Lime Down
Solar Park

Environmental Statement

Volume 3, Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation: Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information

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List of Contents

List of Tables

List of Plates

Appendix 16-1: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation: Legislation, Policy, Guidance, and Supporting Information

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This appendix to **Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 1, Chapter 16: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation [EN010168/APP/6.1]** sets out the legislation, policy, and relevant guidance, and extended baseline conditions, and detailed assessment of likely non-significant effects to support the assessment of likely significant socio-economic, tourism and recreation impacts as a result of the Scheme.

1.1.2 The purpose of Section 1.2 of this appendix is to identify the relevant legislation and policy only, and does not assess the Scheme against those policies. This section also identifies specific policy requirements or guidance that are likely to influence, or set requirements for the scope and methodology of the assessment of socio-economic, tourism and recreation impacts.

1.1.3 Section 1.3 has been provided to give detailed information on the baseline conditions across the Study Areas for socio-economic, tourism and recreation effects. This provides a detailed evidence base for Section 16.7 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 16: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

1.1.4 Finally, Section 1.4 of this report gives a full breakdown of the assessment undertaken to identify significant effects on the socio-economic, tourism and recreation environment as a result of the Scheme. This includes a full breakdown of effects that have been scoped into the assessment that are not assessed to have likely significant effects, and supports Section 16.10 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 16: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

1.2 Legislation, Policy, and Guidance

Legislation

Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

1.2.1 The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regulations) (Ref 1) sets out the regulatory framework for Environmental Impact Assessments in connection with Development Consent Order (DCO) applications, including screening, scoping, assessment of likely significant effects, and the requirements in respect of their content. Therein, Regulation 5(2) requires the direct and indirect significant effects of the Scheme

on population and human health factors to be identified, described, and assessed.

Planning Act 2008

1.2.2 The Planning Act 2008 (Ref 2) sets out the process for the consenting of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and is the principal legislation governing an application for an order for development consent for NSIPs.

Equality Act 2010

1.2.3 The Equality Act 2010 (Ref 3) consolidated previous legislation designed to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics – defined as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation – and is thus a specific consideration for the determination of health impact on vulnerable population groups and to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are not disproportionately affected by the Scheme.

1.2.4 Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the decision-making authority, in their duty, to *"have due regard to the desirability of exercising [its functions] in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage."* Therefore, the assessment in this ES chapter is intended to support the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero in their duty to make an informed decision on the likely effects on socio-economic conditions as a result of this Scheme.

National Planning Policy

National Policy Statements for Energy

1.2.5 National Policy Statements (NPS) set out the policy basis for NSIPs including for ground mounted solar developments. The NPSs that are relevant to the Scheme are Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) and National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5), dated November 2023 and came into force on 17 January 2024. These are important material considerations in addition to other relevant and important national and local planning policies.

Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

1.2.6 Part 4 of EN-1 (Ref 4) sets out the assessment principles for energy applications, including in principle, the presumption in favour of granting consent to applications for energy NSIPs, subject to specific and relevant policy considerations, and those referred to in the Planning Act 2008 (paragraph 4.1.3-4.1.4).

1.2.7 Paragraph 4.1.5 of EN-1 goes on to set out that in decision making, the Secretary of State should take into account the potential benefits and potential adverse impacts of development proposals including their *"contribution to meeting the need for energy infrastructure, job creation, reduction of geographical disparities, environmental enhancements, and any long-term or wider benefits"*. Paragraph 4.1.6 goes on to state that the Secretary of State should take into account *"environmental, social and economic benefits and adverse impacts, at national, regional and local levels"*.

1.2.8 EN-1 reinforces the legal requirement (as defined by the EIA Regulations) for the Applicant to assess *"effects on population, human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, air, climate, the landscape, material assets and cultural heritage, and the interaction between them"* (paragraph 4.3.2) and goes on at paragraph 4.3.4 to specifically require consideration of *"potential effects, including benefits, of a proposal for a project, the applicant must set out information on the likely significant environmental, social and economic effects of the development, and show how any likely significant negative effects would be avoided, reduced, mitigated or compensated for, following the mitigation hierarchy."*

1.2.9 NPS EN-1 requires applicants to consider the generic impacts of development on the surrounding environment with regard to land use in Section 5.11, and socio-economics in Section 5.13.

1.2.10 Paragraph 5.11.6 outlines that *"The government's policy is to ensure there is adequate provision of high quality open space and sports and recreation facilities to meet the needs of local communities. Connecting people with open spaces, sports and recreational facilities all help to underpin people's quality of life and have a vital role to play in promoting healthy living"* before going on at paragraph 5.11.7 to identify that *"Green and blue infrastructure can also enable developments to provide positive environmental, social, health and economic benefits"*.

1.2.11 The NPS also sets out the following requirement for impacts on existing sports and recreation facilities at paragraph 5.11.9:

"Applicants will need to consult the local community on their proposals to build on existing open space, sports or recreational buildings and land. Taking account of the consultations, applicants should consider providing new or additional open space including green and blue infrastructure, sport or recreation facilities, to substitute for any losses as a result of their proposal."

1.2.12 With specific regard to mitigating impacts on recreation, paragraph 5.11.30 states:

"Public Rights of way, National Trails, and other rights of access to land are important recreational facilities for example for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The Secretary of State should expect applicants to take appropriate mitigation measures to address adverse effects on coastal access, National

Trails, other rights of way and open access land and, where appropriate, to consider what opportunities there may be to improve or create new access. In considering revisions to an existing right of way, consideration should be given to the use, character, attractiveness, and convenience of the right of way."

1.2.13 Whilst all of Section 5.13 of EN-1 is relevant, the following extracts have been highlighted.

1.2.14 Paragraph 5.13.2 outlines:

"Where the project is likely to have socio-economic impacts at local or regional levels, the applicant should undertake and include in their application an assessment of these impacts as part of the ES."

1.2.15 The policy requires the applicant to describe the existing socio-economic conditions in the areas surrounding the Scheme and refer to how the development's socio-economic impacts correlate with local planning policies (paragraph 5.13.5), and consider all relevant socio-economic impacts which may include (as set out in paragraph 5.13.4):

- The creation of jobs and training opportunities;
- The contribution to the development of low-carbon industries at the local and regional levels as well as nationally;
- The provision of additional local services and improvements to local infrastructure, including the provision of educational and visitor facilities;
- Any indirect beneficial impacts for the region hosting the infrastructure, in particular in relation to use of local support services and supply chains;
- Effects (positive and negative) on tourism and other users of the area impacted;
- The impact of a changing influx of workers during the different construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the energy infrastructure; and
- Cumulative effects.

1.2.16 EN-1 also states at paragraph 5.13.7:

"Applicants should also consider developing accommodation strategies where appropriate, especially during construction and decommissioning phases, that would include for the need to provide temporary accommodation for construction workers if required."

1.2.17 Furthermore, EN-1 requires the Secretary of State in paragraph 5.13.11 to *"consider any relevant positive provisions the applicant has made or is proposing to make to mitigate impacts (for example through planning*

obligations) and any legacy benefits that may arise as well as any options for phasing development in relation to the socio-economic impacts."

National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure (EN-3)

1.2.18 EN-3 (Ref 5) now provides specific policy dedicated to solar photovoltaic generation (Section 2.10), and as such, the policies therein are directly relevant to this Scheme. NPS EN-3 does not contain any policy that specifically relates to impacts on socio-economics, and tourism and recreation. However, by virtue of the inter-relationship between ES topics, it is pertinent that impacts relating to matters such as public rights of way, landscape, visual and residential amenity, glint and glare, cultural heritage, and construction traffic, noise, and vibration, are properly considered. Where relevant, these are assessed in relation to socio-economics, and tourism and recreation.

National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5)

1.2.19 As the Scheme contains high-voltage electrical cabling to transmit generated electricity to the National Grid, sections of EN-5 (Ref 6) are relevant to the Scheme. However, no specific part of this policy is directly specific to socio-economics, tourism and recreation.

Emerging National Policy Statement Changes

1.2.20 Consultation on updates to the NPSs for Energy was undertaken between April and May 2025 (Ref 7), 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.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

1.2.21 The most recent version of the NPPF, amended December 2024 and February 2025 (Ref 8), acknowledges at paragraph 5 that while it *"does not contain specific policies for nationally significant infrastructure projects"*, it may be given weight in decision-making for NSIPs where the policies in the NPPF are *"other matters that are relevant"*.

1.2.22 Key to the overarching principles of the NPPF is that *the "purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development including the provision of* […] *supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner"* (paragraph 7) and this should be achieved by pursuing interdependent and mutually supportive economic, social, and environmental objectives (paragraph 8). Therefore: *"plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development."* (paragraph 11).

1.2.23 To meet the economic objectives, the NPPF emphasises the importance of building a strong, competitive economy by supporting *"economic growth and*

productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development" (paragraph 85) and helping to support a prosperous rural economy. Social sustainability is given policy context through emphasis on promoting healthy and safe communities (NPPF chapter 8) through enabling and supporting social healthy lifestyles, social interaction, providing social, recreational and cultural facilities (paragraphs 96-97), retaining access to open space, recreational spaces (paragraphs 103-104), and protecting and enhancing public rights of way (paragraph 105). Finally, the NPPF gives significant importance to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environments (NPPF chapters 15-16). All three of the overarching objective areas are relevant to the assessment of socio-economic, tourism and recreation effects anticipated from the development of the Scheme.

1.2.24 Paragraph 161 demonstrates the national ambitions for the planning system to *"support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts"* and to *"support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure"*. The NPPF (at paragraphs 165-169) goes on to explain how local planning authorities should seek to increase the use and supply of renewable energy through providing a positive strategy for energy whilst ensuring adverse impacts are addressed and considering identifying suitable areas for renewable energy sources.

1.2.25 Notably, at paragraph 168, the NPPF is proposed to require decision-makers to *"give significant weight to the proposal's contribution to renewable energy generation and a net zero future"* and *"in the case of applications for the repowering and life-extension of existing renewable sites, give significant weight to the benefits of utilising an established site"*.

Local Planning Policy

1.2.26 Local planning policy is set out in the host Local Authorities' adopted policy documents, consisting of their adopted Local Plans including made neighbourhood planning policies.

1.2.27 Wiltshire Council and South Gloucestershire Council are the two host local authorities to the Scheme. The Order Limits almost entirely fall within Wiltshire, with only two Highway Improvement Areas falling within South Gloucestershire. As such, given their relevance, a full review of local policy relevant to socio-economics, tourism and recreation has been undertaken for Wiltshire Council, while only strategic objectives for South Gloucestershire have been considered.

Wiltshire Core Strategy

1.2.28 The Wiltshire Core Strategy 2006 to 2026 (adopted January 2015) (Ref 9) provides strategic-level planning and development policy for the unitary authority of Wiltshire.

1.2.29 The adopted policies deemed to be of most relevance from the Wiltshire Core Strategy to socio-economic, and tourism and recreation factors, are listed below. These have been identified due to their geographic scope, their relevance to overall and rural employment and economic strategy – including specific regard to the renewable energy, agriculture, and tourism sectors – direct relevance to promotion and enhancement of tourism, accommodation, and any policy relevant to recreation, play, and sports services and infrastructure.

- 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
- Core Policy 63: Transport strategies

Saved Policies

1.2.30 Planning policy for Wiltshire also retains ‘saved policies’ from the previous Local Development Plans for the pre-2009 districts, prior to the formation of the unitary Wiltshire Council. Saved policies from the North Wiltshire and West Wiltshire are considered relevant as the Scheme falls within the former boundaries of these pre-2009 district areas. Those saved policies of continued relevance to socio-economics, tourism and recreation are set out below. These policies have been identified as of most relevance due to their scope in covering protection and development of recreation, leisure, play, and sports facilities, and access to PRoWs and the countryside.

- North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011, adopted June 2006 (Ref 10)
  - T5 Safeguarding
  - CF2 Leisure Facilities and Open Space
  - CF3 Provision of Open Space
- West Wiltshire District Plan, First Alteration, adopted June 2004 (Ref 11)
  - R13 Sailing Lakes
- West Wiltshire Leisure and Recreation DPD, adopted January 2009 (Ref 12)
  - Policy LP1 Protection and enhancement of existing open space or sport and recreation provision
  - Policy LP2 Proposals that involve the loss of open space or sport and recreation provision
  - Policy LP4 Providing recreation facilities in new developments
  - Policy CR1 Footpaths and Rights of Way
  - Policy YP1 Children's play areas
  - Policy YP2 Provision for teenagers

Neighbourhood Plans

1.2.31 Neighbourhood plans were introduced under the Localism Act 2011 (Ref 13) to provide a tool for parish and town councils, and neighbourhood groups to set out planning policies within their designated areas. Once adopted, these plans become an adopted part of local planning policy and as such are material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

1.2.32 The Scheme is located within and abutting a number of parishes that are designated neighbourhood plan areas. Those areas that have adopted neighbourhood plans, or have plans at examination or referendum stage (as of 1 June 2025) are listed below:

- Chippenham
- Chippenham Without
- Corsham
- Great Somerford
- Hullavington
- Melksham Without (as part of Melksham);

- Seagry
- Sherston
- St Paul Malmesbury Without (as part of Malmesbury)
- Stanton St. Quintin (designation only)

1.2.33 Those policies considered relevant to the socio-economic assessment and impacts on tourism and recreation are listed below. As with county-wide local policies, these have been identified due to their policy focus on localised economic strategy and employment, including in renewable energy, agriculture, and tourism, and the protection and enhancement of formal and informal recreational facilities.

- Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2038, adopted May 2024 (Ref 14)
  - Policy SCC3 – Standalone Renewable Energy
  - Policy GI2 – Local Green Spaces
  - Policy GI3 – Green Amenity Areas
  - Policy GI5 – Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
  - Policy T1 – Provision and Enhancement of Cycle Paths
  - Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure
  - Policy E1 – Circular Economy
- Chippenham Without Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2036, adopted October 2023 (Ref 15)
  - Policy CWoNP - NE1
  - Policy CWoNP - E1
  - Policy CWoNP - E2
  - Policy CWoNP - E3
  - Policy CWoNP - E4
- Corsham Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2026, adopted November 2019 (Ref 16)
  - Policy CNP BE1
  - Policy CNP BE2
  - Policy CNP BE4
  - Policy CNP E4

  - Policy CNP HW1
  - Policy CNP HW3
  - Policy CNP L1
  - Policy CNP T2
  - Policy CNP T3
- Great Somerford (incorporating Startley) Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2026, adopted November 2017 (Ref 17)
  - Policy GSNP7 – Local Green Spaces
- Hullavington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016 – 2026, adopted September 2019 (Ref 18)
  - Policy 1: Settlement Boundary
- The second edition Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2: 2020 – 2038, adopted August 2025 (Ref 19)
  - Policy 2: Local Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure
  - Policy 7.5: Allocation of Land at Middle Farm, Corsham Road, Whitley
  - Policy 9: Town Centre
  - Policy 10: Employment Sites
  - Policy 11: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel
  - Policy 14: Open Spaces
  - Policy 15: Community Facilities
  - Policy 17: Landscape Character
  - Policy 21: Local Heritage
- Seagry Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036, adopted May 2021 (Ref 20)
  - Policy SNP3: Footpaths and Bridleways
  - Policy SNP11: Retention of Facilities
- Sherston Neighbourhood Plan 2006 to 2026, adopted May 2019 (Ref 21)
  - 1. Protection of community services and facilities and business premises
  - 2. Protection of open spaces and open areas
  - 6. Sports facilities

- Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan: Volume I – Main Body, adopted February 2015 (Ref 22)
  - Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan does not contain any specific relevant policies, but does contain contextual text and a number of 'tasks' relevant to the socio-economic, tourism and recreation environment. These fall under the objective headings of: a prosperous town centre, business diversity and site allocation, high quality education provision, play parks and leisure facilities, and utilities and renewable energy.

Minerals and Waste Planning

1.2.34 Planning policy for minerals and waste planning in Wiltshire is controlled by four principal documents:

- Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy 2006-2026, adopted June 2009 (Ref 23);
- Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Development Control Policies Development Plan Document, adopted September 2009 (Ref 24);
- Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy 2006-2026, adopted June 2009 (Ref 25); and
- Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Development Control Policies Development Plan Document, adopted September 2009 (Ref 26)

1.2.35 Together these define the planning strategy and policy framework for determining applications and allocation of land for mineral extraction and waste development, including safeguarding land from other developments, across Wiltshire and neighbouring Swindon. The policies of relevance to socio-economics are primarily concerned with minerals safeguarding and ensuring the Scheme does not impact on the viability of land for minerals extraction. These have been explored in Section 20.2: Minerals of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 20: Other Environmental Matters [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

Emerging Local Planning Policy

Wiltshire Local Plan

1.2.36 The emerging Wiltshire Local Plan is a proposed strategic planning document to update the existing strategic objectives of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and replace existing Wiltshire Core Strategy development management policies to ensure their continued consistency with national policy and introduce further detailed development management policies as part of a review of the saved development management policies not replaced by the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

1.2.37 The emerging plan (Ref 27), was submitted for examination in public on 28 November 2024 and is due to be adopted no earlier than the third quarter of

2025. Due to the progressed nature of the policies therein, the emerging policies are likely to be of material consideration, and thus those deemed to be of most relevance to socio-economic, and tourism and recreation factors are set out below:

- Policy 2 Delivery Strategy;
- Policy 4 Addressing climate change;
- Policy 5 Securing infrastructure provision from new development;
- Policy 64 Additional employment land;
- Policy 65 Existing employment land;
- Policy 69 Tourism and related development;
- Policy 70 Sustainable transport;
- Policy 71 Transport and new development;
- Policy 78 Meeting Wiltshire's housing needs;
- Policy 81 Community facilities;
- Policy 84 Public open space and play facilities;
- Policy 86 Renewable energy; and
- Policy 94 Wiltshire's canals and the boating community.

1.2.38 Progress on, and any changes to, the policies during the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan's examination will be monitored as they are published.

Neighbourhood Plans

1.2.39 Corsham Town Council have undergone initial consultation for a new neighbourhood plan, for which questionnaires were made available in March 2024 (Ref 28). The proposed Corsham Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2038 is currently in early draft stages and has not yet been published, with no details of potential dates for consultation on a full draft plan.

1.2.40 Malmesbury are currently in the process of adopting a new neighbourhood plan, the latest draft version of the plan was published in April 2022 (Ref 29), with no publicly available progress published since. The draft plan covers the areas of St. Paul Malmesbury Without Parish, Malmesbury Town, and Brokenborough Parish. Policies considered to be of most relevance with regard to socio-economic, tourism and recreation factors, are:

- Policy 9 (sustainable housing for older people).

Local Climate, Economic and Tourism Strategies

Wiltshire

1.2.41 Wiltshire Council acknowledged and declared a climate emergency in 2019, committing to 2030 as a target year for the Council to make the county carbon neutral. To achieve carbon neutrality, the Wiltshire Climate Strategy 2022 – 2027 was published in February 2022 (Ref 30) to set out the objective and strategic principles that are required to be adopted to meet this goal. The key strategic subjects within the Wiltshire Climate Strategy are: transport, homes and the built environment, natural environment, food and farming, energy, green economy, resources and waste, and creating a carbon neutral council.

1.2.42 Economic and industrial strategy in Wiltshire (and neighbouring Swindon) is provided by the Swindon and Wiltshire Business and Growth Unit, which as of 1 April 2024 has taken over the responsibilities of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP).

1.2.43 The SWLEP (Ref 31) sets out a number of key objectives directly relating to improving economic performance in the plan area, these being improving the skills and talent pool, making transport infrastructure improvements, improving digital capability, place shaping, promoting business development. The following economic sectors are also targeted as priority sectors in the plan: advanced engineering and high value manufacturing; health and life sciences; financial and professional services; digital and information and communications technology; and land-based industries. Secondary targets are the visitor economy, adult health and social care, low carbon economy, and construction.

1.2.44 Longer-term economic and industry strategies in the Wiltshire and Swindon area is set out in the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Industrial Strategy 2020 to 2036, published March 2020 (Ref 32). This document also provides part of the evidence base for the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan. The strategic priorities set out therein seek to develop research and development, higher education and skills, improved infrastructure, and place-specific industry growth including tourism along ‘The Great West Way’.

1.2.45 Tourism and visitor strategy in Wiltshire is provided by Visit Wiltshire. Strategic objectives for managing and investing in the development of the visitor economy in Wiltshire and Swindon was provided by the Destination Management and Development Plan 2015-2020 (Ref 33). The priority actions therein focus on increasing visitor numbers and spending through promotion and developing attractions, improving transport and accessibility, and providing accommodation and support to business reliant on visitor spending. This plan covers up to 2020 but has not been revised or replaced by a similar strategic plan. Following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021, and the direct impacts on the visitor economy as a result, Visit Wiltshire produced their Wiltshire Tourism Recovery Plan in March 2021 (Ref 34) to provide specific guidance for

reinvigorating the recovery of the tourism and visitor economy following the pandemic.

Cotswolds National Landscape

1.2.46 Part of the Cotswolds National Landscape falls within Wiltshire, with the Scheme at Lime Down A and Lime Down C bordering the edge of the National Landscape at Sherston and Alderton respectively. As such, understanding the strategic objectives for visitors and tourism in the Cotswolds is a necessary part of the assessment of socio-economic, tourism and recreation effects. The Cotswolds official tourism information group published the Cotswolds Tourism Destination Management Plan 2022-2025 in 2022 (Ref 35) to set out its objectives for improving visitor numbers and spending across the National Landscape and its immediate surroundings. These objectives include: improving sustainability, improving partnership with businesses and public sector organisations, enhancing the visitor experience, developing the Cotswold brand and advertising, invest in greater intelligence to inform future objectives, and improve business performance in the National Landscape area.

South Gloucestershire

1.2.47 Economic and industrial strategy for Bath and North East Somerset, and for South Gloucestershire, are published in the West of England Local Industrial Strategy July 2019 (Ref 36). This sets out the strategic priorities for the West of England area (which also includes Bristol and North Somerset), which are promotion of cross-sectoral innovation, developing inclusive growth, increasing productivity, maximising innovation in delivery of infrastructure, and committing to tackling climate change. Its key innovation sectors include advanced engineering and aerospace; creative, cultural, and digital industries; financial, business and legal ‘tech’ services; and low carbon technology.

Cotswold and Stroud

1.2.48 The districts of Cotswold and Stroud fall under the economic strategy area of Gloucestershire County Council, with their strategic economic and industrial ambitions set out in their Gloucestershire’s Economic Strategy 2024-2034 (Ref 37). This document sets out the proposed strategic aims for the Gloucestershire area. These include: delivering sustainable growth based around the support of a centralised Gloucestershire City Region; building key sectors such as agri-tech and cyber-tech as part of creating and attracting investment opportunities; supporting and improving employment and local skills; and driving innovation through supporting ideas, people and businesses.

National and Industry Guidance

1.2.49 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 38) although as of March 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.

1.2.50 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 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, assessments of socio-economic impacts should consider socio-demographic and cultural receptors, local economic factors, as well as the accessibility and provision of local services (Ref 40, Ref 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 42). Finally, assessments of social impacts should explain how adverse social impacts can be mitigated or how the predicted project benefits be secured (Ref 43).

1.3 Extended Baseline Conditions Assessment

1.3.1 This section describes the baseline environmental characteristics for the 20 km Study Area with specific reference to socio-economics, and the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas with specific regard to tourism and recreation.

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

Existing Socio-Economic Baseline

Resident Population Size and Growth

1.3.3 The 20 km Study Area for socio-economics had a combined population of 728,300 in 2021 (Ref 44, Ref 45). 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 proportion breakdown per authority area is as follows in **Table 1**:

Table 1: Resident Population Existing Baseline (Census 2021)

Authority Area	Population in 20 km Study Area	Proportion of 20 km Study Area	Population of authority	Proportion of authority population within 20 km Study Area
Bath and North East Somerset	117,800	16.2%	193,400	60.9%
Cotswold	25,900	3.6%	90,800	28.6%
Mendip	10,600	1.5%	116,100	9.1%
South Gloucestershire	125,900	17.3%	290,400	43.4%
Stroud	83,200	11.4%	121,100	68.7%
Swindon	55,200	7.6%	233,400	23.7%
Wiltshire	309,700	42.5%	510,300	60.7%
TOTAL	**728,300**	**100.0%**	**1,555,600**	**46.8%**

Population rounded to nearest 100

1.3.4 Office for National Statistics 2018-based population projections (Ref 48) 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 30,500 people, approximately 4.2%. This however is biased towards greater growth in Cotswold (+7.6%) and South Gloucestershire (+6.3%) compared to Wiltshire (+2.7%). 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%), with the rate in South

Gloucestershire being more than one standard deviation more than the average for LPA areas in England, and Cotswold more than two standard deviations greater than the national average.

1.3.5 The Scheme has an estimated operational life of up to 60 years, and for the purposes of the EIA, the Scheme is anticipated to be decommissioned no later than the period 2089 to 2091, at which point, the national population of the UK is projected to grow by approximately 20.6% (13.9 million people) between 2021 and 2089 (Ref 49). Applied to the 2021 Census population, this generates a national population estimate of 80.7 million, generated almost entirely by population growth in England (+23.7% or 13.5 million estimated population growth). 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

1.3.6 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 50, Ref 51, Ref 52). The four largest five-year age bands are all from age 45 to 64, together comprising 27.6% of the population in the 20 km Study Area. This is presented in **Plate 1** and **Plate 2** below.

Plate 1: Age Profile of the United Kingdom

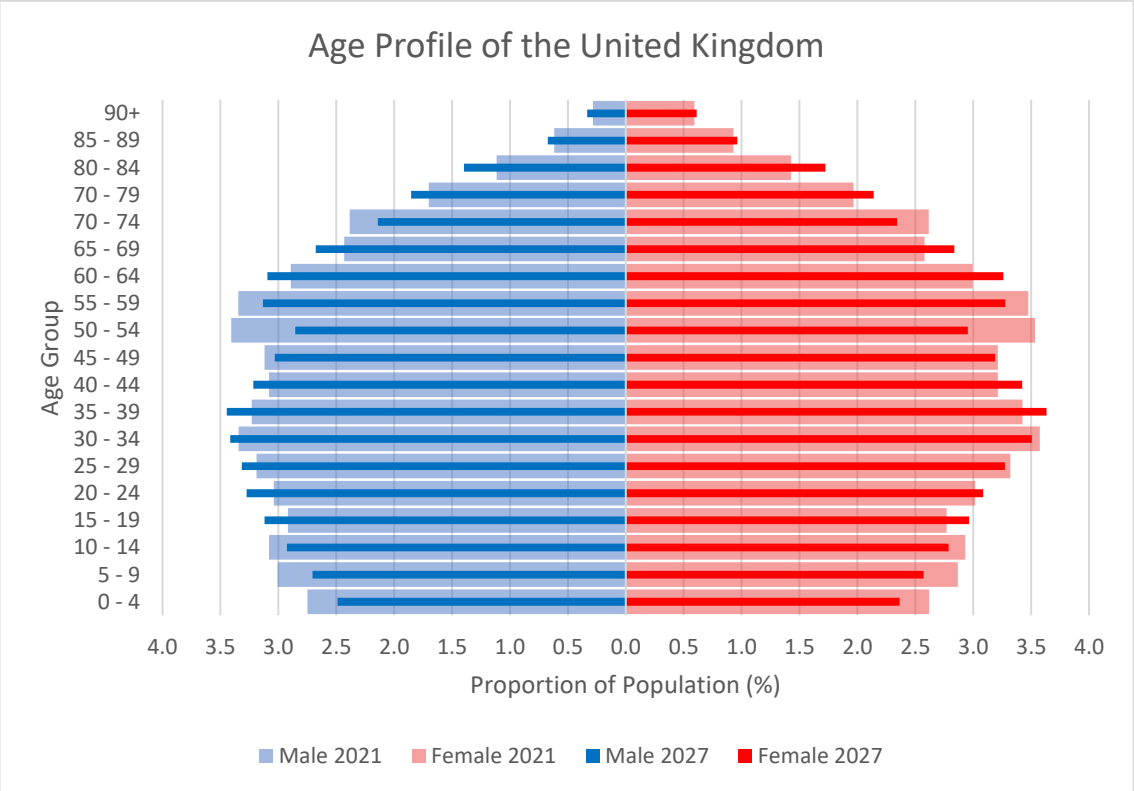
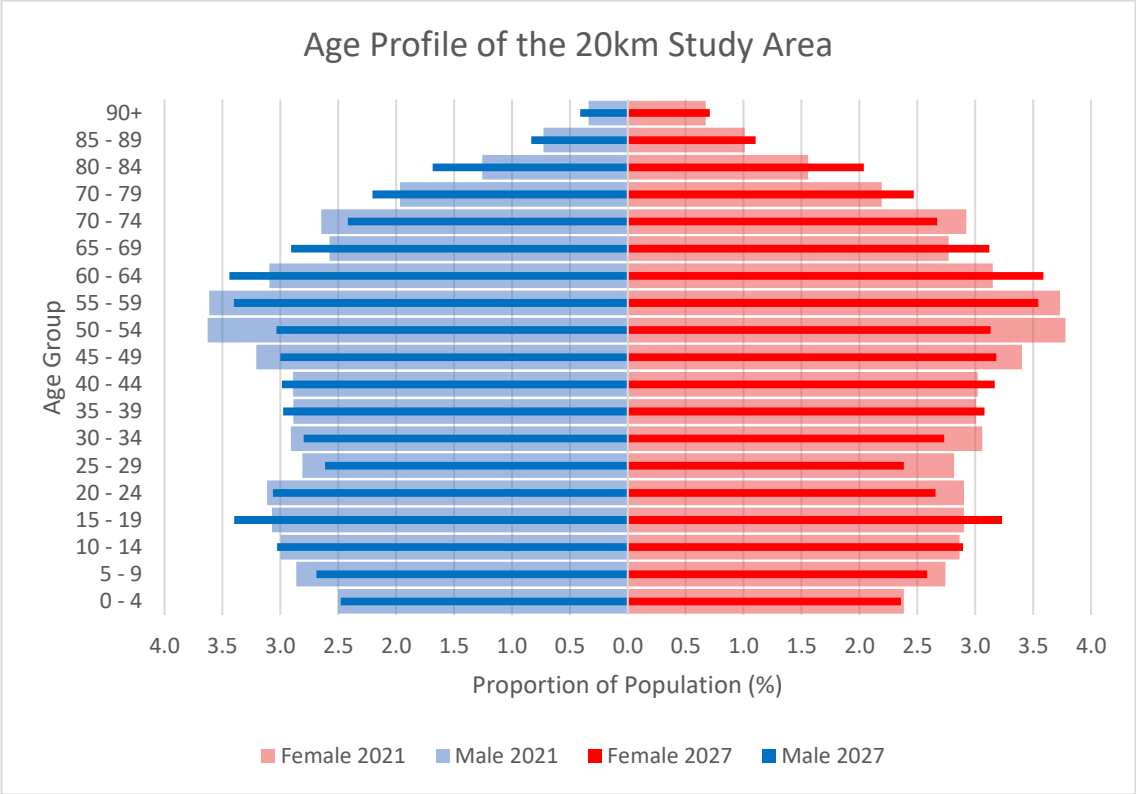


Plate 2: Age Profile of the 20 km Study Area



1.3.7 This is not, however, consistent across the authority areas within the 20 km Study Area. Bath and North East Somerset, Cotswold, and Mendip contrast notably with the rest of the 20 km Study Area, and regional and national trends. Bath and North East Somerset has a significantly larger proportion of residents between 15 and 24 years of age, likely as a result of a concentration of university students. In Cotswold, the largest population age bands are all between 40 and 74 years of age, with a distinctive underrepresentation of 15 to 29 year olds. The population demography in Mendip is weighted younger than the rest of the 20 km Study Area, with substantially greater proportions of 5-14 year olds, and 25-44 year olds than the rest of the 20 km Study Area. Comparatively, the demographic profile of Mendip is closer to that of Northern Ireland than the South West of England. Across the 20 km Study Area, there is however an overall stagnation in population proportion of age bands below 44 year old, indicative of reducing birth rates in England and Wales in the late 1990s and 2000s (Ref 53) and exacerbated by the phenomenon of 'brain-drain' as a result of young and working age people moving out of the area to study or start their working careers.

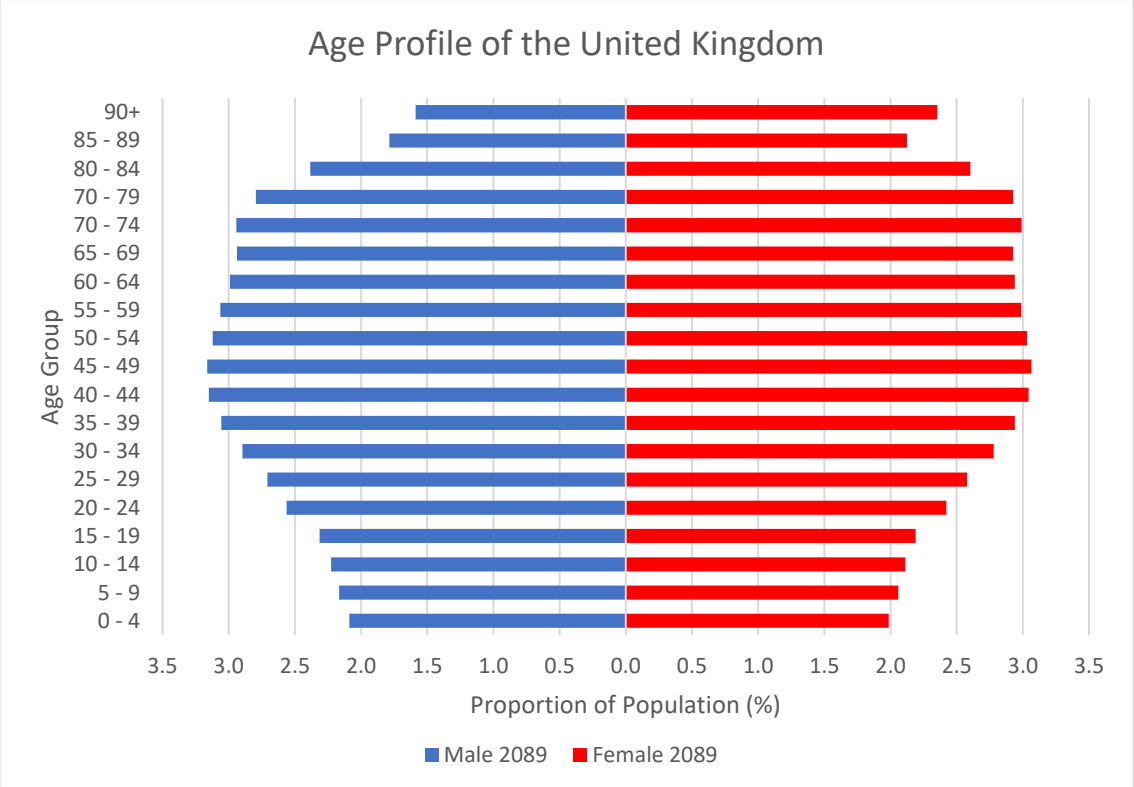
1.3.8 These trends are projected to consistently move with age up to the year 2027, at which point the 20 km Study Area shows a very appreciable trough in population aged 20-39 years old, again indicative of exacerbated 'brain-drain' amongst young working age adults. Furthermore, these show an increased proportion of the population reaching or nearing retirement age by 2027, likely

to increase pressure on services and recreational facilities to cater for this growing demographic. Together, these trends show that the age demography of the 20 km Study Area is of a medium sensitivity to changes.

1.3.9 National population projections indicate that by the end of the Scheme's operational lifetime, estimated for this assessment as being 2089, the age profile of the UK is likely to be weighted towards increasingly older demographics within the population (Ref 49). This is presented in **Plate 3** below. 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. Notably, by this point, the proportion of the population above 70 years old (24.5%) will be greater than the number of under 25s (22.1%). Furthermore, all age groups up to 69 years old have a greater number of males than females, at which point the trend reverses for all older age bands.

1.3.10 Although no sub-national projection is available, it is likely that the 20 km Study Area will have an age profile that is structured by the same or similar trends.

Plate 3: Projected National Age Profile in 2089



Resident Population Health Demographics

1.3.11 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]**.

Deprivation

1.3.12 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) have the following rank of the 317 authority areas (where '1st' is the most deprived area) in England (Ref 54):

- Bath and North East Somerset – 274th;
- Cotswold – 272nd;
- Mendip – 170th;
- South Gloucestershire – 267th;
- Stroud – 279th;
- Swindon – 171st; and
- Wiltshire – 231st.

1.3.13 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. Although not anticipated to alter assessment outcomes, it is noteworthy that of any location within the Order Limits, only the single Highway Improvement Area in Tomarton is located within any LSOA in the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in England (Ref 55).

1.3.14 The population of the 20 km Study Area is overall less likely than the national average to be deprived in any index of deprivation. Of the total 424 LSOAs within the 20 km Study Area, only 2.8% fall within the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England. That notwithstanding, there is a significant urban/rural divide in where deprivation occurs. Urban areas in the 20 km Study Area are more likely to see greater amounts of inequalities, particular with regard to income, employment, education, and crime. This is particular evident in central Melksham, Melksham Forest, parts of Trowbridge, and Twerton in Bath. Rural areas on average are more likely to be deprived of suitable access to housing and services, and to a suitable living environment. Barriers to housing and access to services is also particularly likely to impact people living in Wiltshire and Cotswold. In Swindon, people are more likely to deprived than the national rates across England in respect of access to education, health services, and prevalence of crime.

Access to Housing and Accommodation

1.3.15 The affordability threshold for housing in England and Wales is defined by ONS as the median average house value being 5 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 56). This is generally consistent with or higher than national rates, demonstrating that homes in 20 km Study Area are generally not affordable for a majority of workers. This therefore indicates that the local populace is more likely to be reliant on rented accommodation, living with parents to a greater age, or reliant on joint incomes to afford home ownership.

1.3.16 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. The most recent results are shown in **Table 2** below. In summary, the authorities in the Study Area for socio-economics are unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing, with only Bath and North East Somerset, and Cotswold, able to demonstrate a housing supply surplus. As a result, it is likely that the population in these authority areas, and thus the corresponding parts of the 20 km Study Area, are at an increased risk of being unable to access suitable housing.

Table 2: Supply of Housing Land

Area	Reference period	Housing need over 5 years	Projected housing supply over 5 years	No. Years of Deliverable Supply
Bath and North East Somerset (Ref 57)	2024-2029	3,225	3,556	5.51
Cotswold (Ref 58)	2023-2028	1,327	1,918	7.23
Mendip (Ref 59)	2024-2029	5,307	2,406	2.27
South Gloucestershire (Ref 60)	2024-2029	8,930	7,879	4.41
Stroud (Ref 61)	2024-2029	4,144	2,683	3.24
Swindon (Ref 62)	2023-2028	5,245	5,110	4.87
Wiltshire (Ref 63)	2023-2028	9,760	8,193	4.20
20 km Study Area (Overall)	2023-2029	37,938	31,745	4.18

1.3.17 The construction workforce directly employed for the construction of the Scheme is likely to consist of a significant number of workers who live outside the 20 km Study Area. Whilst some of these workers may commute in, it is considered reasonable to assess the likelihood that these workers would require temporary accommodation in the Study Area during the construction period. These are most likely to be accommodated in private rental accommodation or in serviced accommodation (such as hotels).

1.3.18 The 2021 Census estimates that 16.4% (50,100) of households in the 20 km Study Area are in private rental accommodation. This is lower than the national average rate for England of 20.5% (Ref 64). The English Housing Survey 2023 to 2024 indicates that across England, 10.4% of all private rented dwellings are vacant (Ref 65). 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, that the 20 km Study Area contains a varied mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas, 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. Within 2 km of the Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor, there are a total of 3,200 households in private rental accommodation. Applying the same estimate that 5.2% are vacant gives an approximate estimate of 170 that may be available for use by construction workers.

Skills and Qualifications

1.3.19 The qualification attainment rates at the time of the December 2024 Annual Population Survey indicate a significant variance in skills and qualification between the seven subject local authority areas across the Study Area for socio-economics and national qualification attainment rates (Ref 66). Qualification attainment rates between the Study Area for socio-economics and the Wider Study Area as a whole are broadly consistent.

1.3.20 The proportion of the population between the ages 16-64 years old achieving no qualifications varies significantly, with Stroud having a notably low rate of 2.6% compared to the high rate of 5.3% in Somerset. The resultant combined rate of 4.2% across the Study Area for socio-economics is somewhat lower than the regional rates for the Wider Study Area (4.7%) and the UK national rate (6.8%). Attainment of NVQ Level 4 and higher qualifications is also widely varied across the Study Area for socio-economics, ranging from 43.2% in Somerset to 55.1% in Cotswold. Across the Study Area for socio-economics, the overall rate of Level 4 and higher qualifications stands at about 47.6%, compared to 46.1% in the Wider Study Area, and 47.2% across the UK.

1.3.21 These can be seen in more detail in **Table 3** and **Plate 4** below. Cells highlighted light blue show figures falling between 1σ and 2σ (standard deviations) above or below the national mean. Cells highlighted dark blue show figures falling more than 2σ above or below the national mean

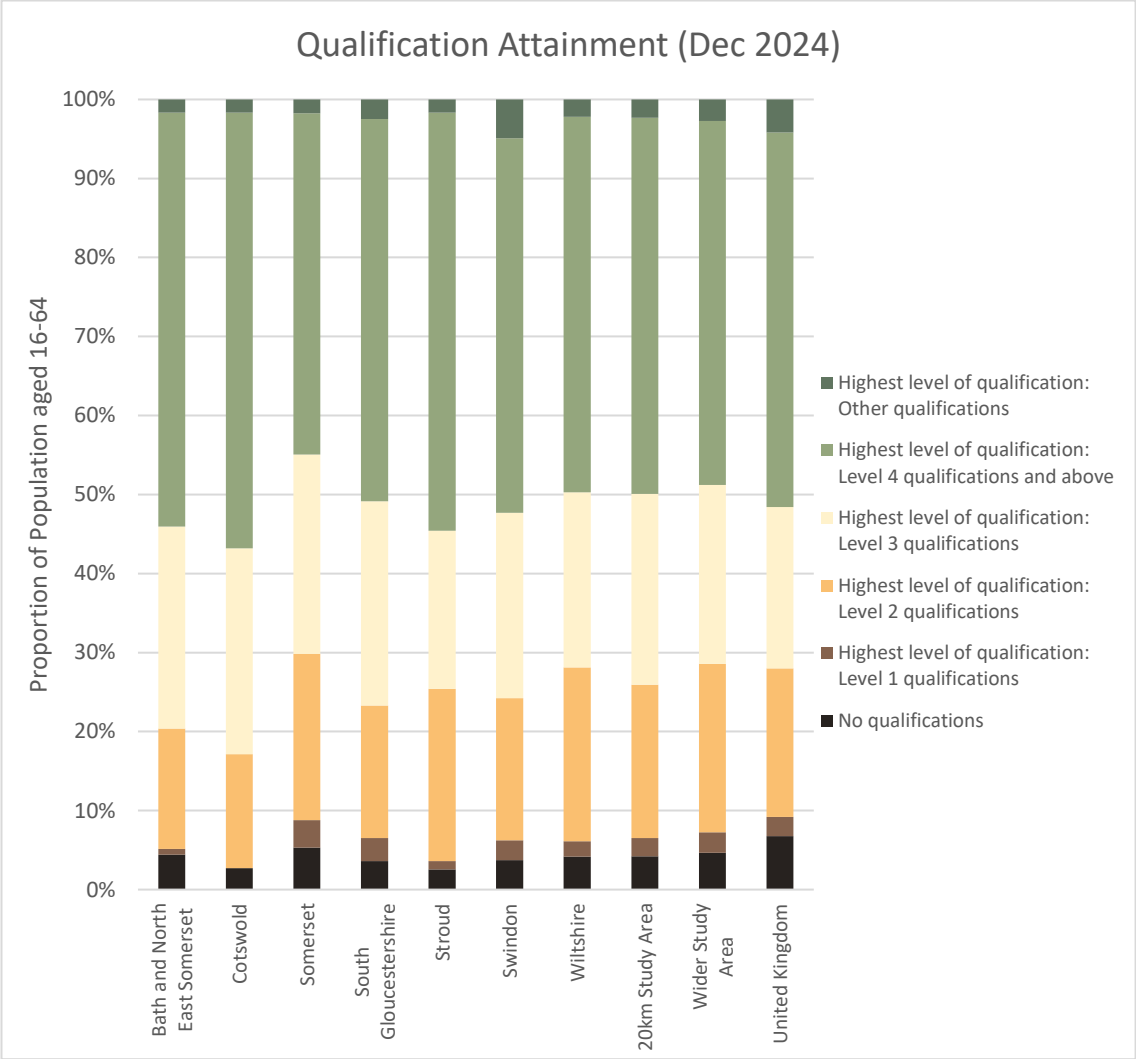
Table 3: Qualification Attainment Rate in ages 16-64 as of December 2024

Highest Level of Qualification / Area	No qualification (%)	Level 1 (%)	Level 2 (%)	Level 3 (%)	Level 4+ (%)	Other (%)
Bath and North East Somerset	4.42	0.75	15.25	25.58	52.42	1.67
Cotswold	2.73	0.00	14.43	26.05	55.11	1.68
Somerset	5.30	3.48	21.03	25.24	43.20	1.75
South Gloucestershire	3.59	2.92	16.78	25.87	48.37	2.47
Stroud	2.56	1.05	21.80	20.00	52.93	1.65
Swindon	3.74	2.49	17.98	23.48	47.40	4.92
Wiltshire	4.17	1.93	22.01	22.18	47.50	2.21
Study Area	4.21	2.31	19.42	24.13	47.61	2.33
Wider Study Area	4.67	2.57	21.33	22.65	46.08	2.71
United Kingdom	6.78	2.41	18.81	20.40	47.42	4.18

1.3.22 The variance in qualification attainment rates across the authority areas within the Study Area for socio-economics demonstrate a number of sectors that are significantly different to the national average. In Cotswold and Stroud, the proportion of the working age population achieving no qualifications is significantly lower than average. In Cotswold, the proportion of the population only achieving NVQ Level 1 qualifications is also notable as it is (effectively) zero.

1.3.23 Cotswold and South Gloucestershire together are outliers in the Study Area for socio-economics for having a far greater proportion of the population only achieving Level 3 qualifications, albeit without adversely impacting upon the proportion of people with Level 4 or higher qualifications. Somerset is the only authority area within the Study Area for socio-economics that has a notably lower proportion of the working population than the national average attaining Level 4 or higher qualifications. Bath and North East Somerset, Cotswold, Somerset and Stroud also have respectively significantly lower rates of attainment of other types of qualifications.

Plate 4: Qualification Attainment Rate in ages 16-64 as of December 2024



Economic Activity, Employment, and Income

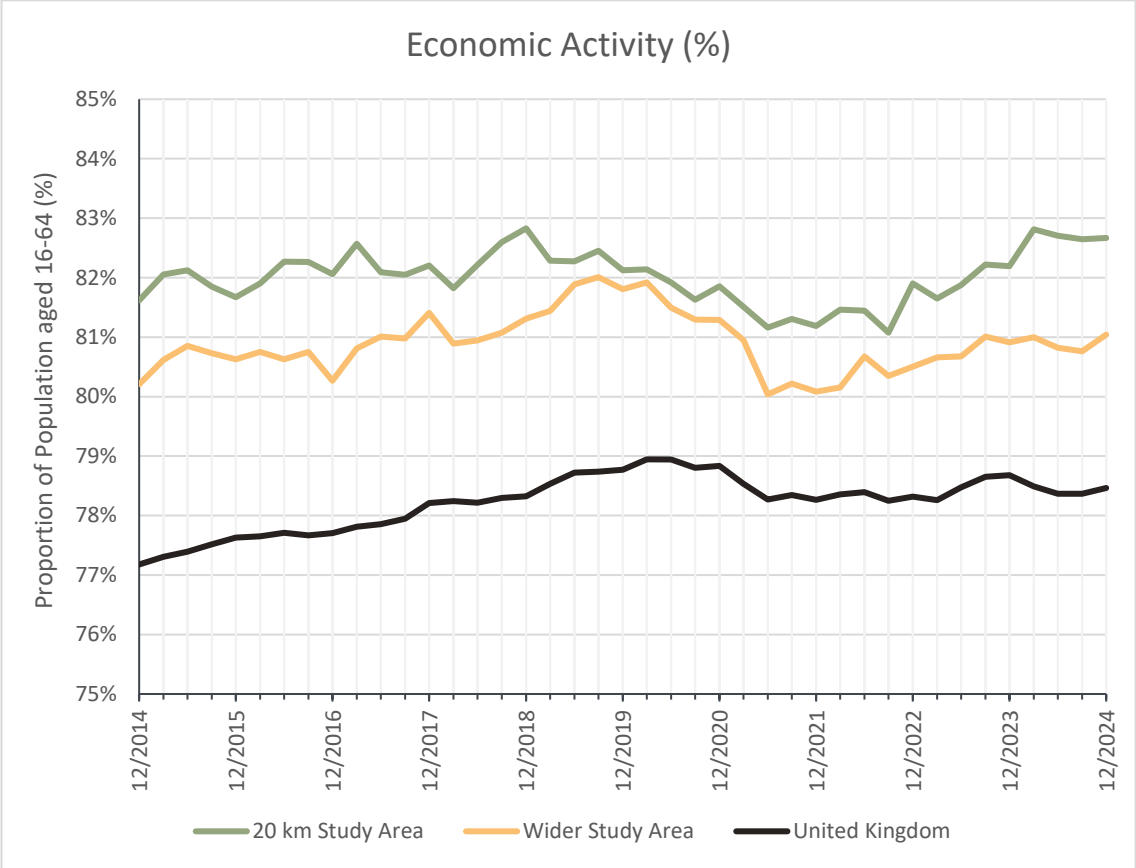
Economic Activity Rate

1.3.24 The economically active population is defined as the members of the working age (16-64-year-old) population being in employment, and those who are seeking employment and are able for work. Economically inactive members of a population are predominantly categorised by retirement, those in full-time education not seeking employment, full-time carers of family members, and long-term sick and disabled people.

1.3.25 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 67). Trends in economic activity since 2014, as can be seen in **Plate 5**, show that the 20 km Study Area has had a relatively stable and consistently higher activity rate 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).

Plate 5: Economic Activity from 2014-2024



1.3.26 Notably in the period 2020-2022, the economic activity rate in the 20 km Study Area stayed very consistent above 81%, in comparison to notable declines in the Wider Study Area and (to a lesser extent) the national rates. Whilst this may be the result of several underlying factors, it is likely that the economy of the 20 km Study Area was disproportionately resilient to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating a good level of resilience and adaptability in the local employment market.

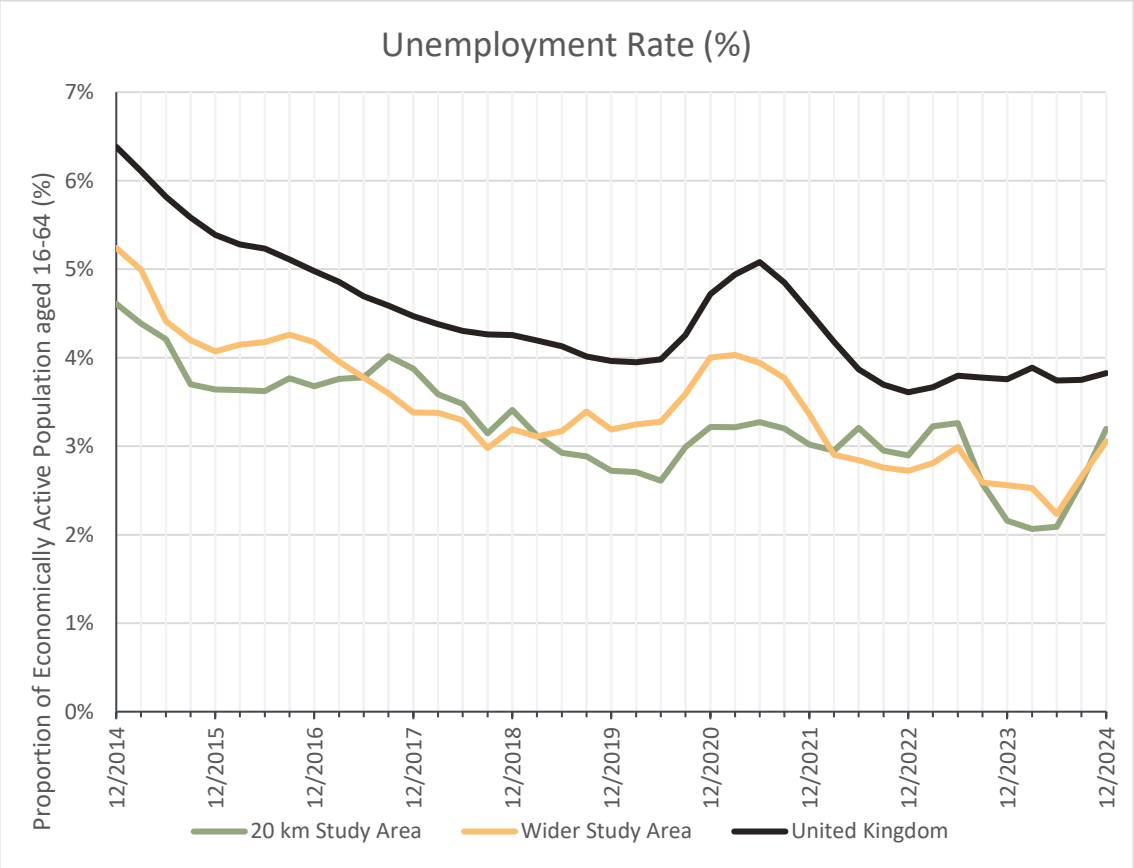
1.3.27 Within the 20 km Study Area, as of December 2024, South Gloucestershire (84.4%), Swindon (85.7%) and Wiltshire (85.1%) had significantly higher than average economic activity rates, with all being more than one standard deviation higher than the national mean.

Unemployment

1.3.28 National trends from 2014-2024 show unemployment in the UK 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 68). Data for the 20 km Study Area shows the unemployment rate largely following the regional unemployment rate albeit with a greater level of

variability. This is shown in **Plate 6** below. Within the 20 km Study Area, the overall unemployment rate as of December 2024 is 3.2%, ranging substantially between local authority areas for which data is available (1.5-6.0%), within which the rate in South Gloucestershire (1.5%) is significantly lower than the national average.

Plate 6: Unemployment Rate from 2014-2024



Employment Rate

1.3.29 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 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 69). Within the 20 km Study Area, the employment rates in South Gloucestershire (83.2%) and Wiltshire (82.4%) are significantly greater than the national average employment rate. The employment count and rate in the 20 km Study Area have stayed relatively consistent, even in the context of the economic impacts of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union

and the COVID-19 pandemic, which have had a more substantial impact in the Wider Study Area and UK overall. This is shown in **Plate 7** and **Plate 8** below.

Plate 7: Employment Count 2014-2024 related to 2014 baseline

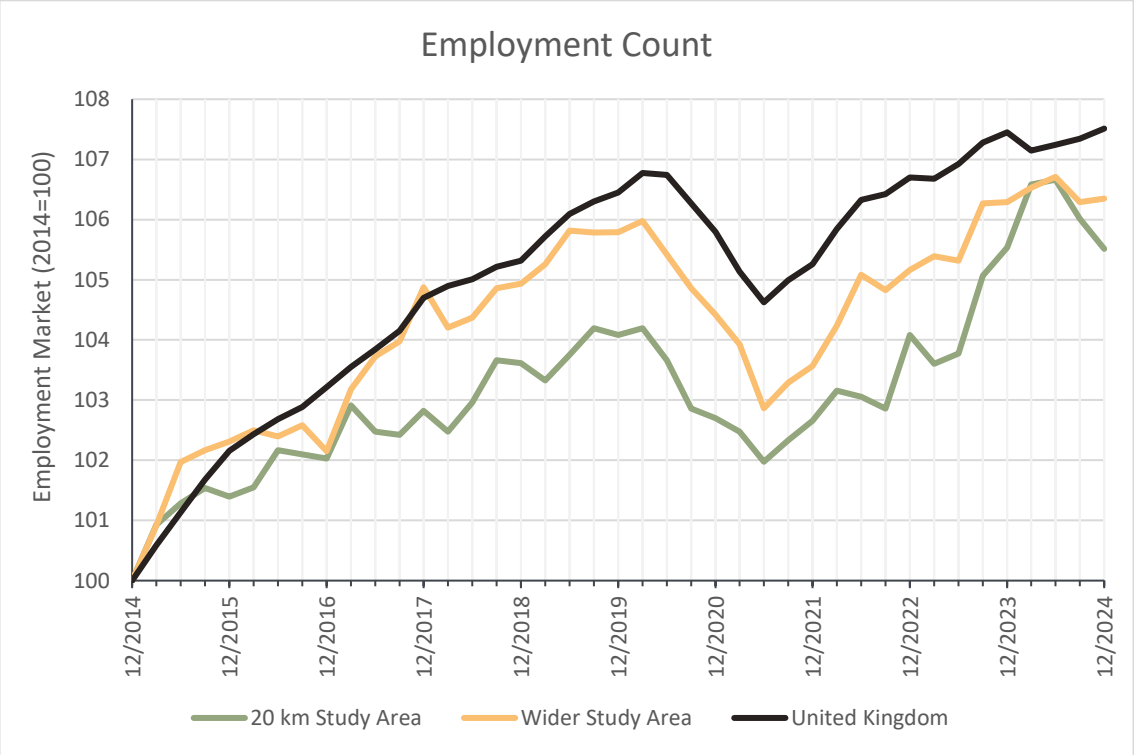
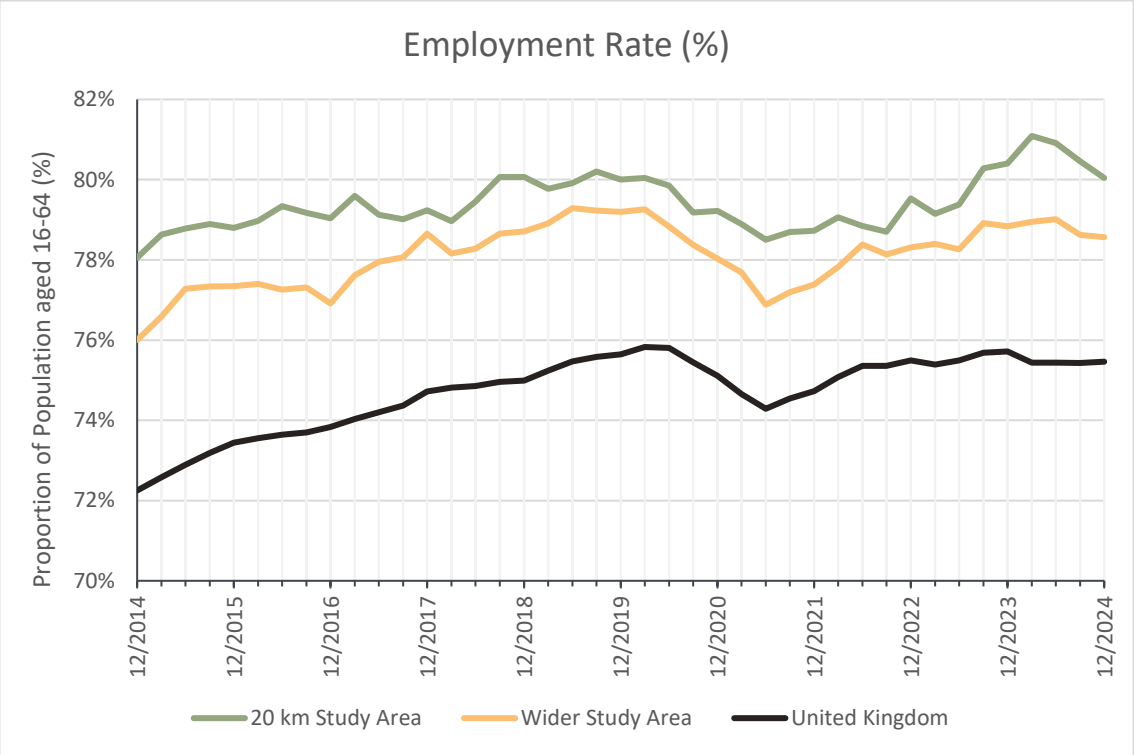


Plate 8: Employment Rate in 16-64 year olds from 2014-2024



Wages

1.3.30 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 somewhat larger than the median for the Wider Study Area, at £36,100, and to a lesser extent, the UK median, at £37,400 (Ref 70). Income is uneven across the seven authority areas within the 20 km Study Area, with residents in Cotswold earning approximately £5,700 more than their counterparts in Mendip (Somerset).

1.3.31 Since 2014, approximated median annual gross wages for working residents in the 20 km Study Area have risen by approximately 39.8% (£10,800). The rate of wage growth has also varied somewhat across the 20 km Study Area, ranging from a 32.1%-51.2% growth from 2014 to 2024, with significant year-on-year variation between different authority areas. 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 70). It is noteworthy that Consumer Price Index (CPI) compared to 2014 is 135.6 in December 2024, demonstrating that the costs of goods and services are on average 35.6% higher in 2024 than 2014. This likely indicated that on average people nationally, have proportionally more surplus income or purchasing power as they did in 2014, largely as a result of continues wage growth in 2023-2024 while CPI inflation has reduced significantly in the last year. These trends are shown in **Plate 9** and **Plate 10** by income in GBP (£) and proportionally to the 2014 base figure in **Plate 11** and **Plate 12**.

Plate 9: Resident Median Annual Gross Income 2014-2024

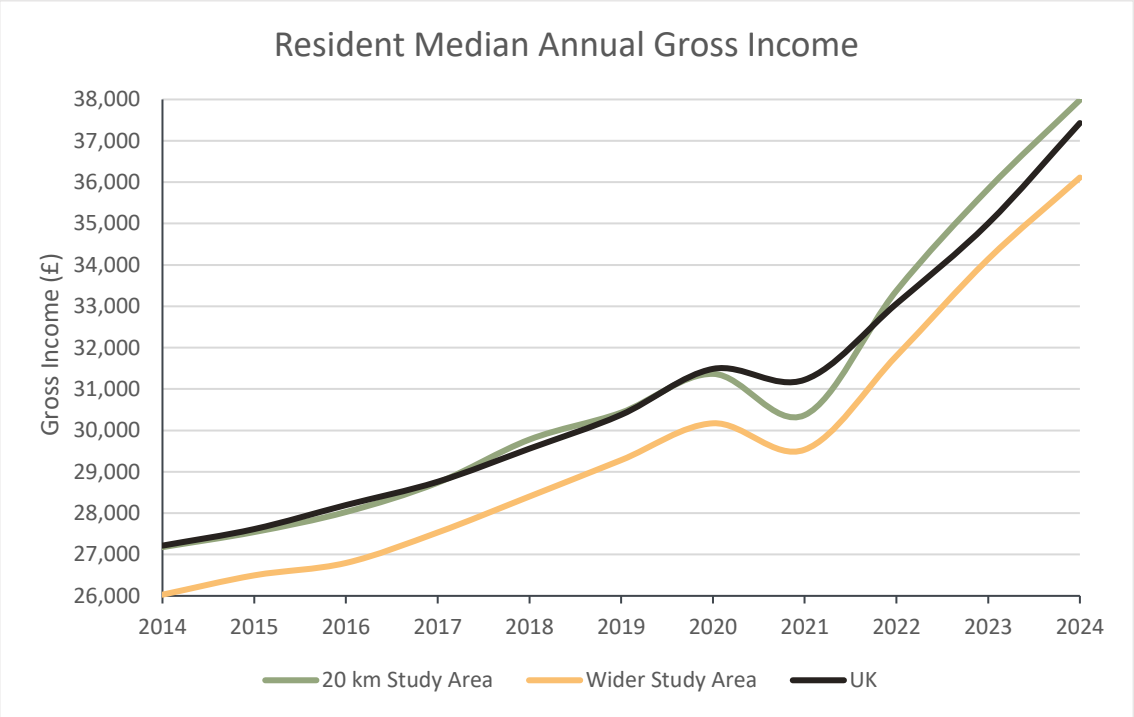


Plate 10: Resident Median Annual Gross Income 2014-2024 (Authority Areas within 20 km Study Area)

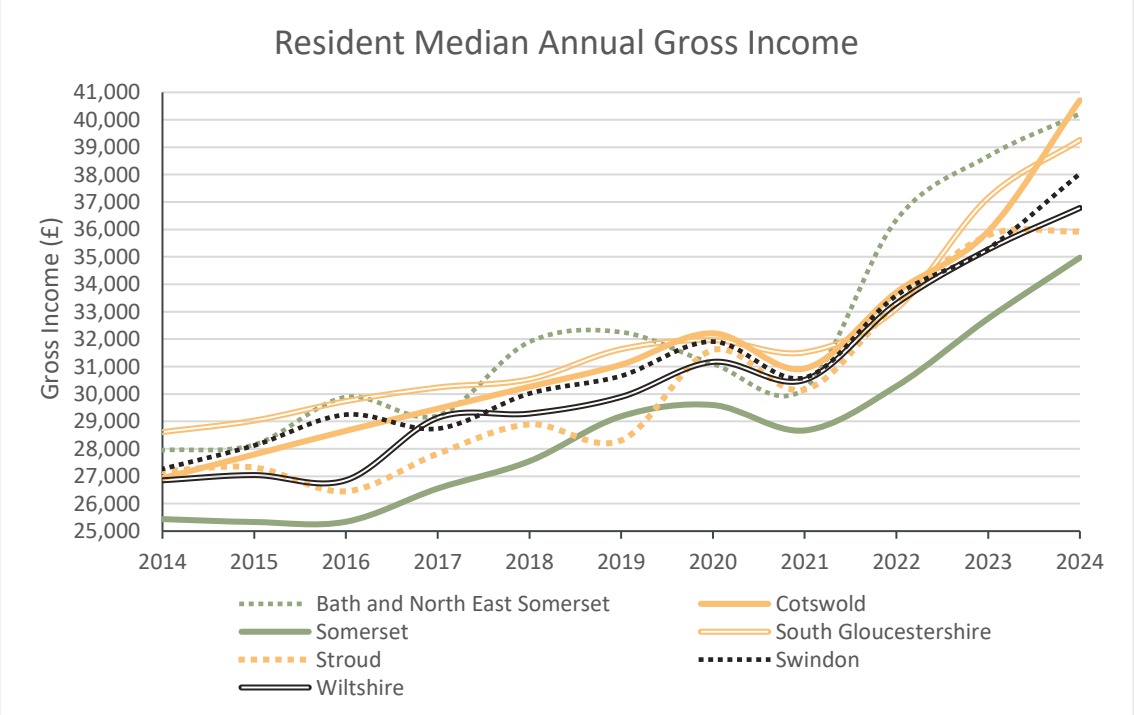


Plate 11: Resident Median Annual Gross Income 2014-2024 related to 2014 baseline

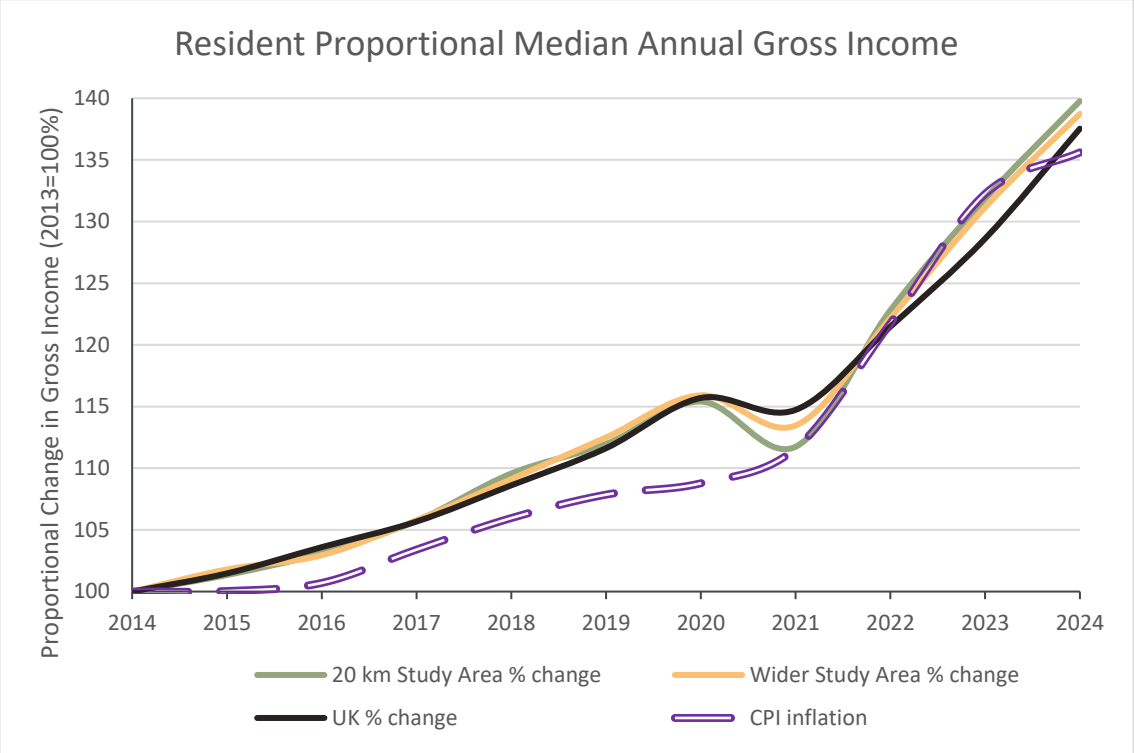
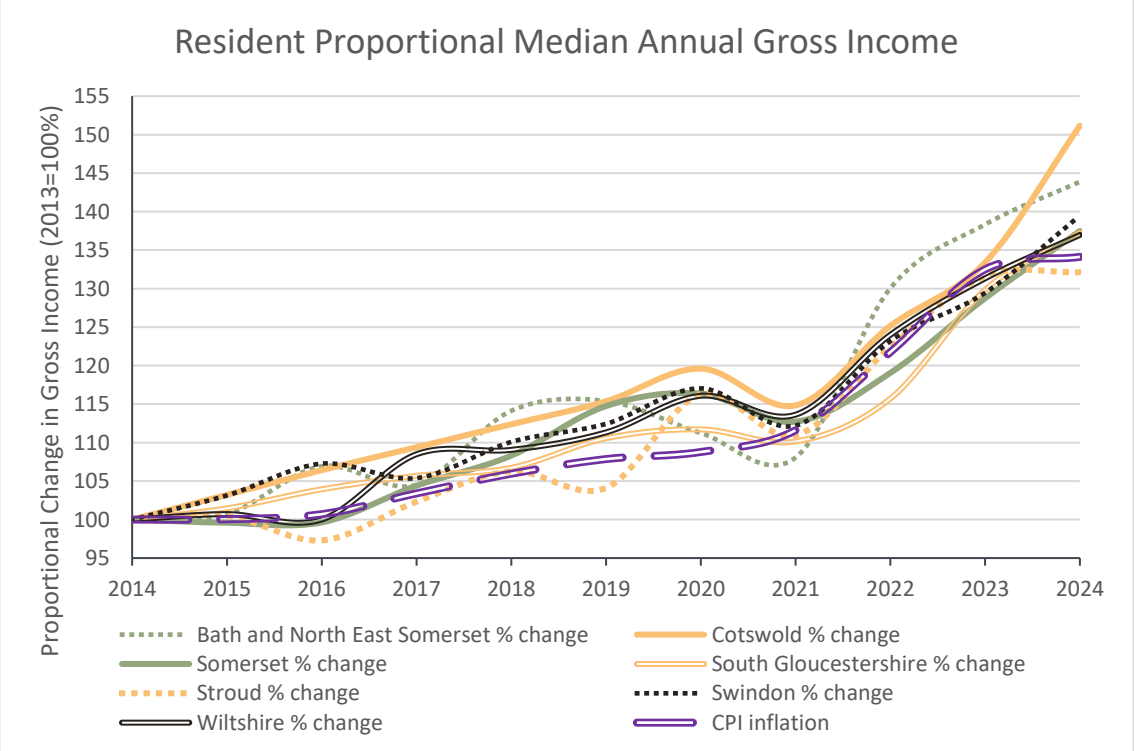


Plate 12: Resident Median Annual Gross Income 2014-2024 related to 2014 baseline (Authority Areas within 20 km Study Area)



1.3.32 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 a small amount 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 71). This difference between resident and workplace median pay indicates that it is likely that a proportion of employees may travel outside the 20 km Study Area to access higher-paid work, or that lower-paid workers are more likely to travel into the area. As with residents' median pay, there is a significant difference across the seven authorities within the 20 km Study Area, with workers in South Gloucestershire earning approximately £9,100 more than workers in Cotswold.

1.3.33 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 71). Within the 20 km Study Area however, workplace wage growth has varied significantly in the reference period, with wage growth ranging from 33.7% in Stroud to 44.1% in South Gloucestershire. Only in Swindon has wage growth not met or exceeded Consumer Price Index (CPI) compared to 2014.

1.3.34 These trends are shown in **Plate 13** and **Plate 14** by income in GBP (£) and proportionally to the 2013 base figure in **Plate 15** and **Plate 16**.

Plate 13: Workplace Median Annual Gross Income 2014-2024

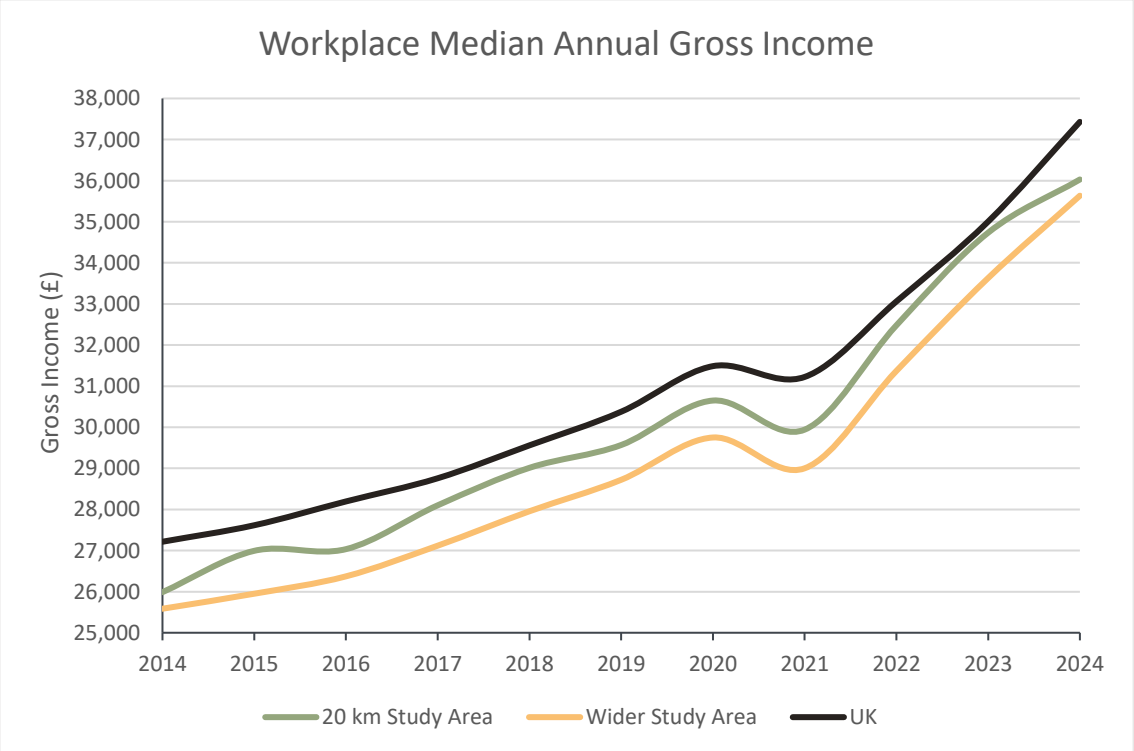


Plate 14: Workplace Median Annual Gross Income 2014-2024 (Authority Areas within 20 km Study Area)

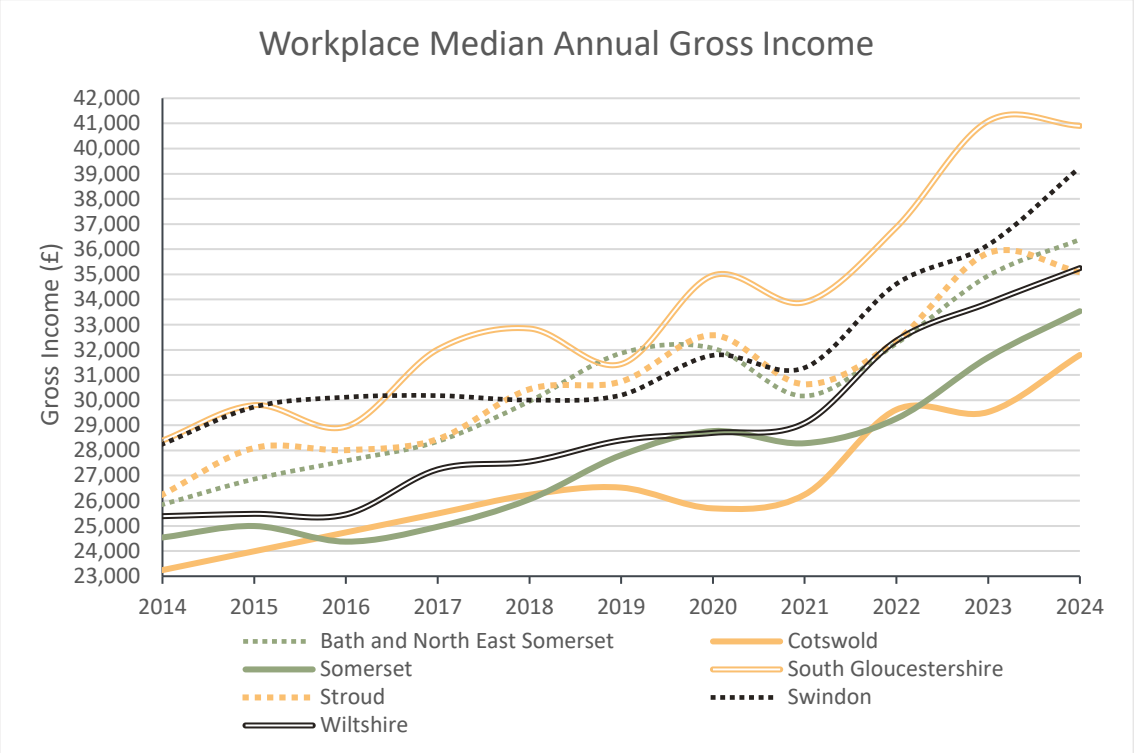


Plate 15: Workplace Median Annual Gross Income 2014-2024 related to 2014 baseline

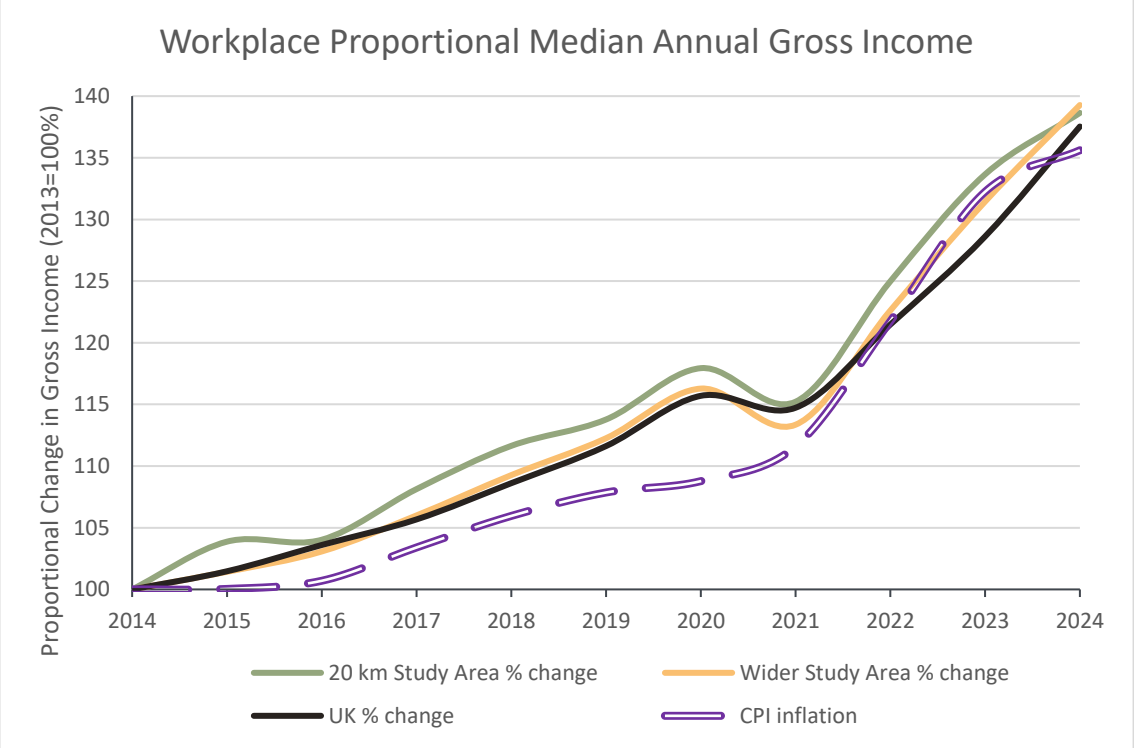
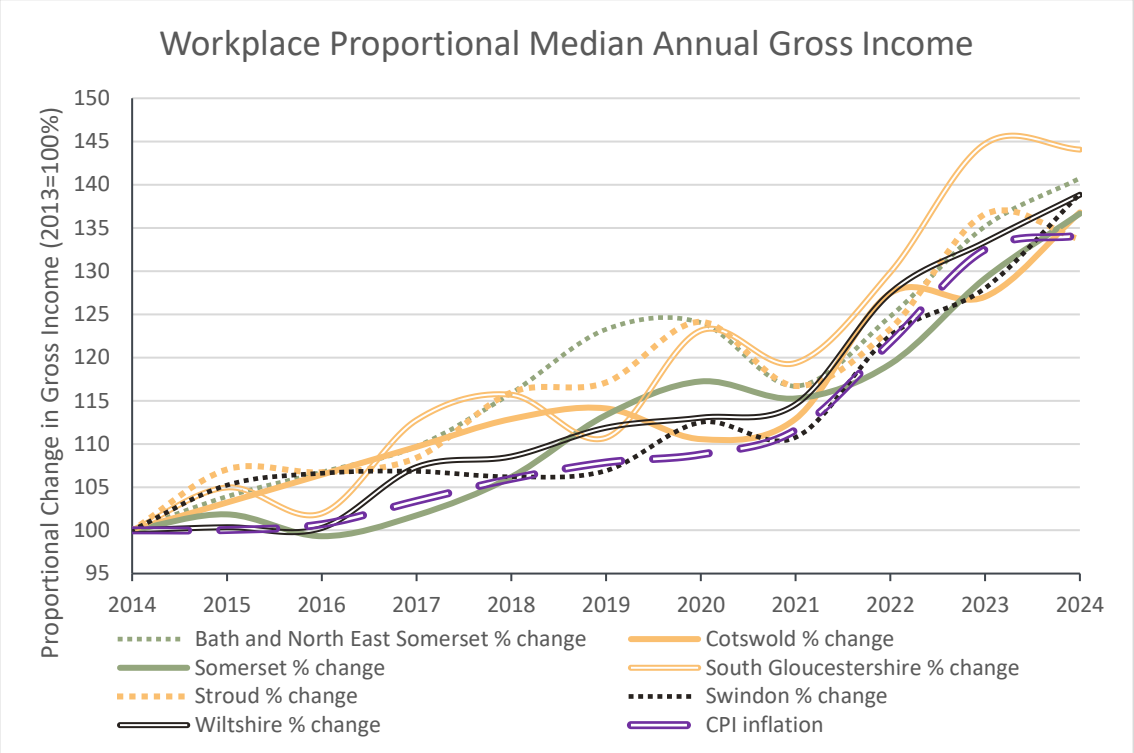


Plate 16: Workplace Median Annual Gross Income 2014-2024 related to 2014 baseline (Authority Areas within 20 km Study Area)



Business Sector Workforce

1.3.35 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 72). **Plate 17** and **Plate 18** below presents a detailed breakdown of the proportion of the workforce in broad business sectors in the 20 km Study Area, shown comparatively against the Wider Study Area and Great Britain.

Plate 17: Proportion of Workforce per Business Sector

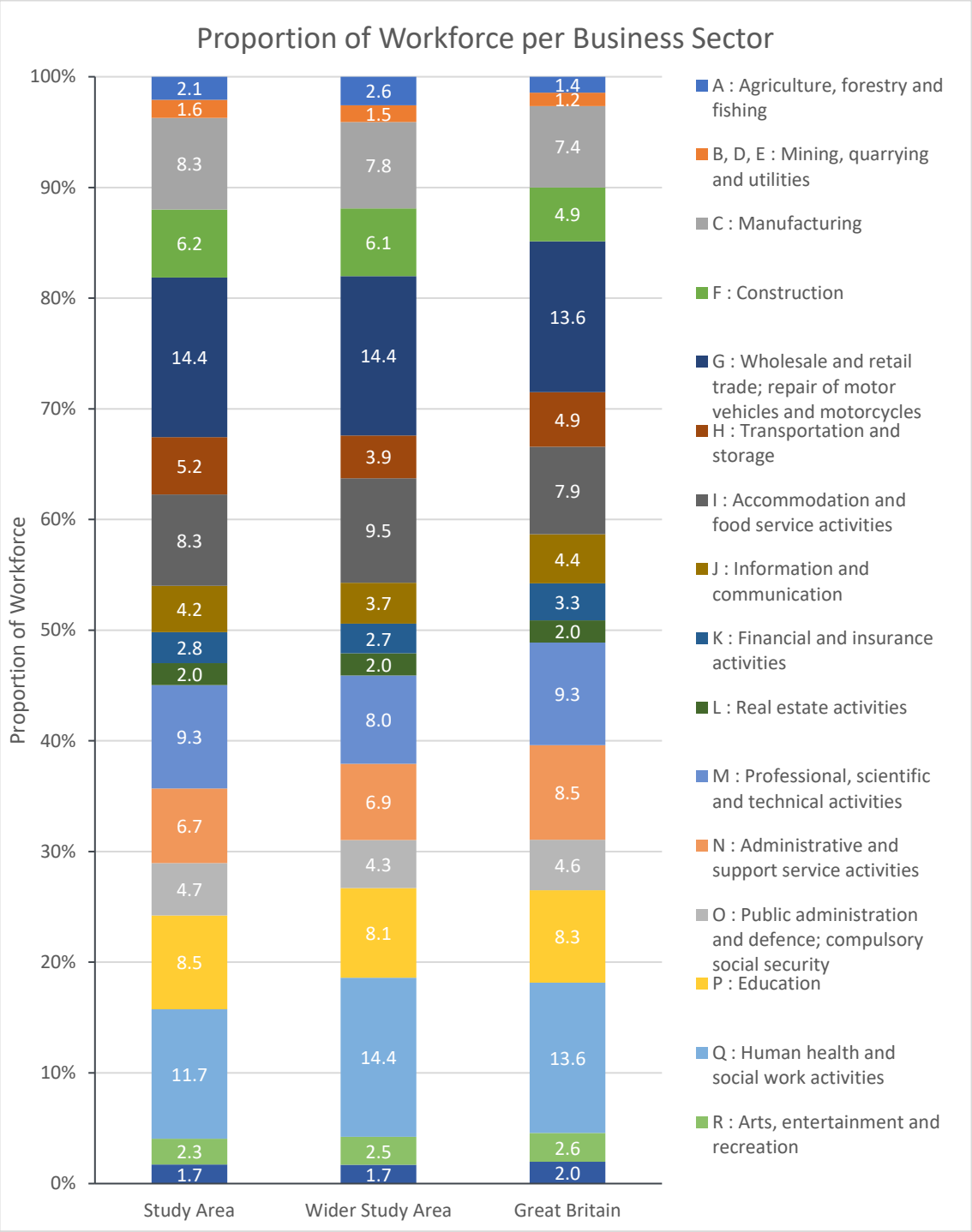
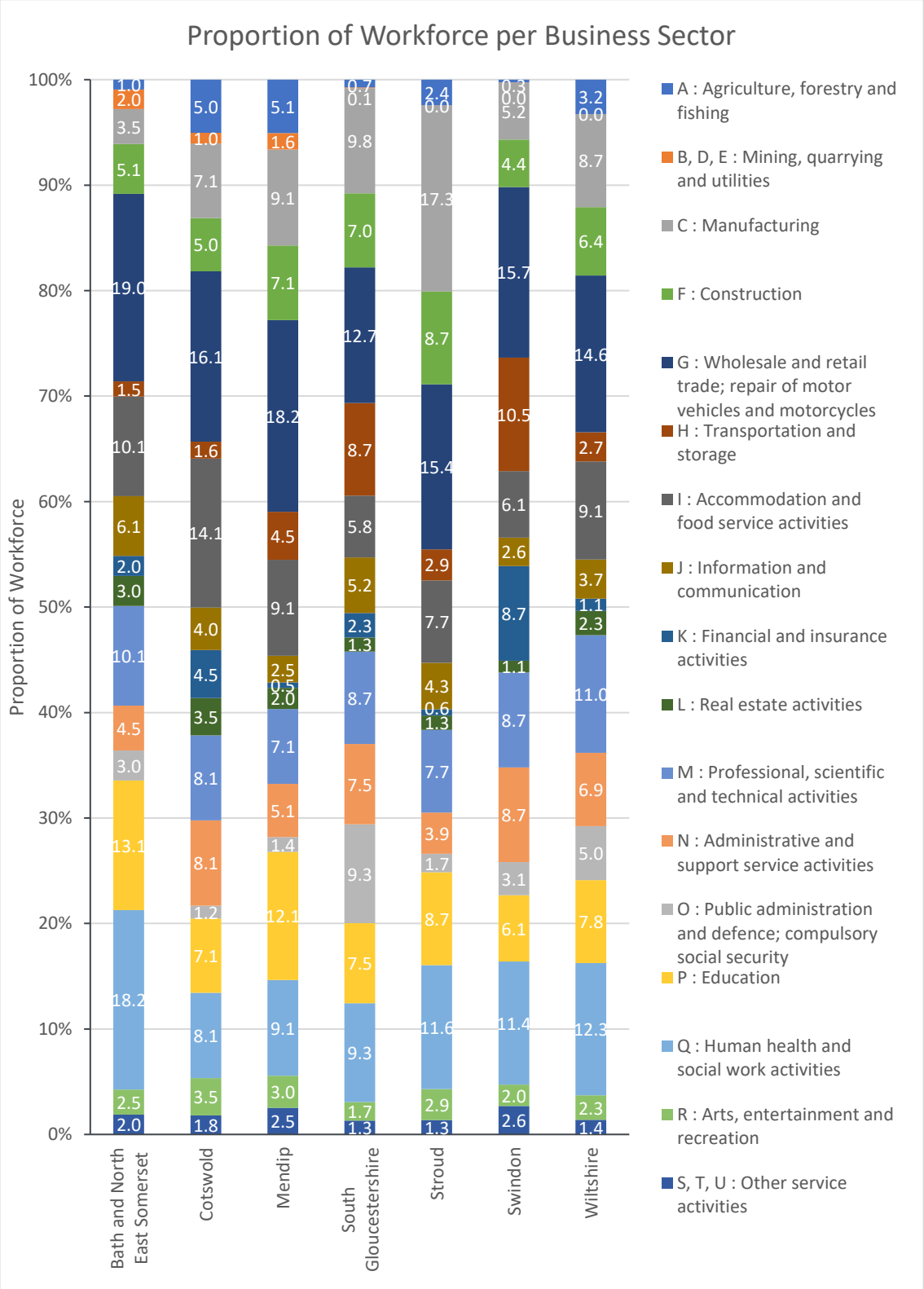


Plate 18: Proportion of Workforce per Business Sector in Local Authority Area



1.3.36 **Plate 17** above demonstrates the largest business sector by percentage of employed workforce in the 20 km Study Area 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).

1.3.37 There is, however, a significant level of variation across the seven authority areas that fall within the 20 km Study Area as demonstrated in **Plate 18**. wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (G) is consistently the largest sector (ranging from 12.7%-19.0%) with the exception of Stroud where manufacturing (C) is the largest sector (17.3%). Human health and social work activities (Q) is no smaller than the 3rd largest sector in any authority, while professional, scientific and technical activities (M) is no smaller than the 6th largest sector in any authority. (Ref 72). In specific respect to the Scheme, the agricultural, forestry and fishing (A) sector falls between being the joint 8th largest sector in both Cotswold and Mendip, to the smallest sector in Bath and North East Somerset, while the construction (F) sector varies between the joint 4th (Stroud) and 10th (Swindon) largest sectors in individual authority areas. Each industry sector in the 20 km Study Area falls within one standard deviation (1σ) of the national mean, demonstrating that no one sector is significantly larger or smaller than compared to the regional or national trend.

1.3.38 At the individual authority level, there are a number of industry sectors in multiple authority areas that diverge from the national mean. In Mendip, 7 of the 17 grouped industry sectors are more than one standard deviation from the national mean. More significantly, the following sectors are more than two standard deviations from the national mean, indicating substantial divergence from national expectations:

- I: Accommodation and food service activities, Cotswold: +2.2σ – (14.1% against 7.9% GB); and
- K: Financial and insurance activities, Swindon: +2.0σ – (8.7% against 3.3% GB).

1.3.39 This is set out across the 20 km Study Area in **Table 4** below, with significant deviations from the national mean highlighted in blue.

Table 4: Employment Proportion by Industrial Sector

Industrial Sector	Bath and North East Somerset	Cotswold	Mendip	South Gloucs.	Stroud	Swindon	Wiltshire	20 km Study Area	Wider Study Area	Great Britain
Broad Industrial Sector										
Agriculture, mining, electricity, gas, water and waste (A, B, D, E)	3.0%	6.1%	6.6%	1.8%	4.0%	3.0%	4.7%	3.7%	4.1%	2.6%
Manufacturing (C)	3.5%	7.1%	9.1%	9.8%	17.3%	5.2%	8.7%	8.3%	7.8%	7.4%
Construction (F)	5.1%	5.0%	7.1%	7.0%	8.7%	4.4%	6.4%	6.2%	6.1%	4.9%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (G)	12.1%	16.1%	18.2%	12.7%	15.4%	15.7%	14.6%	14.4%	14.4%	13.6%
Transportation and storage (H)	1.5%	1.6%	4.5%	8.7%	2.9%	10.5%	2.7%	5.2%	3.9%	4.9%
Accommodation and food service activities (I)	10.1%	14.1%	9.1%	5.8%	7.7%	6.1%	9.1%	8.3%	9.5%	7.9%
Information and communication (J)	6.1%	4.0%	2.5%	5.2%	4.3%	2.6%	3.7%	4.2%	3.7%	4.4%
Financial and insurance activities (K)	2.0%	4.5%	0.5%	2.3%	0.6%	8.7%	1.1%	2.8%	2.7%	3.3%
Real estate activities (L)	3.0%	3.5%	2.0%	1.3%	1.3%	1.1%	2.3%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Professional, scientific and technical activities (M)	10.1%	8.1%	7.1%	8.7%	7.7%	8.7%	11.0%	9.3%	8.0%	9.3%
Administrative and support service activities (N)	4.5%	8.1%	5.1%	7.5%	3.9%	8.7%	6.9%	6.7%	6.9%	8.5%

Industrial Sector	Bath and North East Somerset	Cotswold	Mendip	South Gloucs.	Stroud	Swindon	Wiltshire	20 km Study Area	Wider Study Area	Great Britain
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security (O)	3.0%	1.2%	1.4%	9.3%	1.7%	3.1%	5.0%	4.7%	4.3%	4.6%
Education (P)	13.1%	7.1%	12.1%	7.5%	8.7%	6.1%	7.8%	8.5%	8.1%	8.3%
Human health and social work activities (Q)	18.2%	8.1%	9.1%	9.3%	11.6%	11.4%	12.3%	11.7%	14.4%	13.6%
Arts, entertainment and recreation (R)	2.5%	3.5%	3.0%	1.7%	2.9%	2.0%	2.3%	2.3%	2.5%	2.6%
Other service activities (S, T, U)	2.0%	1.8%	2.5%	1.3%	1.3%	2.6%	1.4%	1.7%	1.7%	2.0%
Assessment-specific Industrial Sector										
Agriculture, forestry and fishing (A)	1.0%	5.0%	5.1%	0.7%	2.4%	0.3%	3.2%	2.1%	2.6%	1.4%
Accommodation (55 – I)	2.0%	4.5%	2.0%	0.7%	1.2%	0.9%	2.1%	1.7%	2.4%	1.5%
Electric power generation, transmission and distribution (35.1 – E)	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.7%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%
Construction of utility projects and other civil engineering projects (42.2, 42.9 – F)	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%

Local Economy

1.3.40 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 73, Ref 74). Within the Study Area for socio-economics, the amount of GVA generated proportionally by authority area is:

- Bath and North East Somerset – 7.7%
- Cotswold – 6.1%
- Somerset – 21.1%
- South Gloucestershire – 22.7%
- Stroud – 4.4%
- Swindon – 17.3%
- Wiltshire – 20.8%

1.3.41 By industry, the nominal and proportional split in GVA has been demonstrated in **Table 5** below in comparison with the values and proportions for the Wider Study Area and Great Britain. A notably larger part of the local economy (in the Study Area for socio-economics) is generated in the administrative and support service activities (N) sector than the national average (by more than one standard deviation). This is highlighted in blue in **Table 5**. This is driven in large by this economic sector being extremely strong in South Gloucestershire (20.4% of GVA total compared to national rate of 5.4%). All other sectors fall within one standard deviation of the national mean.

1.3.42 Within the Study Area for socio-economics, there is significant variation between different local authority areas, with a number of sectors in some authority areas being significant outliers when compared to national trends. These are set out across the Study Area for socio-economics in **Table 5** below, with significant deviations from the national mean highlighted in blue. **Table 5** furthermore presents the GVA per sector of assessment-specific sub-sectors, so defined because they are likely to be directly affected by the Scheme. These are agriculture, forestry and fishing (A); electric power generation, transmission and distribution (35.1 – part of E (electricity and utilities)); and construction of utility projects and other civil engineering projects (42.2, 42.9 – part of F (construction)).

Table 5: Nominal and Proportion GVA by Industrial Sector

Industrial Sector	Bath and North East Somerset		Cotswold		Somerset		South Gloucs.		Stroud		Swindon		Wiltshire		Study Area for socio-economics		Wider Study Area		Great Britain	
	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total
Total	5,634	100%	4,513	100%	15,512	100%	16,715	100%	3,210	100%	12,707	100%	15,345	100%	73,637	100%	185,952	100%	2,464,587	100%
Broad Industrial Sector																				
Agriculture, mining, electricity, gas, water and waste (A, B, D, E)	243	4.3%	133	2.9%	776	5.0%	275	1.6%	72	2.2%	1,704	13.4%	516	3.4%	3,719	5.1%	7,983	4.3%	112,544	4.6%
Manufacturing (C)	220	3.9%	230	5.1%	2,204	14.2%	2,573	15.4%	908	28.3%	1,444	11.4%	1,906	12.4%	9,485	12.9%	19,987	10.7%	225,094	9.1%
Construction (F)	302	5.4%	162	3.6%	1,094	7.1%	1,149	6.9%	275	8.6%	366	2.9%	919	6.0%	4,267	5.8%	12,468	6.7%	154,140	6.3%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (G)	434	7.7%	312	6.9%	1,753	11.3%	1,124	6.7%	292	9.1%	967	7.6%	1,525	9.9%	6,407	8.7%	17,901	9.6%	243,915	9.9%
Transportation and storage (H)	57.0	1.0%	35.0	0.8%	485	3.1%	862	5.2%	80	2.5%	483	3.8%	273	1.8%	2,275	3.1%	5,019	2.7%	83,896	3.4%
Accommodation and food service activities (I)	231	4.1%	187	4.1%	602	3.9%	229	1.4%	113	3.5%	145	1.1%	491	3.2%	1,998	2.7%	6,241	3.4%	69,584	2.8%
Information and communication (J)	383	6.8%	128	2.8%	262	1.7%	964	5.8%	90	2.8%	220	1.7%	544	3.5%	2,591	3.5%	6,738	3.6%	145,592	5.9%
Financial and insurance activities (K)	97	1.7%	1,844	40.9%	314	2.0%	806	4.8%	12	0.4%	2,552	20.1%	116	0.8%	5,741	7.8%	11,001	5.9%	216,643	8.8%
Real estate activities (L)	1,111	19.7%	645	14.3%	2,667	17.2%	1,590	9.5%	535	16.7%	931	7.3%	2,475	16.1%	9,954	13.5%	29,103	15.7%	322,132	13.1%
Professional, scientific and technical activities (M)	433	7.7%	221	4.9%	821	5.3%	776	4.6%	146	4.5%	1,003	7.9%	1,498	9.8%	4,898	6.7%	12,820	6.9%	204,590	8.3%
Administrative and support service activities (N)	75	1.3%	96	2.1%	835	5.4%	3,404	20.4%	38	1.2%	1,389	10.9%	460	3.0%	6,297	8.6%	10,155	5.5%	129,899	5.3%
Public administration and defence;	203	3.6%	73	1.6%	896	5.8%	1,436	8.6%	69	2.1%	260	2.0%	2,159	14.1%	5,096	6.9%	12,513	6.7%	124,394	5.0%

Industrial Sector	Bath and North East Somerset		Cotswold		Somerset		South Gloucs.		Stroud		Swindon		Wiltshire		Study Area for socio-economics		Wider Study Area		Great Britain	
	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total	GVA (£million)	% total
compulsory social security (O)																				
Education (P)	850	15.1%	175	3.9%	821	5.3%	696	4.2%	244	7.6%	338	2.7%	971	6.3%	4,095	5.6%	12,051	6.5%	152,309	6.2%
Human health and social work activities (Q)	811	14.4%	161	3.6%	1,415	9.1%	589	3.5%	202	6.3%	620	4.9%	1,096	7.1%	4,894	6.6%	16,561	8.9%	203,911	8.3%
Arts, entertainment and recreation (R)	78	1.4%	44	1.0%	201	1.3%	88	0.5%	96	3.0%	45	0.4%	152	1.0%	704	1.0%	2,005	1.1%	33,898	1.4%
Other service activities (S, T, U)	107	1.9%	67	1.5%	368	2.4%	154	0.9%	38	1.2%	238	1.9%	244	1.6%	1,216	1.7%	3,405	1.8%	42,046	1.7%
Assessment-specific Industrial Sector																				
Agriculture, forestry and fishing (A)	20	0.4%	108	2.4%	333	2.1%	42	0.3%	30	0.9%	17	0.1%	204	1.3%	753	1.0%	1,921	1.0%	15,768	0.6%
Accommodation (55 – I)	84	1.5%	114	2.5%	235	1.5%	52	0.3%	30	0.9%	37	0.3%	161	1.0%	713	1.0%	2,424	1.3%	19,586	0.8%
Electric power generation, transmission and distribution (35.1 – E)	23	0.4%	3	0.1%	159	1.0%	65	0.4%	6	0.2%	442	3.5%	58	0.4%	757	1.0%	1,450	0.8%	16,988	0.7%
Construction of utility projects and other civil engineering projects (42.2, 42.9 – F)	8	0.1%	5	0.1%	130	0.8%	10	0.1%	5	0.1%	24	0.2%	24	0.2%	205	0.3%	865	0.5%	18,781	0.8%

1.3.43 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). That notwithstanding, the GVA per worker across the Study Area for socio-economics is unevenly split across the authorities therein, ranging from £56,900 in Bath and North East Somerset to £111,000 in Swindon. As a result of these differences, the GVA per worker in three authorities lies beyond one standard deviation of the national mean: -1.2σ in Bath and North East Somerset, +1.3σ in South Gloucestershire, and +2.1σ in Swindon. These figures have been derived from total GVA by industry ONS data, compared against BRES data for the year 2023 for compatibility purposes (Ref 72, Ref 73, Ref 74)

1.3.44 The GVA per worker varies considerably by different industrial sectors both nationally and within the Study Area for socio-economics. **Table 6** below sets the comparative differences in GVA per worker between the seven local authorities within the Study Area for socio-economics, against the Study Area as a whole, and the combined figures for both the Wider Study Area, and Great Britain. The GVA per worker is considerably higher in Swindon than the other authorities within the Study Area for socio-economics. This is driven by significantly greater GVA per worker than the national average in the agriculture, mining, electricity, gas, water and waste (A, B, D, E) grouped sector; manufacturing (C) sector; professional, scientific and technical activities (M) sector; and in administrative and support service activities (N). Another considerable outlier is the administrative and support service activities (N) sector in South Gloucestershire, where the GVA per worker is +7.3σ from the national mean (£262,000/worker vs £47,100/worker nationally).

1.3.45 It is also notable that the GVA per worker in each of the assessment-specific industrial sub-sectors identified are all near to, but lower than, the national rates.

Table 6: GVA per Worker by Industrial Sector (£)

Industrial Sector	Bath and North East Somerset	Cotswold	Somerset	South Gloucestershire	Stroud	Swindon	Wiltshire	Study Area for socio-economics	Wider Study Area	Great Britain
Overall	56,932	91,080	60,511	96,814	61,808	111,095	70,152	76,501	68,465	76,400
Broad Industrial Sector										
Agriculture, mining, electricity, gas, water and waste (A, B, D, E)	82,095	44,333	49,744	87,302	34,532	504,142	50,391	92,020	71,919	132,094
Manufacturing (C)	62,857	65,714	84,769	151,353	100,889	240,667	100,316	112,917	94,278	94,816
Construction (F)	60,400	64,800	64,353	95,750	61,111	73,200	65,643	71,117	75,108	97,991
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (G)	36,167	39,000	44,949	51,091	36,500	53,722	47,656	46,094	45,783	55,536
Transportation and storage (H)	38,000	43,750	53,889	57,467	53,333	40,250	45,500	49,672	47,800	52,599
Accommodation and food service activities (I)	23,100	26,714	26,174	22,900	28,250	20,714	24,550	24,667	24,284	27,277
Information and communication (J)	63,833	64,000	52,400	107,111	40,000	73,333	68,000	73,504	67,380	101,741

Industrial Sector	Bath and North East Somerset	Cotswold	Somerset	South Gloucestershire	Stroud	Swindon	Wiltshire	Study Area for socio-economics	Wider Study Area	Great Britain
Financial and insurance activities (K)	48,500	819,556	139,556	201,500	40,000	255,200	46,400	246,395	150,699	201,528
Real estate activities (L)	370,333	368,571	533,400	706,667	764,286	744,800	495,000	525,277	538,944	499,429
Professional, scientific and technical activities (M)	43,300	55,250	51,313	51,733	36,500	100,300	62,417	59,012	59,078	68,356
Administrative and support service activities (N)	16,667	24,000	36,304	261,846	19,000	138,900	30,667	88,070	54,305	47,133
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security (O)	67,667	121,667	99,556	89,750	76,667	74,286	196,273	115,818	106,042	84,335
Education (P)	65,385	50,000	39,095	53,538	54,222	48,286	57,118	51,835	54,777	56,684
Human health and social work activities (Q)	45,056	40,250	40,429	36,813	33,667	47,692	40,593	41,126	42,464	46,481
Arts, entertainment and recreation (R)	31,200	25,143	33,500	29,333	64,000	20,000	30,400	32,000	29,058	40,499
Other service activities (S, T, U)	53,500	74,444	81,778	68,444	54,286	79,333	81,333	74,373	74,022	66,110

Industrial Sector	Bath and North East Somerset	Cotswold	Somerset	South Gloucestershire	Stroud	Swindon	Wiltshire	Study Area for socio-economics	Wider Study Area	Great Britain
Assessment-specific Industrial Sector										
Agriculture, forestry and fishing (A)	19,802	43,019	30,259	33,571	23,810	57,576	29,119	30,989	27,443	34,204
Electric power generation, transmission and distribution (35.1 – E)	114,359	54,286	106,250	130,286	50,909	552,459	97,188	200,463	145,026	184,655
Construction of utility projects and other civil engineering projects (42.2, 42.9 – F)	60,000	66,667	207,200	27,143	53,333	105,556	65,556	108,790	138,462	136,091

Tourism Economy

1.3.46 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, the Cotswolds National Landscape, Gloucestershire, Somerset, and the West of England. Each of these areas has its own official tourism and visitors' information website.

1.3.47 Visit Wiltshire is responsible for tourism strategy across the Wiltshire Council authority area and Swindon Borough Council authority area, wherein the combined tourism industry is estimated to be worth approximately £1.2 billion (in 2022) and supports 29,000 jobs (Ref 34). Visit Wiltshire's website (Ref 75) identifies the key visitor destinations in the area to be its historically significant sites at Salisbury, Old Sarum and the World Heritage Sites at Stonehenge and Avebury, as well as its landscape and environment, particularly in the Cotswolds, Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire, and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes.

1.3.48 As a National Landscape, the Cotswolds has its own strategic aims for tourism and visitors. The wider National Landscape area is estimated to generate up to £1.4 billion in visitor spending (as of 2019) and support up to 31,000 jobs (Ref 35). The key tourism destinations within the Cotswolds are its natural land features including hills, valleys, lakes and arboreta, and its historical towns, villages and buildings (Ref 76).

1.3.49 Visit Gloucestershire's Tourism Strategy 2021-2025 (Ref 77) covers the authority areas of Cotswold District Council, Stroud District Council, South Gloucestershire Council as well as the rest of Gloucestershire beyond the 20 km Study Area. The strategy seeks to protect and enhance the natural and cultural assets in the county, provide high quality services and meaningful experiences for visitors, and digitise, connect and optimise tourism-focussed businesses. Within the Visit Gloucestershire partnership is Visit Stroud (Ref 78), which identifies a number of retail, historic and leisure facilities as its main visitor destinations.

1.3.50 The authority area of the former Mendip District Council falls under the strategic oversight of Visit Somerset (Ref 79), which identifies the east end of the Mendip Hills, the cathedral city of Wells, and Glastonbury as its key tourism and visitor destinations.

1.3.51 Visit West covers Bath and North East Somerset Council authority area and South Gloucestershire Council authority area, and Bristol and North Somerset beyond the 20 km Study Area. In their Destination Management Plan 2023-2033 (Ref 80), they identify a total value of £2.3 billion to the economy, supporting 33,400 jobs. The plan furthermore identifies the importance of Bath as a key international tourism destination, describing it as one of England's foremost heritage cities due to its Georgian cityscape, historic sites, and Roman

Baths. South Gloucestershire is home to a collection of market towns and is described as the least well-known area as a visitor destination within the Visit West portfolio, supporting more day-trip specific tourism destination such as Aerospace Bristol, Cribbs Causeway and the Bristol Zoo Project.

1.3.52 Tourism and visitor spending in Bristol & Bath, Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire, (focussing only on those areas which cover the 20 km Study Area) has been estimated from the 2023 International Passenger Survey (Ref 81) and 2024 Great Britain Tourism Survey and Great Britain Day Visits Survey (Ref 82). The breakdown per area is set out below in **Table 7** below.

Table 7: Tourism and Visitor Spending and Visits

Tourism Spending and Visitors within the 20 km Study Area	Bath and North East Somerset	Cotswold	Mendip	South Gloucs.	Stroud	Swindon	Wiltshire	20 km Study Area	Wider Study Area	England
Total Spending (£ million)	452	118	172.4	273	159	317	694	2,180	12,700	111,000
Inbound Visitor Spending (£ million)	61.7	16.8	37.0	53.6	22.4	33.5	73.3	298	1,460	26,600
Domestic Overnight Trip Spending (£ million)	130	42.3	48.4	91.2	56.4	90.3	198	656	4,500	27,100
Domestic Holiday Spending (£ million)	33.6	23.6	31.1	50.9	31.5	52.2	114	337	2,500	9,300
Domestic Day Trip Spending (£ million)	227	35.7	55.9	76.9	47.6	141	309	894	4,220	48,000
Total Visits	5,220,000	1,380,000	1,760,000	3,010,000	1,840,000	3,860,000	8,430,000	25,500,000	118,000,000	1,120,000,000
Inbound Visitors	120,000	29,400	71,900	94,100	39,200	73,300	160,000	588,000	2,430,000	33,500,000
Domestic Overnight Trips	546,000	166,000	249,000	359,000	222,000	333,000	729,000	2,600,000	15,900,000	98,900,000

Tourism Spending and Visitors within the 20 km Study Area	Bath and North East Somerset	Cotswold	Mendip	South Gloucs.	Stroud	Swindon	Wiltshire	20 km Study Area	Wider Study Area	England
Domestic Holiday Visitors	114,000	65,900	136,000	142,000	87,800	122,000	267,000	934,000	7,020,000	29,400,000
Domestic Day Trips	4,440,000	1,120,000	1,310,000	2,410,000	1,490,000	3,330,000	7,270,000	21,400,000	92,300,000	959,000,000
Total Average Spend per Visitor	*£86.70*	*£85.80*	*£97.70*	*£90.70*	*£85.80*	*£82.30*	*£82.30*	*£85.70*	*£108.00*	*£99.10*

1.3.53 The tourism and visitor economy in the 20 km Study Area 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 (who comprise 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. Within the 20 km Study Area, those areas that fall within Wiltshire and Bath and North East Somerset received the greatest proportion of visitors and the greatest proportion of visitor spending.

Tourism and Visitor Accommodation

1.3.54 The most recent census of accommodation stock in England is the Visit Britain Accommodation Stock Audit 2016. The local authority areas are estimated to host a total of 25,700 'serviced accommodation' rooms (Ref 83). This includes hotels, bed and breakfasts, inns, and any other catered accommodation that is used by tourists and visitors, but may be used for the temporary accommodation of construction workers. The most recent occupancy rates for hotel room occupancy demonstrates that in the South West region, room occupancy for the month of March 2025 was 71% (Ref 84). The usual busiest months are July to September, with the busiest month in 2024 being July, where room occupancy peaked at 80% (Ref 85).

Tourism and Recreation

1.3.55 The Order Limits are located near to a number of visitor 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]**.

1.4 Supporting Detail to the Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

1.4.1 As has been identified in the Section 16.6: Methodology of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 16: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation [EN010168/APP/6.1]**, the identification of likely significant effects has been informed by a model of anticipated worker requirements for construction by an accredited Engineering Procurement Construction (EPC) contractor, and collective experience from the Applicant team. Derivations of these peak and average activities and workforce have informed the worst-case peak operational and replacement scenario

activities and workforce, and worst-case decommissioning activities and workforce. Economic effects have been derived by multiplying number of workers by the GVA per worker per annum for the relevant sector and area.

Construction

Socio-Economics

Employment Generation

1.4.2 The construction of the Scheme is anticipated to generate an estimated total quantum of labour equivalent to 120,500 days of employment, based on the modelled worker requirements for construction used for this assessment. The consequential estimated labour requirement for the Scheme over the projected approximately two-year construction period is therefore equivalent to a gross 268 full time equivalent (FTE) employees per annum (based on 1 FTE job being 225 days of labour per annum), with the estimated on-site construction workforce expected to peak at approximately 692 employees in the second half of the construction period.

1.4.3 The construction workforce is to consist of a mix of employees from within and outside the 20 km Study Area. There may be need for specialist employment to be sourced from outside the 20 km Study Area where particular skillsets cannot be sourced locally, anticipated due to the technical skills and specialist knowledge requirements for solar, BESS and grid infrastructure construction and electrical engineering works. A full breakdown of the required worker skillset is set out in the **Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (SSCEP) [EN010168/APP/7.20]**.

Socio-Demographic Effects

1.4.4 As stated in paragraph 1.3.4, the projected population increase in the 20 km Study Area from 2021-2027 is anticipated to be approximately 4.2%. This is lower than national rates in the same period (+4.9%), although both South Gloucestershire and Cotswold are projected to have significantly greater population growth than the average for local authorities in England. As such, the population of the 20 km Study Area is of medium sensitivity to further changes due to the variation of projected population growth within the different local authorities in the 20 km Study Area.

1.4.5 Changes to the demographic profile of the 20 km Study Area on the basis of the projected additional population growth associated with the Scheme's construction peak are expected to be as a result of an increase in working-age people, in generally good physical health, who are likely to be majority male (based on 83.5% of jobs in the construction industry in

the UK going to males (Ref 97)). As set out in paragraphs 1.3.6 to 1.3.10, resident age demography in the 20 km Study Area is of medium sensitivity due to its deviation from national trends, specifically in that the largest existing and projected future population age groups are near to or at retirement age. Population health demography has been determined to be of low sensitivity due to good levels of overall population health, including through self-assessed metrics as assessed in Section 18.7 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 18: Human Health [EN010168/APP/6.1]**. Sex demographics have not been assessed separately as the likely level of change in unlikely to be perceivable at the 20 km Study Area level.

1.4.6 Access to housing on a temporary basis during the construction phase in the 20 km Study Area is of medium sensitivity to change. This is as a result of the local population experiencing greater than national average barriers to accessing housing, both with regard to measure as an index of deprivation, as a result of housing being unaffordable for the majority of workers, and as a result of lower than average levels of housing supply in the seven local authority areas in the 20 km Study Area, as demonstrated at paragraphs 1.3.15-1.3.16.

1.4.7 Where inbound employees are anticipated to be temporarily accommodated in private rental accommodation, paragraph 1.3.18 identifies an estimated total of 2,600 vacant private rental properties in the 20 km Study Area, of which an estimated 170 are within 2 km of the Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor. The proposed peak 412 inbound temporary employees could therefore occupy up to 15.3% of vacant private rental accommodation in the 20 km Study Area, of whom up to 40.6% could theoretically be located within 2 km of the Scheme.

1.4.8 As demonstrated in **Table 3** and **Plate 4**, qualification attainment in the 20 km Study Area varies greatly dependent on location within different local authority areas. This is particularly notable in some local authorities such as Cotswold, where trends in qualification attainment differ most from expectations against national averages. As such, skills and qualification attainment in the 20 km Study Area is a medium sensitivity receptor.

Economic Effects (Employment and GVA)

1.4.9 The net direct employment generated by the Scheme is anticipated to induce an uplift of £15.7 million GVA per annum to the 20 km Study Area based on a net total of 100 FTE jobs being generated by the Scheme. This is anticipated to be felt in the construction sector, specifically the construction of utility infrastructure sub-sector. The proposed uplift is equivalent to a 35.9% uplift in employment and GVA per annum to this economic sub-sector (valued in 2023 at £43.9 million GVA per annum). In considering the wider construction industry, this is equivalent to an uplift of

0.17% in employment (60,000 in the 20 km Study Area), or 0.37% in GVA per annum (valued in 2023 at £4.27 billion GVA per annum) (Ref 73).

1.4.10 The Scheme is anticipated to induce a further uplift in GVA more generally in the economy of the 20 km Study Area through indirect and induced economic benefits associated with the Scheme's construction, as a result of prosperity for suppliers, merchants, and those benefitting from increased spending by construction workers. This indirect and induced uplift is estimated at £10.2 million GVA per annum generated from 134 FTE jobs in the 20 km Study Area.

1.4.11 Beyond the 20 km Study Area, the leakage of economic benefit to the rest of the UK is estimated to be up to a further 78 FTE jobs generating £7.95 million GVA per annum during the Scheme construction period (split approximately £4.55 million GVA per annum through direct employment, and the remaining £3.40 million GVA per annum through indirect and induced employment).

1.4.12 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 tenant farmers and indirect effects on suppliers (Ref 98). Owner-occupier landholdings are not anticipated to be adversely affected due to the Scheme as they are largely expected to be able to continue agricultural practices on other parts of their land not included in the Scheme, while financially benefitting from ground rent. Eligible agricultural workers affected by the construction of the Grid Connection Cables are to be compensated for any temporary losses before being able to resume agricultural activities following completion of construction works on the relevant land. The resultant economic effect of the Scheme on the agricultural industry is a loss of £628,000, or 0.08% of the sector in the 20 km Study Area.

1.4.13 The Scheme's construction is anticipated to have a negative impact on tourism spending within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas for tourism and recreation effects. For example, the potential changes to landscape views, both temporarily from construction equipment and longer-term from the installation of the Scheme infrastructure, and the effects from construction traffic on the desirability and accessibility of tourism and recreation routes and centres, could negatively affect the prosperity of the local tourism economy. 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, the construction of the Scheme is anticipated to induce a loss of up to £1.76 million in visitor spending per annum. This is equivalent to a worst-case reduction employment in tourism-dependent

sectors by 50 FTE per annum, equivalent to approximately 0.68% of tourism-dependent employment in the 5 km Study Area (Ref 72).

1.4.14 The accommodation sector, where not affected by losses due to reduced visitor spending, has potential to benefit from construction workers requiring temporary accommodation in the assessment scenario where serviced accommodation is used to accommodate temporary construction workers instead of private rental accommodation. The quantum of rooms required to accommodate the peak inbound temporary workforce (382) is lower than the identified available vacant rooms in the 20 km Study Area (1,200), and as a result, construction workers can likely be accommodated without displacing usual visitors. In this instance, an uplift of between 5 and 30 FTE in the accommodation industry (dependent on average or peak accommodation need) is likely to be induced by increased occupancy of hotels. This is likely to generate an additional minimum £186,000 GVA per annum to the economy in the 20 km Study Area.

1.4.15 The resultant changes to employment and GVA in the 20 km Study Area is therefore estimated to be an uplift of 169 FTE jobs per annum, generating £23.7 million GVA per annum in the 20 km Study Area during the Scheme's construction. Outside the 20 km Study Area, employment and economic benefits felt across the rest of Great Britain as a result of 'leakage' are likely to be up to an additional 78 FTE, generating £7.95 million GVA per annum, both from direct employment of inbound workers, and indirect and induced employment and spending in the rest of Great Britain. Overall, the Scheme is likely to generate a total GVA of £31.7 million GVA per annum during its construction period.

1.4.16 As a result of the level of resilience in the 20 km Study Area to changes to economic activity, unemployment, and the level of employment, the overall workforce in the 20 km Study Area is of a low sensitivity to change. The uplift of 169 workers in the 20 km Study Area represents a 0.02% increase in employment from the baseline of 963,000 total workers. The £23.7 million increase in the GVA per annum to the local economy will amount to a 0.03% rise in GVA per annum in the 20 km Study Area from the 2023 baseline (Ref 73, Ref 74) during the Scheme's construction.

Tourism and Recreation

Visitor Attractions

1.4.17 The construction of the Scheme is anticipated to have a degree of effect on the landscape setting of a small number of nationally and regionally important tourism destinations within the 5 km Study Area, whilst construction traffic associated with the Scheme is anticipated to be present on access routes to some of these locations. These effects are

not however anticipated to impact upon their use and importance as visitor attractions.

1.4.18 Due to their national and international significance, the Badminton Horse Trials and the Cotswolds National Landscape are considered high in sensitivity to changes. The Scheme is anticipated to create no greater than a negligible magnitude impact on either receptor, due to the limited extent of immediate views of the Scheme, with opportunities for views constrained to minimal glimpsed views of the Scheme in Badminton Park, and intermittent views in the areas surrounding Sherston, Luckington, Alderton, and Upper Castle Combe. Topography and vegetation are expected to occlude views from the majority of locations, further limiting the potential for any further views of the Scheme as experienced travelling through the landscape.

1.4.19 The Scheme's 2 km Study Area includes local landscape and heritage locations such as historic buildings and conservation areas, retail and recreational attractions such as garden centres and museums, and art and cultural attractions such as the Corsham Gallery and Pound Art Centre. These receptors are attributed a low sensitivity due to their localised importance as tourism and visitor attractions.

1.4.20 A total of five publicly accessible parks and nature reserves have been assessed within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas. The size of Study Area used is based on the determination of the feature's local or regional importance, with Badminton Park and Corsham Park considered of regional importance (and of medium sensitivity to changes) as a result of their designation as Registered Parks and Gardens. Locally important parks and nature reserves at Corston, Yatton Keynell and Melksham are considered as low sensitivity.

Public Rights of Way and Recreational Routes

1.4.21 The individual assessment of PRoWs affected by the Scheme are tabulated in Table 3-14 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. This identifies the greatest magnitude of impact likely to be experienced is a medium impact on seven PRoWs and unsurfaced highways. This is as a result of direct impacts from site and cable construction activities, the siting of construction compounds, and the use of these PRoWs and unsurfaced highways to facilitate HGV access to onsite works. These seven PRoWs and unsurfaced highway are:

- Public footpath WT|GRIT|20, to be diverted for the placement of a construction compound;
- Public footpath WT|MALW|55, to be partially diverted to meet the diverted bridleway WT|MALW|54;

- Bridleway WT|HULL|7 (connected to WT|MALW|51), likely to experience significant effects from direct impacts from cabling works, and immediate interactions with the construction of Lime Down D and its onsite 132 kV Substation;
- Bridleway WT|MALW|54, to be diverted along a parallel route to facilitate the installation of the construction HGV access to Lime Down E and associated cabling works between Lime Down D and E;
- Bridleway WT|MALW|59, to be used in part by HGVs to access Lime Down E (fields E10-E34);
- Unsurfaced highway listed as Track crossing railway, Rodbourne, (known informally and locally at 'Cabbage Lane') to be used by HGVs to access Lime Down E (fields E9-E34); and
- Unsurfaced highway listed as Track parallel to railway, Rodbourne, to be used by HGVs to access Lime Down E.

1.4.22 The overall impact of the Scheme on the 120 individual PRoW routes assessed is a low impact, demonstrating that the Scheme is not anticipated to have a significant effect on the local and wider PRoW network.

1.4.23 Due to their higher sensitivity, similar impacts on long-distance routes generate a greater significance of effect, albeit acknowledging that these impacts occur on only a short section of each long-distance route. The greatest impact is to the Palladian Way, as this uses bridleway WT|HULL|7 and Down Road unsurfaced highway, both of which are anticipated to be directly impacted by access arrangements to Lime Down D and the 132 kV Substation at Lime Down D. As such, these impacts are of a medium magnitude to users of this route. Furthermore, direct impacts from onsite infrastructure and cabling works are likely to have low magnitude impacts on the Fosse Way, Long Path, and Wiltshire Way cycle route. The resultant overall impact of the Scheme on long-distance recreational routes within the Scheme's 5 km Study Area is therefore a low impact.

Recreation Venues and Facilities

1.4.24 Individual assessments of construction impacts on recreation venues and facilities, consisting of recreational waterways and waterbodies, organised recreational sports grounds, recreational aviation centres, youth recreation and play areas, and equestrian facilities, are 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]**.

Operation and Maintenance

Socio-Economics

Employment Generation

1.4.25 During its operational lifetime, the Scheme is anticipated to generate a modest quantum of labour, related to ongoing operational management, infrastructure and site maintenance, and site management. It is projected that the Scheme will require a gross 15 FTE employees per annum, however these are not anticipated to be located permanently on site. This number for worker requirements for operation and maintenance have been provided by the Applicant based on industry experience and professional judgement.

1.4.26 The long-term operation and maintenance workforce is to consist of a mix of employees from the energy industry and groundskeeping and landscaping sectors. It is considered that whilst some of this workforce could be sourced from within the 20 km Study Area, the worst-case scenario is that no more than 25% are. As such, there is likely to be 'leakage' of economic benefits to employees travelling in from, or working remotely, outside the 20 km Study Area of 75%. As such, an estimated 4 FTE employees per annum are anticipated to be sourced from within the 20 km Study Area.

1.4.27 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. As during construction, there may be need for specialist employment to be sourced from outside the 20 km Study Area during the peak replacement scenario where particular skillsets cannot be sourced locally. A full breakdown of the required worker skillset is set out in the **Outline SSCEP [EN010168/APP/7.20]**.

1.4.28 Given the small scale nature of the long-term operational and maintenance employment requirements to operate and maintain the Scheme, a 'ready reckoner' medium displacement factor of 25% (Ref 95) is considered appropriate. A further 1.804x multiplier (Ref 98) is applied to calculate additional indirect and induced employment from supply chains and additional spending. During peak replacement activities, a 50% displacement factor and 1.33x multiplier (as used for assessment of construction employment) have been used.

Socio-Demographic Effects

1.4.29 During the peak replacement scenario of all Solar PV Panels and BESS Batteries on the Scheme being replaced in 12 months, the inbound workforce would amount to an average of 31 FTE and 150 short-term peak gross direct employees. This amounts to 0.004% and 0.021% respectively of the projected population of the 20 km Study Area at the beginning of the Scheme's operational lifetime. As during construction, any changes to the demographic profile of the 20 km Study Area on the basis of the projected additional population growth associated with the Scheme's peak replacement works are expected to be as a result of an increase in working-age people, in generally good physical health.

1.4.30 To accommodate the peak inbound temporary employment workforce required for all panels being replaced in a worst-case 12-month period, a maximum of 150 rental properties are likely to be required. This is 5.7% of the estimated total of 2,600 vacant private rental properties in the 20 km Study Area (of which an estimated 170 are within 2 km of the Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor – see paragraph 1.3.18. This therefore indicates that the proposed need could theoretically be accommodated entirely within vacant rental properties within 2 km of the Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor.

Economic Effects (Employment and GVA)

1.4.31 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 20 km Study Area – based on an uplift of 3 FTE jobs. This is anticipated to be felt in the electric power generation, transmission and distribution industry sub-sector. The proposed uplift is equivalent to a 0.07% uplift to this economic sub-sector in the 20 km Study Area, valued in 2023 at approximately £757 million GVA per annum.

1.4.32 The Scheme is anticipated to induce a further uplift in GVA more generally in the economy through indirect and induced economic benefits associated with the Scheme's operation and maintenance, as a result of prosperity for suppliers, merchants, and those benefitting from increased spending by Scheme workers. This indirect and induced uplift within the 20 km Study Area is estimated to by 5 FTE jobs generating £388,000 GVA per annum, with an additional £1.16 million GVA per annum from 15 FTE jobs expected to be generated elsewhere in the country.

1.4.33 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 20 km Study Area from 47 FTE employees, with an additional 16 FTE workers generating £2.13 million GVA elsewhere in the UK. The uplift within the 20 km Study Area is equivalent to 16.7% of the value of the 'construction of utility projects' subsector, and 0.17% of the construction

industry sector value in the 20 km Study Area. Additionally, indirect and induced employment is likely to generate a further 62 FTE jobs and £4.77 million GVA in the 20 km Study Area, and 21 FTE jobs and £1.59 million GVA across the rest of the UK, which will be felt across a wider proportion of industrial sectors of each economy.

1.4.34 The operational lifetime of the Scheme is up to 60 years, during which there is likely to be a long-term adverse impact on tourism and visitor spending as a result of the effects of the Scheme on some features, such as landscape views, PRoWs, and nearby heritage assets. This is anticipated to be as a result of reduced enjoyment of experience due to views of the Scheme, resulting in reduced desirability and thus spending at tourism- and visitor-dependent locations. As the effects of the Scheme are more passive in its operation and maintenance phase than during construction, the estimate of the level of loss in visitor spending is likely to be much less than during construction. Based on the likely magnitude of impacts to individual tourism and visitor receptors as assessed in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]** 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. This is equivalent to 0.15% of existing tourism-industry employment and annual visitor spending in the 5 km Study Area.

1.4.35 The peak activity associated with the peak infrastructure replacement scenario is likely to produce more actively apparent effects on the surrounding area, it is pertinent to assume that an additional level of effects on visitor spending may occur during these periods: equivalent to a short-term loss to tourism-dependent industry of 16 FTE jobs and an estimated £547,000 loss in visitor spending during the worst-case 12-month window for when infrastructure is replaced.

1.4.36 The peak replacement scenario may require an average 31 or peak 150 inbound workers to access temporary accommodation in serviced accommodation. As during construction, the quantum of rooms required to accommodate the peak inbound temporary workforce for the assessed replacement scenario is lower than the approximately 1,200 identified available vacant rooms in the 20 km Study Area. As a result, temporary inbound workers can likely be accommodated without displacing usual visitors.

1.4.37 The resultant changes to employment is therefore estimated to be an annual loss of 23 FTE jobs in the 20 km Study Area, as a result of adverse effects on agriculture and tourism. That notwithstanding, the Scheme may generate an uplift of £1.46 million GVA per annum in the 20 km Study

Area during its operational lifetime. This amounts to a loss of 0.002% of employment in the 20 km Study Area, but a 0.002% increase in GVA per annum from the 2023 baseline (Ref 73, Ref 74) in the same area during the Scheme's operational lifetime.

1.4.38 An additional £12.5 million GVA is likely to be generated during the worst-case 12-month peak replacement period, based on a net increase in 76 FTE jobs in the 20 km Study Area during the peak replacement scenario. This amounts to a 0.008% increase in employment and a 0.017% increase in GVA in the 20 km Study Area during the peak replacement scenario.

Tourism and Recreation

Visitor Attractions

1.4.39 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.

1.4.40 Potential effects on the WOMAD festival from 2026 onwards have not been assessed. In November 2024 it was announced that WOMAD 2025 was not being held, and that WOMAD 2026 would not be hosted at Charlton Park. A new venue has not been announced as of 1 June 2025.

1.4.41 Whilst many of the local attractions within the Scheme's area of visual influence (largely within the 2 km Study Area) are likely to be negligibly affected by the operation and maintenance of the Scheme, those that are reliant on their landscape setting as an intrinsic part of their value may be impacted to a greater extent, such as on their surrounding landscape character and serenity. Key landscape and heritage assets, such as nature reserves, and the large number of listed buildings and scheduled monuments in nearby conservation areas, are identified **ES Volume 1, Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact**, **Chapter 12: Cultural Heritage**, **Chapter 13: Transport and Access [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

Public Rights of Way and Recreational Routes

1.4.42 The individual assessment of PRoWs affected by the Scheme are tabulated in Table 3-14 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. This identifies the greatest magnitude of impact likely to be experienced is a low impact on 25 of the assessed PRoWs and permissive recreation routes. The overall impact of the Scheme on the 120 individual PRoW routes assessed is a negligible impact. During the 12-month peak replacement scenario, impacts are also expected to be no greater than a medium magnitude on four routes, due to similar impacts as during construction where PRoWs are required for HGV access to onsite works. The overall impact on the

network remains negligible during the assessed peak replacement scenario.

1.4.43 As during construction, due to their higher sensitivity, similar impacts on long-distance routes generate a greater significance of effect. During the Scheme's operational lifetime, the greatest magnitude of impact to any long-distance recreational route is low, where they have direct changes to their visual character as a result of the Scheme. This results in long-term significant effects to these receptors. Overall, however, the likely impact on long-distance recreational routes across the 5 km Study Area is a long-term negligible magnitude impact, due to a number of identified routes: the Long Path, National Cycle Route 4 and National Cycle Route 403, as assessed in Table 3-15 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]** being anticipated to experience neutral effects during the Scheme's operational lifetime, including during peak replacement works.

Recreation Venues and Facilities

1.4.44 Due to the separation of recreational waterways or waterbodies used for recreation from the Solar PV Sites, and the negligible likelihood of indirect impacts for HGV movements or long-distance views, Table 3-16 in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]** concludes no effects from the Scheme are anticipated on recreational waterways or waterbodies during the operation and maintenance phase of the Scheme, including during peak replacement activities.

1.4.45 The Scheme's impacts on formal recreational facilities for organised sports during the operational lifetime of the Scheme 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]**, and largely identify neutral impacts during the Scheme's operational lifetime. The greatest magnitude of impact to these facilities is likely to be a negligible magnitude impact to the M4 Karting site at Hullavington Airfield, solely because of views of Lime Down E on the approach to the receptor and in outdoor areas at the venue. During the peak replacement scenario, this is anticipated to raise to a low magnitude impact as a result of increased HGVs on access routes, while Grittleton Cricket Ground and the MOD Buckley Barracks playing field may also experience negligible impacts for the same reason. All other recreational facilities are anticipated to remain experiencing neutral impacts even during peak replacement activities on the Scheme.

1.4.46 Due to their separation from the Solar PV Sites, and the negligible likelihood of indirect impacts for HGV movements or long-distance views,

no recreational aviation sites have been assessed for operation and maintenance impacts.

1.4.47 As for formal organised sports venues, impacts on youth recreation sites are generally anticipated to be neutral throughout the operational lifetime of the Scheme and during the peak replacement scenario. This is only different for locations with direct views of the Scheme or that are likely to be impacted by HGV traffic for replacement works. Those anticipated to be impacted are at Acton Turville, Corston, and Grittleton Village Hall, all as a result on HGV movements potentially creating an environment where children feel less safe accessing play areas.

1.4.48 During its operational lifetime, the Scheme is likely to impact on equestrian facilities by way of views impacting desirability of the facilities for users, but also in regard to changes in the landscape character of the surrounding areas as appreciated from highways and bridleways used as hacking routes. In considering the impact upon the recreational use of equestrian facilities with the implementation of embedded visual mitigation measures, these impacts are anticipated to range between neutral and low in impact magnitude. The level of magnitude is dependent on the proximity of the receptor to the Scheme, and the amount by which access to public hacking routes may be affected. When considering the overall impact on all equestrian facilities within the Scheme's 2 km Study Area, the anticipated magnitude is negligible. The peak replacement scenario is likely to increase onsite works, noise impacts on nearby equestrian facilities and paddocks, and HGV traffic on the local highway network, thus potentially impacting upon the use of equestrian facilities for recreation. While these impacts are anticipated to be felt at more locations due to increased HGV movement on the local highway network, these additional impacts are not anticipated to be of a larger overall or greater individual magnitude than during the Scheme's operational lifetime.

Decommissioning

Socio-Economics

1.4.49 The assessment of decommissioning workforce applies the same assumptions as set out for construction with regard to the number of employees likely to be sourced from within the 20 km Study Area, the resultant 'leakage', 50% displacement factor, and likely quantum of indirect and induced employment, to the Scheme's anticipated gross peak employment of 554 employees.

Socio-Demographic Effects

1.4.50 Projected population increase in England from 2021-2089 is anticipated to be approximately 23.7%. Applying the same assumption to the 20 km

Study Area as a best estimate, this represents a population increase of approximately 173,000 people in the 20 km Study Area, bringing the total population of the 20 km Study Area in 2089 to approximately 901,000. An additional 274 people in the 20 km Study Area as a result of peak decommissioning activities is an additional 0.030% uplift to projected future residential population at the point of decommissioning.

1.4.51 As described in paragraphs 1.3.9-1.3.10, changes to the age and sex demographic profile nationally between now and 2089 demonstrate a considerable increase in the proportion of the population at or above retirement age. In 2021, approximately 18.6% of the population was over the age of 65, in 2089 this is estimated to be 30.4%. In the absence of sub-national data, this trend is also considered applicable to the population of the 20 km Study Area. Although negligible in magnitude, the additional population growth associated with the Scheme's decommissioning peak are expected to be as a result of an increase in working-age people, in generally good physical health, who are likely to be majority male (based on current assumptions that 83.5% of jobs in the construction industry in the UK going to males (Ref 97)). The resident age and health demographic profiles in the 20 km Study Area are deemed to be of medium sensitivity due to the likely consistency with aging population trends, with a greater proportion of people living in relatively poorer health. Sex demographics have not been assessed separately as the likely level of change generated by the inbound workforce in unlikely to be perceivable at the 20 km Study Area level.

Economic Effects (Employment and GVA)

1.4.52 The net direct employment and induced uplift to the 20 km Study Area economy generated by the Scheme's decommissioning, is anticipated to be felt in the construction and energy sectors, specifically in utility infrastructure sub-sectors where specialist skills are required for infrastructure decommissioning activities. This economic uplift is equivalent to either 28.7% of the 2023 value of the construction of utility infrastructure sub-sector in the 20 km Study Area (£43.9 million GVA per annum), or 1.7% of the electric power generation, transmission and distribution industry sub-sector in the 20 km Study Area (£753 million GVA per annum in 2023).

1.4.53 As during construction, 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 20 km Study Area, generating an estimated £8.17 million GVA per annum. Beyond the 20 km Study Area, the leakage of economic benefit to the rest

of the UK is estimated to be up to a further £6.36 million GVA per annum during the Scheme decommissioning period, generated through direct employment (£3.64 million GVA per annum) and indirect and induced employment (£2.72 million GVA per annum).

1.4.54 Decommissioning activities in relation to the Scheme are likely to lead to temporary changes to landscape views, both from equipment and movement on the Sites, and impacts from decommissioning traffic. These impacts are likely to affect the desirability and accessibility of tourism and recreation routes and centres, and could negatively impact the prosperity of the local tourism economy. Based on assessment of current tourism and recreation facilities, it is estimate that decommissioning impacts could lead to a loss of up to 30 FTE jobs in tourism-dependent industries. However, given the level of uncertainty for estimating tourism losses in the years 2089 to 2091, a more conservative approach is to assess based on construction impacts. As decommissioning works are estimated to be up to 80% as labour-intensive as construction, an 80% factor has been applied to the assessment findings at paragraph 1.4.13. As a result, the worst-case estimated loss to the tourism industry during decommissioning works is anticipated to be up to 40 FTE workers, and a loss of £1.41 million GVA per annum.

1.4.55 The quantum of serviced accommodation rooms required to accommodate the peak inbound workforce (274) is lower than the currently identified available vacant rooms in the 20 km Study Area (1,200), and as a result, decommissioning workers can likely be accommodated without displacing usual visitors, in the event that serviced accommodation is used to accommodate temporary inbound workers instead of using private rental accommodation. This is based on current accommodation stock and vacancy rates as future rates cannot be reliably predicted.

1.4.56 The resultant changes to employment and GVA in the 20 km Study Area is therefore estimated to be an uplift of 131 FTE jobs per annum (which represents a 0.014% increase in employment from the 2023 baseline of 963,000 total workers), generating £18.9 million GVA per annum in the 20 km Study Area during the Scheme's decommissioning.

1.4.57 The £18.9 million increase in the GVA per annum to the local economy will amount to a 0.026% rise in GVA per annum in the 20 km Study Area from the 2023 baseline (Ref 73, Ref 74) during the Scheme's decommissioning.

1.4.58 Outside the 20 km Study Area, employment and economic benefits felt across the rest of Great Britain as a result of 'leakage' are likely to be up to an additional 62 FTE, generating £6.36 million GVA per annum.

Resultantly, the Scheme is likely to generate a total GVA of £25.2 million per annum during its decommissioning.

Tourism and Recreation

1.4.59 Following completion of decommissioning and the return of the land to the landowner, the desirability of the surrounding area is likely to return to near baseline conditions prior to the construction of the Scheme. The land will be returned to (future) landowners to choose how the land is used and managed. Whilst it is anticipated the majority of the land will return to arable use, a notable exception to this will be any established landscape or ecological enhancement measures installed as part of the Scheme, such as hedgerows and woodland. These are considered likely to be retained given their potential benefits to agricultural land and the wider farming estate. Mitigation measures to control impacts on tourism and recreation facilities as a result of traffic, and decommissioning activities, are set out in the **Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) [EN010168/APP/7.22]** and **Outline Decommissioning Strategy [EN010168/APP/7.14]**.

1.5 Cumulative Effects Assessment

1.5.1 A shortlist of cumulative plans and projects identified in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 21: Cumulative Effects and In-Combination Effects [EN010168/APP/6.1]** of this ES. Specific assessment of cumulative effects on individual tourism and recreation receptors identified in Section 3 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 16-2: Tourism and Recreation Receptor Tables [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Cumulative Effects

1.5.2 For socio-economics, tourism and recreation, cumulative effects have been measured across the 20 km Study Area for socio-economic effects, and within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas for locally important tourism and recreation facilities and regionally and nationally important tourism and recreation facilities respectively. Those developments considered relevant in the assessment of cumulative effects are set out in Table 16-20 in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 16: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation [EN010168/APP/6.1]**. These include developments under construction, approved, in scoping, and that are strategic developments for local development plans, as defined in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 21: Cumulative Effects and In-Combination Effects [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

1.5.3 The calculation of cumulative socio-economic, tourism and recreation effects from the identified projects has been taken through a mixed methodology which utilises both information available in the public domain, and extrapolated estimates based on the model used for the

socio-economic assessment set out in Section 16.10 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 16: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation [EN010168/APP/6.1]**. Information sources for identified projects rely largely on planning application documentation available through Local Planning Authority planning application portals (Ref 99-Ref 134). This combined methodology seeks to provide as accurate as possible an estimation of cumulative effects on direct effects such as employment, economic gross value added, and impacts on use and accessibility of recreational facilities. These have then been utilised to determine indirect or resultant effects, such as on socio-demographic indicators. It should be noted that this methodology seeks to determine a worst-case or greatest level of cumulative effect.

1.5.4 This section will only describe where there is anticipated to be a change of level of significance from the assessment of residual effects. All other effects have been treated as the same level of significance as Lime Down Solar Park assessed in isolation.

Cumulative Construction Phase

1.5.5 The following **Table 8** sets out the assumptions made to calculate the cumulative construction impacts of the identified projects. These assumptions are made on the basis of publicly available project information and construction employment assumptions, together with assumptions generated from scaling assessed effects from the Scheme to other developments (particularly in regard to accommodation employment). Cumulative developments not anticipated to be under construction in the period 2027-2029 (ID: 93, 103, 129, 207/208, 218/234, and 218) have not been included.

Table 8: Cumulative Project Construction Assumptions

Project	Cumulative Site ID	Construction Timescale	Gross Direct Employment	Direct Employment in the Study Area	Indirect and Induced Employment	Agricultural Employment	Accommodation Employment	Tourism Employment
Lime Down Solar Park	X	2027-2029	268	201	134	-20	5	-50
Stanbridge Park, Sherston	3	2026-2028	36	27	30	0	1	0
Sherston GP Surgery	5	2025-2027	6	5	5	0	0	0

Project	Cumulative Site ID	Construction Timescale	Gross Direct Employment	Direct Employment in the Study Area	Indirect and Induced Employment	Agricultural Employment	Accommodation Employment	Tourism Employment
Land at the Street, Hullavington	58	2025-2029	43	32	36	0	1	0
Patterdown Road, Chippenham	101	2026-2028	33	25	28	0	1	0
Hunters Moon Phase 6	105	2025-2028	45	34	38	0	1	0
Melksham North Solar	123/ 244	2025-2027	56	42	28	-4	1	-2
Wooley Park Farm	224	unknown	90	67	76	-1	2	-1
Whistle Mead Solar Farm	225/ 277	2026-2027	19	15	10	-1	0	-1
Studley Solar Farm	226	2026-2027	42	32	21	-1	1	-1
Lawn Farm	229	2026-2027	16	12	8	-1	0	-1
Minety Solar Farm	231	2026-2027	80	60	40	-1	1	-1
Pond Lane BESS	237	2026-2027	30	23	26	0	1	0
Stonehill BESS	240	2026-2027	16	12	14	0	0	0
Somerford Farm BESS	241	2026-2027	26	19	22	0	0	0
Milou Cable	242	2026-2027	5	4	4	0	0	0
Red Barn Solar	243	2026-2027	64	48	32	-1	1	-1
Swallett Energy Park	254	2027-2028	22	17	11	0	0	0
Chippenham Site Allocation CH1	256	2021-2037	810	608	683	-6	15	-5
WCS Chippenham Employment Sites	260	no info	250	188	211	0	5	-2
Chapel Knapp BESS	310	2026-2027	16	12	14	0	0	0
Saltersford Lane	319	2026-2029	56	42	47	0	1	0

Project	Cumulative Site ID	Construction Timescale	Gross Direct Employment	Direct Employment in the Study Area	Indirect and Induced Employment	Agricultural Employment	Accommodation Employment	Tourism Employment
Corsham Road, Whitley	328	2028-2029	26	20	22	0	0	0
Shaw BESS	333	2026-2027	64	48	54	0	1	-1
Allington North Solar	346	2027-2028	16	12	8	-1	0	-1
Kingway Nurseries	357	2027-2029	53	40	45	-2	1	-1
Brockleaze BESS	358	2027-2028	160.0	120	135	0	3	-1
Total	X	2027-2029	2,350	1,760 1,320*	1,780	-41	43	-68

* 1,320 net direct FTE jobs as a result of up to 25% displacement of existing employment in the 20 km Study Area.

Socio-Demographic Effects

1.5.6 **Table 8** above sets out the estimated gross and net direct employment anticipated to be generated by the identified cumulative developments of approximately 2,350and 1,320 workers respectively. The difference between these (approximately 56%) accounts for “leakage” of commuters from outside the 20 km Study Area, and existing employment displacement. As such, there is anticipated to be a cumulative inbound temporary construction workforce of up to 590 FTE employees during the cumulative construction period of 2027-2029.

1.5.7 The assessed uplift in population as a result of the inbound cumulative construction workforce would constitute a short-term, temporary uplift of 0.08% to the projected residential population of the 20 km Study Area for socio-economic effects in 2027. As identified in paragraph 1.3.4, the population of the 20 km Study Area is of medium sensitivity to further changes due to the variation of projected population growth within the different local authorities in the 20 km Study Area. This therefore represents a short-term temporary negligible magnitude impact. Given the 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 20 km Study Area. Resultantly, this is an overall **neutral effect** to the 20 km Study Area.

1.5.8 Changes to the demographic profile of the 20 km Study Area from this projected population uplift are expected to be as a result of an increase in working-age people, in generally good physical health, who are likely to be majority male. As set out in paragraphs 1.3.6 to 1.3.10, resident age demography in the 20 km Study Area is of medium sensitivity due to its deviation from national trends. Population health demography has been determined to be of low sensitivity due to good levels of overall population health, including through self-assessed metrics. Sex demographics have not been assessed separately as the likely level of change in unlikely to be perceivable at the 20 km Study Area level. As a result of being of medium sensitivity to change, there is a likely cumulative short-term temporary **minor beneficial effect** (not significant) to the population age demography in the Study Area. As a result of being of low sensitivity to change, there is a likely cumulative short-term temporary **negligible beneficial effect** (not significant) to the self-assessed health demography in the Study Area.

1.5.9 The cumulative inbound workforce of approximately 590 employees has been deemed as requiring temporary accommodation during the cumulative assessment phase. Access to housing and accommodation in the Study Area is of medium sensitivity to change. This is as a result of the local population experiencing greater than national average barriers to accessing housing, and as a result of lower than average levels of housing supply in the seven local authority areas in the 20 km Study Area, as demonstrated at paragraphs 1.3.15-1.3.16. Where inbound employees require temporary private rental accommodation, the proposed 590 inbound employees are projected to occupy up to 22.5% of an estimated total of 2,600 vacant private rental accommodation in the 20 km 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). This is no greater in level of significance than the Scheme in isolation.

1.5.10 Cumulative impacts on skills and qualification attainment in the 20 km Study Area are likely to be somewhat greater than assessed for the Scheme in isolation, as a result of skills and education opportunities such as through construction apprenticeships. With additional enhancement measures to improve local skills and qualifications opportunities set out in the **Outline SSCEP [EN010168/APP/7.20]**, the level of significance of the cumulative effect is anticipated to be the same as the residual effect of the Scheme assessed in isolation – a medium-term temporary **moderate-minor beneficial effect** (not significant).

Economic Effects

1.5.11 The total cumulative net direct employment generated in the 20 km Study Area is anticipated to induce an uplift of £207 million GVA per annum from an uplift of 1,320 FTE jobs in the construction sector during the cumulative construction period. The proposed uplift is equivalent to a 2.2% uplift in employment, and a 4.8% growth in GVA per annum to this economic sector (valued in 2023 at £4.27 billion GVA per annum).

1.5.12 A further uplift in GVA more generally in the economy of the 20 km Study Area through indirect and induced economic benefits associated with the cumulative construction period, is estimated at £136 million GVA per annum, based on an uplift of approximately 1,780 FTE jobs.

1.5.13 Beyond the 20 km Study Area, the leakage of economic benefit to the rest of the UK is estimated to be up to a further £81.0 million GVA per annum as a result of a net employment increase of 936 FTE jobs across the UK beyond the 20 km Study Area.

1.5.14 As the majority of the identified cumulative developments are located on agricultural land, an adverse impact on the agricultural industry in the 20 km Study Area is anticipated. This is as a result of direct reduction in employment on farm holdings, and indirectly through suppliers and downstream businesses. The resultant economic impact from these developments on the agricultural industry is a loss of approximately 41 FTE jobs worth £1.34 million GVA per annum, equivalent to 0.18% of the sector value in the 20 km Study Area.

1.5.15 Impacts from changes to landscape views as a result of the cumulative construction works, and the impacts from construction traffic impacting the desirability and accessibility of tourism and recreation routes and centres, could negatively impact the prosperity of the local tourism economy by up to £2.38 million in visitor spending per annum, resulting in the potential loss of 67 FTE jobs in tourism-dependent sectors, equivalent to approximately 0.91% of this sector's employment and economic performance within the 5 km Study Area of the Scheme.

1.5.16 The accommodation sector, where not affected by losses due to reduced visitor spending, has potential to benefit from inbound construction workers requiring temporary accommodation within the 20 km Study Area. The quantum of rooms required to accommodate the peak inbound temporary workforce (590) is lower than the identified available vacant rooms in the 20 km Study Area (1,200), and as a result, construction workers can likely be accommodated without displacing usual visitors. In this instance, a cumulative uplift of up to 43 FTE jobs is likely to be induced by increased occupancy of hotels, generating an additional £1.63 million GVA per annum to the economy in the 20 km Study Area.

Table 9: Sector Employment and GVA per Annum as a Result of the Cumulative Construction Phase

Economic Area	20 km Study Area Employment	GVA per worker	20 km Study Area GVA
Net Direct Scheme Employment	1,320	£156,674	£207,000,000
Indirect and Induced Scheme Employment	1,780	£76,501	£136,000,000
Agriculture (Direct and Indirect)	-43	£30,989	-£1,340,000
Tourism	-67	£35,240	-£2,380,000
Accommodation	43	£38,355	£1,630,000
Total Net Employment	3,030	n/a	£341,000,000

1.5.17 The resultant cumulative changes to employment and GVA in the 20 km Study Area (as shown in **Table 9** above) are therefore estimated to be a net uplift of 2,720 FTE jobs per annum, generating £341 million GVA per annum in the 20 km Study Area during the cumulative construction period. Outside the 20 km Study Area, employment and economic benefits felt across the rest of Great Britain as a result of 'leakage' are likely to be up to an additional 936 FTE, generating £81.0 million GVA per annum, both from direct employment of inbound workers, and indirect and induced employment and spending in the rest of Great Britain.

1.5.18 As a result of the level of resilience in the 20 km Study Area to changes to economic activity, unemployment, and the level of employment, the overall workforce in the 20 km Study Area is of a low sensitivity to change.

1.5.19 The uplift of 3,030 FTE workers in the Study Area represents a low magnitude 0.32% increase in employment from the baseline of 963,000 total workers. This represents an overall cumulative medium-term temporary **minor beneficial effect** (not significant) on the labour force in the Study Area.

1.5.20 The £341 million increase in the GVA per annum to the local economy will amount to a 0.46% rise in GVA per annum in the 20 km Study Area from the 2023 baseline during the cumulative construction period. This rise would constitute a low positive impact on the local economy, as well as on local prosperity. As a result of the low sensitivity of economic prosperity, or local wages in the Study Area, the resultant effects are a cumulative

medium-term temporary **minor beneficial effect** (not significant) to local economy and prosperity.

Tourism and Recreation

1.5.21 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. These include the impacts to the economy already explored in the Study Area for socio-economic effects, as well as the more direct impacts as a result of cumulative landscape and traffic impacts on use, enjoyment and desirability.

1.5.22 Of the identified cumulative developments, those likely to have the greatest cumulative construction impacts are those located in more concentrated clusters – particularly in the south of Chippenham, and near to the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation.

1.5.23 Cumulative construction effects on nationally and regionally important tourism and visitor attractions are anticipated to be limited to small-scale additional visual impacts to the Cotswold National Landscape, as a result of construction of residential and healthcare development in the village of Sherston. This therefore does not create any cumulative effects of any greater significance than the Scheme assessed in isolation. No other assessed receptors are anticipated to experience cumulative effects. As a result, there is no significant cumulative effect overall, or individually, on nationally and regionally important tourism and visitor attractions in the 5 km Study Area.

1.5.24 Cumulative visual and traffic impacts from construction are anticipated to have non-significant cumulative effects on locally important tourism destinations within the 2 km Study Area. However, these are likely to be limited to individual receptors, and therefore have no cumulative effect on locally important visitor attractions overall in the 2 km Study Area of any greater significance than the Scheme assessed in isolation. The conservation areas of Atworth, Malmesbury, Sherston and Yatton Keynell, as well as Lowden Garden Centre, are anticipated to experience individual cumulative effects up to cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate-minor adverse effects**. These therefore are not significant cumulative effects.

1.5.25 Whilst there is not anticipated to be any significant cumulative effect on parks and nature reserves overall in the 2 km Study Area during the cumulative construction phase, the development of the Chippenham By-pass and multiple developments in the south of Chippenham are anticipated to generate a cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effect** to Corsham Park. This is therefore a **significant**

cumulative effect to this individual receptor. No other parks and nature reserves are anticipated to experience any cumulative effects of greater significance than as a result of the Scheme assessed in isolation.

1.5.26 The cumulative construction phase of the identified projects is likely to increase impacts on PRoWs and other recreation routes (permissive routes and highways) as a result of visual impacts, increased HGV movements, and in some cases direct impacts on use. Overall, this is likely to have a cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate-minor adverse effect** (not significant) on the PRoW network within the 2 km Study Area. With respect to individual PRoWs, this includes up to medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effects** on footpath WT|HULL|29, and byway open to all traffic WT|CORM|122. There therefore are **significant cumulative effects** to these specific receptors. Four other PRoWs (footpath WT|CHIW|6, footpath WT|CORM|2, bridleway WT|CHIW|10, and byway open to all traffic WT|HULL|9) have increased cumulative temporary non-significant adverse effects. Cumulative effects on the recreational use of the local highway network are not anticipated to be of a greater level of significance than the Scheme assessed in isolation.

1.5.27 Long-distance recreational routes within the 5 km Study Area are likely to experience up to an overall cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effect** as a result of cumulative developments undergoing construction. This is a **significant cumulative effect**. Within this, one individual receptor, the Sustrans Cycle Route 403 (also known as the North Wiltshire Rivers Route), is anticipated to experience a cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate adverse effect** of greater significance than the Scheme assessed in isolation. This is therefore also a **significant cumulative effect** to this individual receptor.

1.5.28 Recreational waterways and waterbodies and aviation centres are not anticipated to be susceptible to cumulative construction impacts due to distance between them and the assessed cumulative development, and lack of intervisibility between cumulative developments. As such, no cumulative effects have been identified in the 5 km Study Area to recreational waterways and waterbodies or aviation centres.

1.5.29 With regard to organised recreational sports grounds, there is potential for non-significant cumulative effects on Chippenham Golf Centre and MOD Buckey Barracks playing field as a result of cumulative construction traffic, with the former also likely to be impacted by views from the adjacent BESS development at 8 Tiddlywink. However, this is not anticipated to create any cumulative effect on organised recreational sports grounds overall in the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas of any greater significance than the Scheme assessed in isolation.

1.5.30 Of the identified youth recreation and play areas, Corston and Hilltop Park are likely to experience non-significant cumulative effects (medium-term temporary **moderate-minor adverse effects**), as a result of increased HGV traffic, amenity impacts from construction noise, and a potential gradual increase in user demand as new developments are occupied. Whilst these are not significant effects, this is anticipated to increase the overall significance of effect to youth recreation and play areas in the 2 km Study to a cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate-minor adverse effect** (which is not significant).

1.5.31 Equestrian facilities are likely to be affected only by cumulative traffic counts on access routes and impacts from developments using bridleways for access. This is likely to affect only the Catridge Farm in Lacock, which is anticipated to experience no more than a cumulative medium-term temporary **moderate-minor adverse effect**. This is not significant. No other equestrian receptor is anticipated to experience any cumulative effect greater than from the Scheme assessed in isolation, and as such there is not anticipated to be any increase the significance of effect on equestrian facilities overall within the 2 km Study Area during the cumulative construction phase.

Cumulative Operation and Maintenance Phase

1.5.32 The following **Table 10** sets out the assumptions made to calculate the cumulative operational impacts of the identified projects. As for construction, these assumptions are made on the basis of publicly available project information and employment density assumptions, together with assumptions generated from scaling assessed effects from the Scheme to other developments (particularly in regard to tourism employment). The cumulative operational period is considered from 2038, which is the earliest predicted year all of the assessed developments are likely to be completed, to 2046, at which point the first of the identified cumulative developments is anticipated to be decommissioned. Cumulative effects with regard to the peak replacement scenario have not been assessed separately as the identified cumulative developments are not anticipated to require significant rebuilding or replacement activities to occur. This also applied to solar PV and BESS developments, which due to their differing commencement and operational periods, are not likely to have significantly overlapping replacement schedules (if needed at all) that would be likely to generate significant cumulative effects with the Scheme.

Table 10: Cumulative Project Operation and Maintenance Assumptions

Project	Cumulative Site ID	Operational Timescale	Net Direct Employment	Indirect and Induced Employment	Agricultural Employment	Tourism Employment
Lime Down Solar Park (the Scheme)	n/a	2029-2089	4	5	-20	-11
Stanbridge Park, Sherston	3	2028-	0	0	0	0
Sherston GP Surgery	5	2027-	12	14	0	0
Land at the Street, Hullavington	58	2029-	0	0	0	0
Hullavington Barracks	93	2026-	0	0	0	0
Patterdown Road, Chippenham	101	2028-	0	0	0	0
Chippenham Bypass Phase 4 and 5	103	2026-	0	0	-1	-1
Hunters Moon Phase 6	105	2028-	0	0	0	0
Melksham North Solar	123/244	2027-2067	2	1	-4	-1
Melksham National Grid Cable	129	2026-	0	0	0	0
Minety 2 BESS	206	2026-2046	1	1	0	0
8 Tiddlywink BESS	207/208	2026-2066	2	2	0	0
Five Lanes Solar Project	218/234	2025-2065	2	1	-2	0
Leigh Delamere Solar Farm	221	no info	1	1	-2	0
Woolley Park Farm	224	2026-2066	2	2	-1	0
Whistle Mead Solar Farm	225/277	2027-2067	2	1	-2	0
Studley Solar Farm	226	2027-2067	1	1	-2	0
Lawn Farm	229	2027-2067	2	1	-1	0
Minety Solar Farm	231	2027-2067	2	1	-2	0
Pond Lane BESS	237	2026-2046	1	1	0	0
Stonehill BESS	240	2026-2046	1	1	0	0

Project	Cumulative Site ID	Operational Timescale	Net Direct Employment	Indirect and Induced Employment	Agricultural Employment	Tourism Employment
Somerford Farm BESS	241	2026-2066	1	1	0	0
Milou Cable	242	2027-	0	0	0	0
Red Barn Solar	243	2027-2067	2	1	-1	0
Swallett Energy Park	254	2028-2068	1	1	0	0
Chippenham Site Allocation CH1	256	2038-	1,300	1,450	-6	-2
WCS Chippenham Employment Sites	260	no info	1,900	2,100	0	-1
Chapel Knapp BESS	310	2026-2066	1	1	0	0
Saltersford Lane	319	2029-	0	0	0	0
Corsham Road, Whitley	328	2029-	0	0	0	0
Shaw BESS	333	2027-2067	2	2	0	0
Allington North Solar	346	2028-2068	1	1	-1	0
Kingway Nurseries	357	2029-	134	150	-2	0
Brockleaze BESS	358	2028-	1	1	0	0
Total	n/a	2038-2046	3,340	3,750	-48	-17

Socio-Demographic Effects

1.5.33 **Table 10** above sets out the estimated net direct employment anticipated to be generated by the identified cumulative developments. This difference accounts for “leakage” of commuters from outside the 20 km Study Area, and for a long-term displacement of approximately 25% of existing employment within the 20 km Study Area.

1.5.34 Due to the largely permanent or long-term nature of the jobs anticipated to be generated by the cumulatively assessed developments, it is not anticipated that there will be any substantial uplift in temporary or inbound workers that would have more than a negligible magnitude change to any socio-demographic receptor. Resultantly, cumulative changes to the demographic profile of the 20 km Study Area are anticipated to be a

neutral effect overall to a population of medium sensitivity (as set out in paragraph 1.3.4). Changes to the demographic profile of the 20 km Study Area from increased working opportunities are likely to negligibly improve resident age and health demography. Respectively, these are medium and low in sensitivity, resulting in a cumulative long-term **minor beneficial effect** (not significant) to the population age demography, and a long-term **negligible beneficial effect** (not significant) to the self-assessed health demography in the Study Area. None of these effects are significant, but are anticipated to be greater in significance than for the Scheme assessed in isolation.

1.5.35 Cumulative requirements for temporary accommodation are therefore anticipated to be minimal, and therefore of no greater than a negligible magnitude impact on the local private rental accommodation market. This would therefore constitute no more than a cumulative long-term **minor adverse effect**, which is not significant.

1.5.36 Cumulative impacts on skills and qualification attainment in the 20 km Study Area are likely to be substantially greater than assessed for the Scheme in isolation due to the prevalence of employment opportunities that are likely to induce apprenticeships, training opportunities, and the requirement for specialist skills training, as supported by additional enhancement measures in the **Outline SSCEP [EN010168/APP/7.20]**. Conservatively, this is estimated to have a low magnitude impact on skills and qualification attainment in the 20 km Study Area, where the population is of medium sensitivity to change. As such, the cumulative operation and maintenance phase of the identified developments is anticipated to have up to a cumulative long-term **moderate-minor beneficial effect** (not significant) on skills and qualification attainment in the Study Area.

Economic Effects

1.5.37 The total cumulative net direct employment generated in the 20 km Study Area is anticipated to generate an uplift of 3,340 FTE jobs and £256 million GVA per annum from 2038 until 2046. The proposed uplift from this anticipated net direct employment equivalent to a 0.35% uplift in employment and in GVA per annum to the economy of the 20 km Study Area (valued in 2023 at £73.6 billion GVA per annum).

1.5.38 A further uplift in employment and economic prosperity through indirect and induced employment and economic benefits associated with the cumulative operational period, is estimated to generate a further 3,750 FTE jobs at a value of up to £287 million GVA per annum.

1.5.39 As identified during the cumulative construction period, the identified cumulative developments are anticipated to generate a permanent

adverse impact on the agricultural industry in the Study Area. By 2038, this equates to a loss of approximately 48 FTE jobs to the agriculture industry, worth £1.49 million GVA per annum, equivalent to 0.20% of the sector value in the 20 km Study Area.

1.5.40 Impacts from changes to landscape views and use and enjoyment of attractions and recreational facilities as a result of the cumulative developments, are anticipated to negatively impact the prosperity of the local tourism economy in the Study Area in the long-term. This impact is estimated to cause an annual loss of up to £616,000 in visitor spending, resulting in the loss of 17 FTE jobs in tourism-dependent sectors. This is equivalent to approximately 0.24% of this sector's employment and economic performance within the 5 km Study Area of the Scheme.

1.5.41 The accommodation sector, where not affected by losses due to reduced visitor spending, is only likely to minimally benefit from inbound workers requiring accommodation. Benefits from increased business travel and associated overnight stays attributed to new employment development may have some beneficial effect, however this has not been quantified for the purpose of this assessment.

Table 11: Sector Employment and GVA per Annum as a Result of the Cumulative Construction Phase

Economic Area	20 km Study Area Employment	GVA per worker	20 km Study Area GVA
Net Direct Scheme Employment	3,340	£76,501	£256,000,000
Indirect and Induced Scheme Employment	3,750	£76,501	£287,000,000
Agriculture (Direct and Indirect)	-43	£30,989	-£1,490,000
Tourism	-17	£35,240	-£616,000
Total Net Employment	7,030	n/a	£540,000,000

1.5.42 The resultant cumulative changes to employment and GVA in the 20 km Study Area as a result of the full operation and maintenance workforce of the identified cumulative developments are therefore estimated to be an uplift of 7,030 FTE jobs per annum generating £540 million GVA per annum in the 20 km Study Area during the greatest cumulative operational period. This therefore represents a low magnitude 0.73% increase in employment (from the 2023 baseline of 963,000 total workers) and in

economic performance (from the 2023 baseline of £73.6 billion GVA per annum) within the 20 km Study Area.

1.5.43 As a result of the level of resilience in the 20 km Study Area to changes to employment and economic factors, these receptors are of a low sensitivity to change. Resultantly, there is anticipated to constitute cumulative long-term **minor beneficial effects** (not significant) to both employment and the labour force, and the local economy and prosperity in the Study Area.

Tourism and Recreation

1.5.44 Within the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas for tourism and recreation receptors of local and regional importance respectively, there is anticipated to be some degree of cumulative effect as a result of the operation and maintenance of the Scheme and the location of other identified developments during their operational and maintenance or occupational lifetime. Effects to the tourism economy have already been explored in the Study Area for socio-economic effects at paragraph 1.5.40 above, while the likely long-term direct impacts as a result of cumulative landscape and land use impacts on the use, enjoyment and desirability of tourism and recreation facilities are set out below.

1.5.45 As during construction, of the identified cumulative developments, those likely to have the greatest cumulative operational impacts are those located in more concentrated clusters in the south of Chippenham, and near to the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation. It should be noted that this corresponds with the Cable Route Corridor, which is unlikely to generate any effects on tourism and recreation receptors during operation. As such, the identified cumulative effects are in most instances generated solely by other developments, rather than in addition to the effects from the Scheme. Where developments are likely to be completed ahead of the Scheme's construction, these have already been considered as part of the future baseline assessment.

1.5.46 Cumulative visual and land use impacts during the operational lifetime of the Scheme are not anticipated to have cumulative effects of any greater significance than the Scheme in isolation for nationally and regionally important tourism and visitor attractions in the 5 km Study Area. This is considered for individual receptors, and to nationally and regionally important tourism and visitor attractions overall in the 5 km Study Area.

1.5.47 That notwithstanding, the cumulatively assessed developments are anticipated to have non-significant cumulative effects on ten of the locally important tourism destination assessed, largely as a result of operational effects in proximity to the Cable Route Corridor. These receptors are the Lowdon Garden Centre, and the conservation areas of Allington, Atworth, Bowden Hill, Corsham, Easton, Gastard, Leigh Delamere, Sevington, and

Yatton Keynell. The greatest significance of cumulative effect to any assessed receptor in the 2 km Study Area is a cumulative long-term **moderate-minor adverse effect** to Rodbourne Conservation Area. This is not a significant effect. As a result of the cumulative effects to individual receptors near to the Cable Route Corridor, it is anticipated that there will be a change to the overall significance of effect to local tourism destinations in the 2 km Study Area to a cumulative long-term **negligible adverse effect** (not significant).

1.5.48 Cumulative operational effects on parks and nature reserves are limited to a cumulative long-term **minor adverse effect** on Corsham Park (not a significant effect), solely as a result of views of developments to the south of Chippenham, and the respective change in landscape character to the parkland. No cumulative effect is anticipated to parks and nature reserves overall in the 2 km Study Area

1.5.49 The cumulative operational phase of the identified projects is likely to increase impacts on 19 PRoWs, largely as a result of visual impacts but also to a small extent due to increased occupational traffic flows. The effects are solely the result of other developments as the Cable Route Corridor is not anticipated to have any effect on PRoWs during the Scheme's operational lifetime. The individual cumulative effects to PRoWs are not significant (no greater than a long-term **moderate-minor adverse effect** to footpath WT|HULL|29). These effects are not significant, are no higher than the significance of effects from the Scheme assessed in isolation, and affect only a small proportion of the assessed PRoWs, permissive routes and highways in the 2 km Study Area. As such, these are not anticipated to change the overall significance of effect to PRoWs within the 2 km Study Area.

1.5.50 As during construction, cumulative operational effects on the recreational use of the local highway network are not anticipated to be of a greater significance than the Scheme in isolation.

1.5.51 Only two long-distance recreational routes: the Long Path, and Sustrans Cycle Route 403 are anticipated to experience any cumulative effects during the cumulative operational phase. These effects are up to cumulative long-term **moderate-minor adverse effects** as a result of cumulative developments. As for PRoWs, these effects are not significant, and at worst are no greater than the Scheme as assessed in isolation. This is however anticipated to change the overall significance of effects on assessed long-distance recreational routes in the 5 km Study Area to an overall cumulative long-term **minor adverse effect** (also not significant).

1.5.52 As during construction, recreational waterbodies and aviation centres are not anticipated to experience any cumulative operational effects due to

distance and lack of intervisibility between cumulative developments. As such, no cumulative effects have been identified in the 5 km Study Area.

1.5.53 With regard to organised recreational sports grounds, there is potential for non-significant cumulative operational effects on Chippenham Gold Centre, Whitley Cricket Ground, and Whitley Golf Club, anticipated to experience no more than long-term cumulative **minor adverse effects**, as a result of changes to views from these receptors, albeit not including of the Scheme. These effects are not significant, and as such are not anticipated to increase the overall significance of effect on organised recreational sports grounds in the 2 km and 5 km Study Areas.

1.5.54 Of the identified youth recreation and play areas, only Coppershell and Hilltop Park likely to experience any cumulative effects during the cumulative operational phase, as a result of potential increases in demand and traffic inputs in Gastard and Methuen Park respectively. As such, up to cumulative long-term **minor adverse effects** are anticipated on these receptors. This is not significant, but is anticipated to increase the overall significance of effect to youth recreation and play areas in the 2 km Study to a cumulative long-term **negligible adverse effect** (not significant).

1.5.55 Cumulative effects on equestrian facilities are likely to be minimal, and are anticipated only to affect only Catridge Farm, Lacock, First Lane paddocks, Whitley, and Poplar Farm, Shaw, as a result of the visual impacts on hacking routes from energy and residential development in Whitley and nearby to the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation. These are anticipated to be no greater than a cumulative long-term **minor adverse effect** at any location, which is not significant. As a result of the minimal nature of these cumulative effects, the significance of effect on equestrian facilities overall within the 2 km Study Area is not anticipated to increase above a cumulative long-term **negligible adverse effect** (not significant).

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