation.

16.11.12 The diversion of footpath WT|GRIT|20 and bridleway WT|MALW|54, where access to Cable Route Corridor works east of Grittleton, and HGV access to Lime Down E are taken respectively, will be reintroduced for decommissioning

as set out for construction. These diversions are proposed to ensure PRoW users are not experienced exposed to significant effects on their use of the PRoW or their health and safety.

Enhancement Measures

Construction

16.11.13 Enhancement to local education through promoting of apprenticeship and training schemes will have a positive impact on education and skills attainment in fields such as construction, engineering, and energy technology throughout the lifetime of the Scheme, and is set out in the **Outline SSCEP [EN010168/APP/7.20]** to commence at the Scheme's construction phase. During construction, an enhancement to availability of apprenticeship and training schemes in the Study Area for socio-economic effects is likely to induce an uplift to access to education as a measured index of deprivation resulting in an improvement in skills and qualification attainment. This is anticipated to result in a medium-term moderate-minor beneficial effect (not significant) on skills and qualification attainment in the Study Area.

16.11.14 Practicable opportunities to promote local recruitment and procurement, education and skills uplifting, and apprenticeship and training schemes for construction, manufacturing, and the energy industry are also set out in the **Outline SSCEP [EN010168/APP/7.20]**. Focus on local recruitment and procurement during construction will help to enhance construction sector employment and the sector economy in the Study Area. Furthermore, exploration of options to find ways to support agricultural workers in moving to diversified agricultural practices (such as sheep rearing and grazing) that can be continued alongside the operation of the Scheme will help to mitigate the impacts on agriculture sector employment and the sector economy. As a result of the enhancements set out in the **Outline SSCEP [EN010168/APP/7.20]** there is likely to be an uplift in level of net benefit to the local economy, and thus to economic prosperity, and resident and workplace income.

16.11.15 These measures will collectively help to enhance the level of economic activity and employment in the Study Area. Furthermore, this will also enhance access to employment as a measured index of deprivation in the Study Area although this is not anticipated to increase the significance of beneficial effect to these receptors.

Operation and Maintenance

16.11.16 As described for the construction phase, the **Outline SSCEP [EN010168/APP/7.20]** sets out to enhance the Scheme's employment and economic benefit through focussing on local recruitment and procurement and supporting local education and skills uplifting during the operational lifetime of the Scheme. This includes ensuring loss of tourism and agricultural employment

is directly mitigated or compensated through uplifts in other employment sectors. Efforts to secure opportunities for re-skilling of employees into new industries, including the energy sector, and supporting the local agricultural industry (such as through diversified agricultural practices, such as sheep rearing and grazing) are set out in the **Outline SSCEP [EN010168/APP/7.20]**.

16.11.17 Support for local education and skills uplifting during the Scheme's operation and maintenance phase is set out in the **Outline SSCEP [EN010168/APP/7.20]** to enhance access to education as a measured index of deprivation, and improve overall skills and qualification attainment throughout the Scheme's operational lifetime, including during the peak replacement scenario.

16.11.18 Whilst the measures in the **Outline SSCEP [EN010168/APP/7.20]** are expected to enhance the provision of skills and qualification uplifts, and economic and employment opportunities throughout the operation and maintenance phase of the Scheme and during the peak replacement scenario, the significance of beneficial effects to these receptors are not anticipated to change.

16.11.19 The Scheme also features provision for enhancement to existing PRoW within the Scheme Order Limits, through repairing, upgrading and replacing existing PRoW furniture, such as signs, gates, and re-establishing hedgerows gaps. Furthermore, ecological mitigation and landscape planting along PRoW corridors on in fields not proposed for Solar PV infrastructure will aid the enhancement of the experience for PRoW users on the network.

16.11.20 In addition, the Scheme provides for a set of new non-vehicular permissive paths on each of the Solar PV Sites. These permissive paths are shown on the **Works Plan [EN010168/APP/2.3]** as demarcated by Work No.10. These routes will provide pedestrians and riders improved accessibility to the countryside and improved connectivity to the wider PRoW network. These permissive paths are to remain open up to 365 days per year throughout the proposed 60-year operational lifetime of the Scheme. These permissive paths will provide a beneficial impact on PRoW use for local users and visitors through mitigating adverse impacts on other PRoW and providing alternative access routes to the use of the local highway network. These measures, when implemented, will enhance *connectivity* in the local area and may help to improve recreation in the immediate vicinity, secondarily benefitting local population health and wellbeing in the long-term. The provision of these permissive paths is secured through landowner agreements alongside the DCO, and in the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]**, secured by way of requirement in the **Draft DCO [EN010168/APP/3.1]**.

Decommissioning

16.11.21 Additional enhancement measures during decommissioning will be implemented in a similar respect to during construction insofar as is practicable.

This will therefore include promotion of local skills and training opportunities, and focus on promoting local labour, supply chains, and delivery of transferable skills and employment. While these measures should create some level of uplift in economic activity, and local economic prosperity, these measures are not likely to increase the significance of these beneficial effects. This is secured through the **Outline SSCEP [EN010168/APP/7.20]** and **Outline Decommissioning Strategy [EN010168/APP/7.14]** by way of requirement in the **Draft DCO [EN010168/APP/3.1]**.

16.12 Residual Effects and Conclusions

16.12.1 This section summarises the residual significant effects of the Scheme on socio-economics, tourism and recreation following the implementation of embedded and additional mitigation.

16.12.2 Significant residual effects are defined as moderate, major-moderate or major. These are listed in **Table 16-17** (construction), **Table 16-18** (operation and maintenance), and **Table 16-19** (decommissioning).

16.12.3 A full table of non-significant residual effect is set out in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-3: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Summary of Non-Significant Effects [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

16.12.4 See **ES Volume 1, Chapter 22: Summary of Significant Effects [EN010168/APP/6.1]** for a summary of significant effects.

Table 16-17: Summary of Significant Residual Effects (Construction)

Receptor	Sensitivity (value)	Description of impact	Mitigation/Enhancement measure	Residual effect after mitigation
PRoW and permissive routes: *Bridleway WT|MALW|54* *Unsurfaced highway, Track crossing railway, Rodbourne* *Unsurfaced highway, Track parallel to railway, Rodbourne* (2 km Study Area)	Medium	Direct impacts from cabling works and Lime Down E. Short- to medium-term diversions likely to be required. Use of route for HGV access to Lime Down E. Increased HGV traffic at road crossings.	Embedded design measures to remove array areas and offset from PRoW. Secured through the **DPP [EN010168/APP/7.4]**. Use of construction traffic management to control HGV routing and numbers. Secured through the **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]**. --- Additional targeted traffic and HGV control measures on shared user routes. Secured through the **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]**. Provision of diversion on WT|MALW|54 to reduce impact on use. Secured through the **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]**.	**Medium-term temporary moderate adverse**
Long distance recreational routes: *Fosse Way* *Long Path* *Palladian Way* *Wiltshire Way* (5 km Study Area)	High	Direct impacts from access to Lime Down B and cabling works. Potential for short-term diversions or closures during construction works. Immediate views of Lime Down B, C, D, and construction compounds. Increased HGV traffic using route and at road crossings.	Embedded design measures to remove array areas and offset from PRoW. Secured through the **DPP [EN010168/APP/7.4]**. Use of construction traffic management to control HGV routing and numbers. Secured through the **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]** and **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]**. --- Additional targeted traffic and HGV control measures on shared user routes. Secured through the **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]** and **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]**.	**Medium-term temporary moderate adverse**

Receptor	Sensitivity (value)	Description of impact	Mitigation/Enhancement measure	Residual effect after mitigation
Equestrian facilities: *Park Farm* (2 km Study Area)	Low	Direct impacts from cabling works on use of the equestrian facilities. Immediate views of cabling works on hacking routes. Increased HGV traffic on access routes and hacking routes.	Embedded cabling works safety measures. Secured through the **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]**. Embedded transport and PRoW mitigation measures. Secured through the **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]** and **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]**. --- Additional targeted traffic and HGV control measures. Secured through the **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]**.	**Medium-term temporary moderate adverse**

Table 16-18: Summary of Significant Residual Effects (Operation and Maintenance)

Receptor	Sensitivity (value)	Description of impact	Mitigation/Enhancement measure	Residual effect after mitigation
Long distance recreational routes: *Fosse Way* (5 km Study Area)	High	Direct impacts from access to Lime Down B. Immediate views of Lime Down B and C, partially occluded by intervening vegetation. Increased HGV traffic using route and at road crossings during peak replacement activity.	Embedded design measures to remove array areas and offset from PRoW. Secured through the **DPP [EN010168/APP/7.4]**. Embedded landscape screening planting and ecological enhancement areas. Secured through the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]**. Use of traffic management to control operational movements and HGV routing and numbers during peak replacement activities. Secured through the **Outline OEMP [EN010168/APP/7.13]** and **Outline PRoW and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17]**.	**Long-term temporary moderate adverse**

Table 16-19: Summary of Significant Residual Effects (Decommissioning)

Receptor	Sensitivity (value)	Description of impact	Mitigation/Enhancement measure	Residual effect after mitigation
Long distance recreational routes: *Fosse Way* *Long Path* *Palladian Way* *Wiltshire Way* (5 km Study Area)	High	Impacts from decommissioning works, traffic, and views on desirability and use	Embedded design measures to remove array areas and offset from PRoW. Secured through the **DPP [EN010168/APP/7.4]**. Embedded landscape screening planting. Secured through the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]**. Use of decommissioning traffic management to control HGV routing and numbers. Secured through the **Outline Decommissioning Strategy [EN010168/APP/7.14]**. --- Additional targeted traffic and HGV control on shared user routes. Secured through the **Outline Decommissioning Strategy [EN010168/APP/7.14]**.	**Medium-term temporary moderate adverse**

16.13 Cumulative Effects Assessment

Inter-Project Cumulative Effects

16.13.1 This section presents an assessment of cumulative effects between the Scheme and other proposed and committed plans and projects.

16.13.2 This assessment has been made with reference to the methodology and guidance set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: EIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.1]** of this ES and shortlist of cumulative plans and projects identified in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 21: Cumulative and In-Combination Effects [EN010168/APP/6.1]** of this ES.

16.13.3 For individual receptors, this cumulative effect assessment identifies where the assessed effects of the Scheme could interact with effects arising from other plans and projects on either or both of a spatial and temporal basis.

16.13.4 Plans and projects identified from **ES Volume 1, Chapter 21: Cumulative and In-Combination Effects [EN010168/APP/6.1]** of this ES which have the potential to result in cumulative effects on socio-economics, tourism and recreation are set out in **Table 16-20** and considered below. The remaining plans and projects were reviewed in relation to socio-economics, tourism and recreation receptors identified in this assessment and no further potential for cumulative effects are identified (Ref 16-101 - Ref 16-102).

Table 16-20: Plans and Projects Relevant to Socio-economics, Tourism and Recreation Cumulative Effects Assessment

ID	Reference and Description	Distance from the Scheme	Potential Cumulative Effects
3	PL/2024/00865 (Ref 16-101) Residential development for 45 dwellings, vehicular and pedestrian access including a new footway to Sopworth Lane, associated parking, open space, landscaping, and associated infrastructure. Application submitted and awaiting determination.	1.1 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
5	PL/2021/10696 (Ref 16-102) Proposed erection of a GP Surgery (Class E(e)), car park and associated works (Outline application relating to access). Development permitted for 600 m^2 of Class E(e) space.	1.0 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
57	19/01490/FUL (Ref 16-104) A Residential Development Comprising 31 Dwellings (Use Class C3), a New Vehicular Access, Public Open Space, Landscaping, Sustainable Urban Drainage and Other Associated Infrastructure Works.	0.5 km	Not assessed, as the development is built and therefore part of baseline assessment
58	20/10972/OUT (Ref 16-105) Outline Planning Application for up to 71 Dwellings, Community Car Park, Land Reserved for Future Expansion of Hullavington CofE Primary School, Access, Open Space, Surface Water Attenuation Basin, Landscaping and Associated Works. Development under construction.	0.1 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
93	PL/2022/08742 (Ref 16-106) 75 bed modular unit single living accommodation, with supporting kitchen and utility units. New cycle storage shelter and new waste management facility. Development permitted.	1.2 km	Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance

ID	Reference and Description	Distance from the Scheme	Potential Cumulative Effects
96	18/08271/OUT (Ref 16-107) Outline planning application for up to 44,150 sq.m. (GIA) of development, comprising a maximum of 20,000 sq.m. (GIA) of research and development/office floorspace (Class B1 (a) and (b)) and 24,150 sq.m. of ancillary development including test areas, an energy centre, a logistics/storage building, hangar building, staff and customer facilities, and gatehouse, and new access arrangements including a re-aligned section of C1 road and new roundabouts at both the junction of the A429/C1 roads and on the C1 road (all matters reserved except for access).	1.0 km	Not assessed, as the development is built and therefore part of baseline assessment
101	PL/2024/02998 (Ref 16-108) Development of site to provide 41 No. residential (Use Class C3) units and associated works including 40% affordable housing, parking provision, highways improvements, off-site ecological enhancement and refuse/recycling stores. Application submitted and awaiting determination.	1.3 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
103	PL/2023/04993 (Ref 16-109) EIA Screening Opinion for the A350 Chippenham Bypass Phase 4 and 5 scheme - Dualling an existing single carriageway at the A350 Chippenham Bypass in order to improve regional connectivity and meet the increased traffic demand that is expected from the A350 growth zone under permitted development rights. Development under construction for 1.8 km of dual-carriageway with associated infrastructure.	1.1 km	Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
105	PL/2022/06908 (Ref 16-110) Full Planning Application for 56 Dwellings, associated parking, public open space, landscaping, access, drainage works and associated infrastructure. Development permitted.	0.6 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance

ID	Reference and Description	Distance from the Scheme	Potential Cumulative Effects
123 244	PL/2024/01560 (Ref 16-111) Laying a section of underground cable linking an approved solar farm (ref: 20/06840/FUL) to the approved cable route within National Grid's land title, together with ancillary work necessary for the implementation of the planning permission. (Melksham Substation). 20/06840/FUL (Ref 16-112) Construction of a solar farm and battery storage facility together with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure. PoC at Melksham Substation. Development permitted for 49.9 MW of energy generation and estimated 50-100 MWh of energy storage	0.0 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
129	PL/2022/09253 (Ref 16-113) Installation of underground cable. Development permitted for a 350 m cable route.	0.0 km	Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
206	PL/2021/04151 (Ref 16-114) Construction of a 2 hour duration containerised Battery Storage Facility with the ability to store and export up to 49.99 MW of electricity. The development will comprise 58 single storey steel cabins, known as E - Houses which are 12m long, 2.4m wide and 2.9m high, which house banks of lithium-ion batteries. 12 MV Blocks, also known as the transformers and control gear sit alongside E - Houses. The compound is protected with a 2.5 m high steel mesh fence. The proposed development would replace the approved Minety North substation (Minety North, 17/03936/FUL). (Minety South 2)	10 km	Not assessed, as the development is built and therefore part of baseline assessment
207 208	19/10628/FUL (Ref 16-115) The construction of a 10 MW Battery Storage Facility, the formation of a new access, alteration of an existing building, site clearance and other associated works. PL/2021/07610 (Ref 16-116) Development of a 20 MW battery storage facility. Development permitted.	0.3 km	Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance

ID	Reference and Description	Distance from the Scheme	Potential Cumulative Effects
218 234	20/08618/FUL (Ref 16-117) Installation of a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar PV panels with a generating capacity of up to 49.9 MW, including mounting system, battery storage units, inverters, underground cabling, stock proof fence, CCTV, internal tracks and associated infrastructure, landscaping and environmental enhancements for a temporary period of 40 years and a permanent grid connection hub. 20/05893/SCO (Ref 16-118) EIA screening/scoping opinion for installation of a solar farm with a 49.9 MW output for a temporary period of 40 years, including battery storage units, associated infrastructure, permanent grid connection hub and environmental enhancements. Development permitted for 49.9 MW of energy generation and estimated 10-20 MWh of energy storage.	6.0 km	Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance
221	PL/2021/06100 (Ref 16-119) The installation of a solar farm of up to 49.9 MW of generating capacity, comprising the installation of solar photovoltaic panels and associated infrastructure including customer cabin, customer substation, DNO substation and equipment, inverter and transformer substations (Leigh Delamere Solar Farm). Development permitted.	1.3 km	Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
224	PL/2023/04625 (Ref 16-120) Proposed Battery Energy Storage Scheme on Land at Woolley Park Farm, Leigh Road, Trowbridge The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. EIA Screening outcome is that EIA is not required for development of an estimated 280-560 MWh of energy storage.	5.8 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance

ID	Reference and Description	Distance from the Scheme	Potential Cumulative Effects
225 227	PL/2023/01914 (Ref 16-121) Proposed temporary planning permission for 40 years for the development of a solar farm of up to 24.14 MW of generating capacity, comprising of the installation of solar photovoltaic panels and associated infrastructure including customer cabin, customer substation, DNO substation and equipment, inverter and transformer substations, spare part container, associated battery storage, access tracks, widening of existing highway access, fencing, security cameras, landscape planting, ecological improvements and associated works. The existing agricultural use of the site will also continue in tandem with the solar farm with the grazing of farm animals. 20/06517/SCR (Ref 16-122) EIA Screening Opinion in relation to the proposed development of solar farm and associated development. Application submitted and awaiting determination.	4.5 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
226	PL/2021/08690 (Ref 16-123) Installation of a solar farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure. Development permitted for 49.9 MW of energy generation and estimated 40-80 MWh of energy storage.	2.4 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
229	PL/2022/01695 (Ref 16-124) EIA Screening Opinion for a proposed 20 MW Solar Farm development. EIA Screening outcome is that EIA is not required for the development.	1.7 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
231	20/03528/FUL (Ref 16-125)	9.0 km	Socio-Economic: Construction

ID	Reference and Description	Distance from the Scheme	Potential Cumulative Effects
	Installation of a renewable led energy scheme comprising ground mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with transformer stations; access; internal access track; landscaping; security fencing; security measures; access gate; and ancillary infrastructure. Development permitted for 49.9 MW of energy generation and estimated 20-40 MWh of energy storage.		Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance
237	PL/2022/00664 (Ref 16-126) Proposed Development is for a battery storage facility. The use of the site would change from agricultural to energy infrastructure. Application not determination and subject to appeal for an estimated 80-160 MWh of energy storage	9.4 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance
240	PL/2022/05504 (Ref 16-127) Installation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) together with associated ancillary infrastructure, equipment and access arrangements. Development permitted for an estimated 40-80 MWh of energy storage.	9.4 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance
241	PL/2022/02824 (Ref 16-128) Proposed Development is for a battery storage facility and ancillary development. Development permitted for an estimated 65-130 MWh of energy storage.	9.0 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance
242	PL/2024/03276 (Ref 16-129) Proposed development of a grid connection cable route for the approved Milou battery energy storage system. Development permitted for a 640 m cable route.	9.3 km	Socio-Economic: Construction
243	PL/2023/08481 (Ref 16-130) Development of a solar farm of up to 40MW of export capacity, comprising the installation of solar photovoltaic panels, associated infrastructure and associated works including grid connection. (Eden RB Solar) (Red Barn Solar Farm). Development permitted.	2.6 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance

ID	Reference and Description	Distance from the Scheme	Potential Cumulative Effects
254	PL/2023/10077 (Ref 16-131) Construction and operation of a renewable energy park comprising ground mounted solar photovoltaics (PV) together with associated infrastructure, access, landscaping and cabling. Application refused for approximately 23-28 MW of energy generation.	4.9 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance
256	CH1 – South West Chippenham (Rowden Park Site and Smaller Extension Sites) (Ref 16-132) Mixed use urban extension for 1,000 dwellings, 18 ha employment land, primary school, local centre and country park Additional for 11 ha / 400 dwelling on smaller extension sites Development under construction for approximately 1,400 dwellings and approximately 50,000 m^2 pf business and employment space.	0.9 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
260	CP35 – Methuen Park (Ref 16-133) Principal Employment Area (WCS) for B1, B2 and B8 Use - up to 26.5 ha of new employment (spread across all 3 Principal Employment Areas in Chippenham). Policy allocation for the delivery of approximately 75,000 m^2 pf business and employment space.	0.4 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
310	PL/2024/10434 (Ref 16-134) EIA Screening Opinion for proposed battery energy storage scheme of up to c. 50MW. EIA Screening outcome is that EIA is not required for the development.	0.2 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
311	PL/2024/06899 (Ref 16-135)	2.9 km	Not assessed due to scale

ID	Reference and Description	Distance from the Scheme	Potential Cumulative Effects
	Erection of an electrical substation, boundary timber fence and associated planting.		
319	PL/2024/11691 (Ref 16-136) Approval of reserved matters (layout, scale, appearance and landscaping) following outline consent PL/2022/06612 (APP/Y3940/W/322502) for the erection of 70 dwellings together with associated infrastructure and engineering works. Development permitted.	1.2 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
328	PL/2024/09725 (Ref 16-137) Outline Planning application (with all matters except access reserved) for up to 22 dwellings, new access off Corsham Road, Public open space, drainage and associated works. Application submitted and awaiting determination.	0.1 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
330	PL/2024/09454 (Ref 16-138) Erection of a substation.	3.1 km	Not assessed due to scale
333	PL/2024/10089 (Ref 16-139) EIA Screening Opinion in relation to the proposed development of “Battery Energy Storage Scheme”. EIA Screening outcome is that EIA is not required for the development of approximately 100-200 MWh of energy storage.	1.3 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
346	PL/2024/09410 (Ref 16-140) Construction and operation of a solar farm together with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure. Application submitted and awaiting determination for development of an estimated 10 MW of energy generation.	0.1 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction

ID	Reference and Description	Distance from the Scheme	Potential Cumulative Effects
			Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
357	PL/2025/03530 (Ref 16-141) Full planning application for the demolition of the remaining horticultural nurseries and erection of employment facilities comprising office and product development premises (Class E) and warehouse and light industrial facilities (Class B2 and B8). Ancillary uses include a mobility hub, café, and accommodation, together with landscaping, drainage, and other associated works. Application submitted and awaiting determination for development of 5,340 m^2 of Class B2, B8 and E space.	0.2 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance
358	PL/2025/02785 (Ref 16-102) EIA Screening Opinion for Proposed Battery Energy Storage System and Associated Infrastructure EIA Screening outcome is that EIA is not required for the development of approximately 350-700 MWh of energy storage.	1.2 km	Socio-Economic: Construction Socio-Economic: Operation and Maintenance Tourism and Recreation: Construction Tourism and Recreation: Operation and Maintenance

Cumulative Construction Phase

16.13.5 Cumulative construction effects have been assessed for the years 2027-2029, based on the earliest anticipated construction phase for the Scheme, and based on the earliest, or most likely construction timescales for the assessed cumulative developments in **Table 16-20**. This section should be read in conjunction with supporting details in Section 1.5 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Socio-Economics

16.13.6 The cumulative assessed developments are anticipated to generate a gross total of 2,350 construction jobs, of which approximately 590 are anticipated to be filled by short-term temporary inbound workers from outside the 20 km Study Area. The total change to employment from the cumulative development assessed, as a result of direct employment accounting for leakage and displacement, indirect and induced employment, and impacts on agriculture, accommodation and tourism, is a net increase of approximately 3,030 FTE jobs and an estimated £341 million GVA per annum to the 20 km Study Area.

16.13.7 The likely significance of effects on socio-economic receptors as a result of the cumulative changes to population demography, and employment and economic receptors are as follows.

16.13.8 Cumulative effects to population and demographic receptors are largely similar to those identified by the Scheme in isolation. Resident population is likely to experience no more than a **neutral effect**, while population age and health demography are likely to experience a cumulative short- to medium-term temporary **minor beneficial effect** and a likely cumulative short- to medium-term temporary **negligible beneficial effect** respectively. Access to housing as a result of temporary accommodation need for inbound workers is anticipated to experience a cumulative short- to medium-term temporary **minor adverse effect**. Cumulative impacts on skills and qualification attainment in the 20 km Study Area are likely to generate a medium-term temporary **moderate-minor beneficial effect**. None of these are significant effects, nor greater in significance than the residual effects of the Scheme assessed in isolation.

16.13.9 The likely cumulative employment and economic effects of the assessed developments are of an increased level of significance when compared to the Scheme assessed in isolation. Both in respect of employment and labour force in the 20 km Study Area, and local economic performance and prosperity in the 20 km Study Area, there is assessed to be cumulative medium-term temporary **minor beneficial effects**. Although greater than for the Scheme is isolation, these are not significant effects.

Tourism and Recreation

16.13.10 The cumulative construction phase impacts from the assessed developments within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas for tourism and recreation receptors are very likely to have a somewhat increased level of effect on tourism and recreation. As such, the following effects are predicted during the cumulative construction phase:

- Nationally and regionally important visitor attractions – no significant cumulative effects overall or to individual receptors within the 5 km Study Area;
- Locally important visitor attractions – no significant cumulative effects overall or to individual receptors within the 2 km Study Area;
- Parks and nature reserves – no significant cumulative effect overall within the 2 km Study Area. Corsham Park is anticipated to experience a cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effect**, which is a **significant effect** to this individual receptor. This is anticipated to be generated by cumulative impacts from project IDs 101, 103, 105, and 319 in **Table 16-20**;
- PRoW and recreational routes (including highways) – are anticipated to experience a cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate-minor adverse effect** (not significant) overall within the 2 km Study Area. Cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effects** are anticipated to be experienced on footpath WT|HULL|29 (refer to project ID 58 in **Table 16-20**) and byway open to all traffic WT|CORM|122 (refer to project IDs 101, 103, 105, and 319 in **Table 16-20**), which are **significant effects** to these individual receptors;
- Long-distance recreation routes – are anticipated to experience a cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effect** overall within the 5 km Study Area, which is a **significant effect**. Cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effects**, which are therefore **significant effects** to individual receptors, are anticipated to be experienced on Long Path (refer to project IDs 101, 103, and 358 in **Table 16-20**), Palladian Way (refer to project IDs 58 and 221 in **Table 16-20**), and Wiltshire Way (refer to project ID 358 in **Table 16-20**), albeit that are no greater in significance than for the Scheme in isolation. Sustrans Cycle Route 403 (also known as the North Wiltshire Rivers Route) is also anticipated to experience a **significant** cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effect**, which is anticipated to be generated by cumulative impacts from project IDs 103, 105, and 319 in **Table 16-20**;
- Recreational waterways and waterbodies – no cumulative effects anticipated;
- Recreational aviation – no cumulative effects anticipated;

- Organised recreational sports – no significant cumulative effects overall or to individual receptors within the 2 km Study Area;
- Youth recreational and play areas – are anticipated to experience a cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate-minor adverse effect** (not significant) overall within the 2 km Study Area. No significant cumulative effects are anticipated to individual receptors;
- Equestrian facilities – no significant cumulative effects overall or to individual receptors within the 2 km Study Area.

16.13.11 Further detail is set out at paragraphs 1.5.21-1.5.31 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Cumulative Operation and Maintenance (and Occupational) Phase

16.13.12 Cumulative operation and maintenance (and occupational effects of residential development) effects have been assessed for the years 2038-2046. This is the predicted period from earliest year all of the assessed developments are likely to be completed, to the earliest likely year of the first of the assessed developments to be decommissioned. This timescale has been derived from publicly available information for the assessed cumulative developments in **Table 16-20**. This section should be read in conjunction with supporting details in Section 1.5 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Socio-Economics

16.13.13 The cumulative assessed developments are anticipated to generate an estimated net direct employment of 3,300 FTE jobs once all fully operational, with an additional 3,750 FTE jobs likely to be generated through indirect or induced employment within the 20 km Study Area. The total change to employment from the cumulative development assessed, as a result of direct employment accounting for leakage and displacement, indirect and induced employment, and impacts on agriculture, accommodation and tourism, is a net increase of approximately 7,000 FTE jobs and an estimated £540 million GVA per annum to the 20 km Study Area.

16.13.14 The likely significance of effects on socio-economic receptors as a result of the cumulative changes to population demography, and employment and economic receptors are as follows.

16.13.15 Cumulative effects to population and demographic receptors are largely somewhat greater in significance to those identified by the Scheme in isolation. This is due to the quantum of anticipated employment, although as the

anticipated employment is most likely permanent or long-term in nature, it is not anticipated that there will be any substantial uplift in temporary or inbound workers that would be generated during the cumulative operation and maintenance lifetime of the assessed developments. Resultantly, resident population is likely to experience no more than a **neutral effect**, while population age and health demography are likely to experience no more than a cumulative long-term **minor beneficial effect** and a likely cumulative long-term **negligible beneficial effect** respectively.

16.13.16 Cumulative requirements for temporary accommodation are anticipated to be minimal, and therefore of no greater than a negligible magnitude impact. This would therefore constitute no more than a cumulative long-term **minor adverse effect** on the local private rental accommodation market, which is not significant. Cumulative impacts on skills and qualification attainment in the 20 km Study Area are likely to generate a cumulative long-term **moderate-minor beneficial effect**. Neither of these are significant effects, but are both greater in significance than the residual effects of the Scheme assessed in isolation.

16.13.17 The likely cumulative employment and economic effects of the assessed developments are of an increased level of significance when compared to the Scheme assessed in isolation. Both in respect of employment and labour force in the 20 km Study Area, and local economic performance and prosperity in the 20 km Study Area, there is assessed to be cumulative long-term **minor beneficial effects**. Although greater than for the Scheme in isolation, these are not significant effects.

Tourism and Recreation

16.13.18 The cumulative operation and maintenance (and occupational) phase impacts from the assessed developments within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas for tourism and recreation receptors are likely to have some increased level of effect on tourism and recreation, albeit largely as a result of developments near to the Cable Route Corridor rather than the Solar PV Sites. That notwithstanding, the assessment of cumulative effects during the cumulative operation and maintenance phase finds no significant cumulative effects are anticipated.

16.13.19 Further detail is set out at paragraphs 1.5.44-1.5.55 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Cumulative Decommissioning Phase

16.13.20 The decommissioning of the Scheme is anticipated to take place no later than 2089-2091 after a maximum 60-year operational lifetime. Of the assessed cumulative developments, only the assessed Solar PV and BESS

developments are assessed as having finite operational lifetimes. These range from 20 to 40 years across the cumulatively assessed development. As these are substantially shorter than the assessed operational lifetime of the Scheme, it is unlikely the respective decommissioning periods for these developments will overlap. As such, it is not considered that there will be any likely significant cumulative effects in conjunction with other developments.

In-Combination Cumulative Effects

16.13.21 In-combination cumulative effects are those where impacts from two or more environmental disciplines are considered likely to result in a new or different likely significant effect, or an effect of greater significance, than any one of the impacts on their own. The identified in-combination effects are set out within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 21 Cumulative and In-Combination Effects [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

16.13.22 The assessment presented in this chapter has already considered impacts on socio-economics, tourism and recreation from other topics, including transport, noise and vibration, cultural heritage, and landscape and visual impacts.

16.13.23 No in-combination effects alongside socio-economics, tourism and recreation have been identified as a result of the Scheme.

16.14 References

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Ref 16-3 The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, 2017 No.572. (as amended)

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Ref 16-16 Corsham Town Council (2019). Corsham Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2026. Trowbridge: Wiltshire Council. Available at: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-neighbourhood-made-plans [Accessed 12 August 2025]

Ref 16-17 Great Somerford Parish Council (2017). Great Somerford (incorporating Startley) Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2026. Trowbridge: Wiltshire Council. Available at: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-neighbourhood-made-plans [Accessed 12 August 2025]

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