



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio



Planning Inspectorate

Application by Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited for an order granting development consent for the Oxfordshire Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

The Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ1): Issued on 8 October 2026

Responses are due by deadline 2: 26 October 2026

The following table sets out the Examining Authority's (ExA's) written questions and requests for information - ExQ1. If necessary, the examination timetable enables the ExA to issue a further round of written questions in due course. If this is done, the further round of questions will be referred to as ExQ2.

Questions are set out using an issues-based framework derived from the initial assessment of principal issues provided as **annex C** to the [Rule 6 Letter](#) dated 24 August 2026. Questions have been added to the framework of issues set out there as they have arisen from representations and to address the assessment of the application against relevant policies.

Note about Q1.9.1. This question is for the applicant and the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCB). They are asked to review the ExA's position summary table at annex A and make any amendment through tracked changes to the Microsoft Word version.

Column 2 of the table indicates which interested parties (IPs) and other persons each question is directed to. The ExA would be grateful if all persons named could answer all questions directed to them, providing a substantive response, or indicating that the question is not relevant to them for a reason. This does not prevent an answer being provided to a question by a person to whom it is not directed, should the question be relevant to their interests.

Each question has a unique reference number which starts with 1 (indicating that it is from ExQ1) and then has an issue number and a question number. When you are answering a question, please start your answer by quoting the unique reference number.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI) in casework evidence

If you use AI to create your submission, you should tell us that you have done this. You should specify which systems or tools you have used, the source of the information that the AI system has based its content on, and what information the AI has been used to create or alter. Further information can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's [guidance](#). By following this guidance, you will help the ExA to understand the origin



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and accuracy of the information submitted, thereby supporting fair and impartial decision-making. **If you do not declare the use of AI in any evidence submission where it has been used or remove evidence such as watermarks, we reserve the right to reject the submission.**

You should respond to the questions by using the **Have your say** function on the [project page of the National Infrastructure website](#) and selecting 'Responses to Examining Authority's First Written Questions (ExQ1)' when asked.

If you are responding to a small number of questions, you can submit your answers by choosing 'Make a comment' and entering your answers in the 'Your comments' box. If you are answering a larger number of questions you should download a copy of the Microsoft Word version of the document, enter your answers and save the document using an appropriate file name. You can then submit the completed document by selecting 'Upload files'.

Microsoft Word version: [Examining Authority's Written Questions 1 \(ExQ1\) - Word version \(Word, 227KB\)](#)



Abbreviations used:

Art	article	LLFA	Lead Local Flood Authority
ALA1981	Acquisition of Land Act 1981	LIR	the Local Impact Report
AoD	Above Ordnance Datum	LHA	Local Highway Authority
AP	Affected Person	LPA	local planning authority
BMV	Best and Most Versatile	LVIA	Landscape and Visual Assessment
BoR	the Book of Reference	m	metre
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method	MPO	The Infrastructure Planning (Model Provisions) Order 2009
CA	compulsory acquisition	MSRR	Middleton Stoney Relief Road
CDC	Cherwell District Council	NE	Natural England
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
CMP	Carbon Management Plan	NNNPS	National Networks National Policy Statement
CPO	compulsory purchase order	NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
CO₂	Carbon Dioxide	NTS	Non-technical summary
dDCO	the draft Development Consent Order	OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
EA	the Environment Agency	PA2008	Planning Act 2008
EM	the Explanatory Memorandum	P-CEMP	Phase-specific Construction Environmental Management Plan
EMG2	East Midlands Gateway 2	PRoW	Public Right of Way
EPC	Energy Performance Certificate	PV	Photovoltaics
ES	the Environmental Statement	R	requirement



EIA	Equality Impact Assessment	SAC	Special Area of Conservation
ExA	Examining Authority	SNCB	Statutory Nature Conservation Body
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment	SI	statutory instrument
GI	Green Infrastructure	SoR	Statement of Reason
GIA	Gross Internal Area	SoS	secretary of state
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle	sqm	square metre
HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment	SRFI	Strategic Rail Freight Interchange
HPLR	Heyford Park Link Road	SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
IP	Interested Parties	TP	temporary possession
IVC	In-Vessel Composting	UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
kWh	Kilowatt-hour	ZTV	Zone of theoretical influence

The Examination Library

References in these questions set out in square brackets (for example [APP-010]) are to documents catalogued in the Examination Library. The Examination Library can be obtained from the following link: [Examination Library](#)

It will be updated as the examination progresses.

Citation of questions

Questions in this table should be cited as follows:

Question reference: issue reference: question number, for example Q1.1.1 – refers to question 1 in this table.



Index

1. General and cross-topic questions.....	6
2. Air Quality	6
3. Climate change	6
4. Compulsory acquisition, temporary possession and other land or rights considerations	7
5. The draft Development Consent Order (DCO)	8
6. Design.....	10
7. Ecology and nature conservation	11
8. Geology and ground conditions	13
9. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).....	17
10. Historic environment.....	17
11. Landscape and visual, including lighting.....	18
12. Materials and Waste	22
13. Need, location and delivery	24
14. Noise and vibration	26
15. Socio-economics and health	27
16. Soil resources and agricultural land.....	28
17. Traffic and transport	28
18. Water environment	31

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
1. General and cross-topic questions		
Q1.1.1	All IPs	National Planning Policy Framework All parties are requested to consider the National Planning Policy Framework published on 17 August 2026 and set out if and how any changes in government policy, would affect the consideration of the proposed developments.
2. Air Quality		
Q1.2.1	The applicant	Transition to low-emission rail freight technologies Paragraph 4.6.11 of ES chapter 4 Air Quality and Odour [APP-172] states that <i>“for the purpose of the assessment, no mitigation measures relevant to operational phase rail emissions were included within the proposed development. However, it is expected that emissions reductions will be delivered in the near future as cleaner locomotives come online.”</i> Could the applicant explain how it would facilitate the adoption of cleaner rail freight locomotive technologies in the future?
3. Climate change		
Q1.3.1	The applicant	BREEAM rating across the proposed buildings Paragraph 15.5.4 of ES chapter 15 Climate Change [APP-183] states that <i>“buildings will target Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ‘A+’ rating and achieve a minimum of ‘Excellent’ BREEAM.”</i> Could the applicant describe the actions it would take to ensure that ‘Excellent’ BREEAM rating is achieved across all proposed buildings, and identify the mechanisms that would be used to secure and maintain this rating?
Q1.3.2	The applicant	Operational energy implications of refrigerated warehouse buildings It is mentioned in paragraph 15.5.54 of ES chapter 15 Climate Change [APP-183] that <i>“the Main Site warehouse building operational intensity has been calculated as 30 kWh/m² GIA per year. As such, the operational energy intensity for the proposed development meets the Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standards’ limits for unrefrigerated warehouses.”</i> Could the applicant demonstrate the anticipated operational energy demand should the proposed warehouse buildings require refrigeration, and explain how this would affect overall energy consumption and associated emissions?
Q1.3.3	The applicant	Carbon Management Plan Paragraph 15.6.4 of ES chapter 15 Climate Change [APP-183] explains that <i>“while the applicant will seek to deploy measures contained in the Carbon Management Plan to the extent possible, it may not be feasible to deploy every measure, for reasons such as impact on cost, delivery programme and local availability of materials. As such, the Principal Contractor, informed by the Carbon Management Plan, will be responsible for achieving the applicant’s sustainability requirements.”</i> Could the applicant identify the measures within the Carbon Management Plan [APP-305] to which it would be committed, and clarify how these measures would be secured through the development process and monitored, maintained, and enforced over the lifetime of the development? Could the applicant also explain how compliance with the mitigation measures assigned to the Principal Contractor would be monitored and enforced?
Q1.3.4	The applicant	Implementation and enforceability of green lease clause It is specified in Table 2.6 (paragraph 2.2.4) of ES Appendix 15.5 Carbon Management Plan (CMP) [APP-305] that <i>“the applicant will explore the inclusion of green clauses within tenant leases, where possible. Occupants will then be responsible for complying with such green lease clauses as set out within their lease agreements. Such clauses may include (subject to feasibility and tenant agreement) commitments by the tenant to ensure efficient use of energy within the buildings and prioritising the use of renewable energy; and commitments by the applicant to enable utility consumption monitoring and provide a tenant forum to review and agree targets and strategies to improve environmental performance.”</i> Could the applicant confirm whether all green clauses would be subject to tenant agreement and, if not, identify which clauses would be mandatory within the tenancy agreements?
Q1.3.5	The applicant	Low impact refrigerants Paragraph 6.3 of Appendix B (Mountpark Sustainable Procurement Plan) of ES Appendix 15.5 (CMP) [APP-305] states that <i>“currently, typical refrigerants used in building cooling systems are major greenhouse gases that are many times more potent than carbon dioxide in</i>

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
		<i>their contribution to global warming and climate change. These have been dramatically improved over the years, from R22 which had a Global Warming Potential (GWP) of 1810 to the latest gases such as R32 with a GWP of 675. There are more efficient refrigerants currently in research, but are not yet commercially available, such as ammonia and CO₂.</i> Could the applicant confirm whether it would be willing to investigate and, where feasible, adopt the most up-to-date low-impact refrigerants available at the time of development completion, beyond the currently proposed R32 refrigerant? If so, could the applicant explain how the selection, implementation, monitoring and ongoing compliance of such refrigerants would be secured and enforced?
Q1.3.6	The applicant	Post occupancy energy review It is mentioned in paragraph 12.5.1 of Appendix C (Mountpark's Example Developer's Specification) of ES Appendix 15.5 (CMP) [APP-305] that <i>"the Contractor shall commission and pay for the nominated energy assessor (Employer to approve i.e. Ramboll or similar approved) to report on the actual energy consumption after 12 months occupancy compared to the design predictions and targets set out in the design stage operational energy modelling."</i> Could the applicant explain how compliance with the mitigation measures assigned to the Principal Contractor would be monitored and enforced?
Q1.3.7	The applicant	Installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels on available roof space of warehouse units Could the applicant confirm what mechanisms, commitments or requirements would ensure that solar PV panels are installed on the roofs of all proposed buildings, noting paragraph 15.5.4 of ES chapter 15 Climate Change [APP-183] which states that <i>"the structural design of the warehouse units allows for 100% of usable roof areas to be covered by solar PV to enable the buildings to be 'future proofed' should there be additional demand for renewable energy on-site, and where there is capacity within the grid to accommodate such additional generated renewable electricity"</i>? Could the applicant also clarify why solar PV panels are not proposed across the entirety of the available roof area, and provide the rationale for the proportion of roof space that would remain unutilised for solar energy generation?
4. Compulsory acquisition, temporary possession and other land or rights considerations		
Q1.4.1	The applicant	Clarification: Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker and Statement of Reasons In the Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker [APP-146] on pages 24 and 25, and in Appendix 2 to the Statement of Reasons [APP-143] pages 77 and 78, under Temporary Possession, the land interests shown buff coloured in column 1 are presumably intended to be coloured yellow to match the Land plan. Please confirm.
Q1.4.2	The applicant	Clarification: Statement of Reasons Paragraph 3.3 of the Statement of Reasons [APP-143] states that <i>"The Order limits define the area within which the works authorised by the Order may be carried out."</i> This is in agreement with the definitions of Order land (an area of land) and Order limits (a line) given in the DCO. Paragraph 5.7 of the Statement of Reasons [APP-143] states that <i>"... the land on which the authorised development may be carried out is referred to as the "Order limits" and is shown by a red line on the Works Plans ..."</i>. Noting that plots of land on the Land plan are also delineated by a red line, should paragraph 5.7 of the Statement of Reasons be deleted (save for the final sentence) to avoid confusion? Or, in the alternative, should it be reworded for clarity and consistency to say <i>"... the land on which the authorised development may be carried out is referred to as being within the "Order limits" which are shown by a red line on both the Land plan and the Works plan ..."</i>?
Q1.4.3	The applicant	Clarification: Statement of Reasons Paragraph 4.13 of the Statement of Reasons [APP-143] says that <i>"Section 6 of this Statement sets out the justification for seeking compulsory acquisition powers in respect of the Order land and in so doing explains how the statutory conditions for including compulsory acquisition powers in the DCO are met and how the considerations set out in the CLG guidance have been taken into account"</i> but section 6 is a brief section about categories of Order land. Should this reference be to section 7 of the Statement of Reasons? If so, it would assist the ExA if you could please point to your explicit conclusions as to how the tests in sections 122 and 123 of the Planning Act 2008 are met.
Q1.4.4	The applicant	Clarification: Statement of Reasons In paragraph 7.32.15 of the Statement of Reasons [APP-143], should "Work No 24" read "Work No 23"? Please clarify.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.4.5	The applicant Statutory undertakers	Clarification: Statutory Undertakers' Works Paragraph 3.55 of the Planning Statement [APP-161] states that <i>"The Proposed Development includes or requires the delivery of works to various utilities networks, both 'off-site' and within the Application Site"</i> . Please explain which works are "included" and which are "required", where they are specified and how this affects your case for acquisition of the necessary land and/or rights. Statutory undertakers are invited to comment.
Q1.4.6	The applicant	Procedure for implementation of compulsory acquisition powers Paragraph 5.5 of the Statement of Reasons [APP-143] states that <i>"Provisions are also included to enable implementation of the compulsory acquisition by way of either the notice of entry and notice to treat procedure or the general vesting procedure."</i> Is one preferable to the other and, if so, in what circumstances?
Q1.4.7	The applicant	Funding of compulsory acquisition Paragraph 5.8 of the Funding Statement [APP-144] refers to compensation and paragraph 5.9 says that <i>"The remainder of the land acquisition and any claims for blight that may be submitted is also expected to be funded by the Applicant ..."</i> Paragraph 7.1 states that <i>"In the event any claims for blight arise the cost of meeting any valid claim will be met by the Applicant."</i> Please explain what you mean by <i>"is also expected to"</i> and confirm that all compulsory acquisition will be funded by the applicant.
Q1.4.8	The applicant	Funding the proposed development With reference to paragraph 6.2 of the Funding Statement [APP-144], please explain which of the mechanisms mentioned would be considered and which might be used, and give details of what other business models you envisage might be used.
Q1.4.9	The applicant	Compensation: guarantees Article 41 lists the relevant provisions: see also paragraph 5.11 of the Funding Statement [APP-144]. - Article 31 also contains powers to override easements and other rights, and Article 31(1)(a) in particular, but is not listed in Article 41. Please explain. - do the parties consider that 15 years from the exercise of the relevant power is a reasonable/sufficient time for the guarantee or other form of security to be in place?
Q1.4.10	The applicant	Book of Reference: plots 2/4 and 2/10 We note your response in Part 1C of Document 9.1 [PDA-007] to the representation by Savills on behalf of Meyrick-Jones LLP [RR-096] in respect of a change to the registered proprietor (see sheet 2 of the Land Plan). Please advise when the revised Book of Reference will be submitted into the examination.
Q1.4.11	All parties	New public rights of way (PRoW) All parties are invited to comment on the applicant's decision to acquire a right over the land rather than the freehold, noting paragraph 12.8 of the Statement of Reasons [APP-143] in respect of dedication agreements.
Q1.4.12	The applicant	Equality impact assessment Paragraph 1.6 of the Equality Impact Assessment [AS-086] states that <i>"Types of equality effects considered are either differential or disproportionate ..."</i> and paragraph 1.7 says that <i>"where possible and applicable whether the Proposed Development will have a positive, neutral or negative effect ..."</i> : paragraph 4.1 refers to the construction phase and paragraph 4.2 refers to the operational phase. - are the tables in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 referring to the residual effects of the impacts considered? - where is the mitigation for each of the identified impacts secured?
5. The draft Development Consent Order (DCO)		
Q1.5.1	The applicant	Article 2 - Commence Under the definition of 'commence' in Article 2 (interpretation) of the dDCO [APP-139], reference is made in (i) to the <i>'....redevelopment of the threshing barn....'</i> . As drafted, this could be interpreted as allowing the redevelopment works to proceed as pre-commence works. Can the applicant explain and justify the wording. How does this wording fit with R15?

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.5.2	The applicant	Article 4 Explain and justify how the limits of deviation in 2(a), (b), (c) and (d) were identified. How have these limits been assessed on the Environmental Statement?
Q1.5.3	The applicant	Article 5 Explain what is meant by ‘...for any purpose ancillary to those purposes.’ at the end of Article 5.
Q1.5.4	The applicant	Article 23 Article 23 (Authority to survey and investigate land) includes no precise definition or boundary of where the power applies. Provide more explanation and justify why the power is required and how its application can be controlled. The ExA also notes that the Article only requires the operator to compensate owners and occupiers for any loss or damage, but does not include any requirement to make good any damage caused. Explain and justify why this is not included.
Q1.5.5	The applicant	Article 25 A number of recent NSIP have included within their dDCOs articles similar to Article 25 (Removal of human remains), however these have subsequently been deleted by the relevant SoS. Provide further explanation and justification for the inclusion of this Article.
Q1.5.6	The applicant OCC/CDC	Article 45 Explain the purpose and need for this Article. Does this benefit apply to all land within the Order limits, if so, explain and justify why? With no specific definition of the planning use class for the development contained within the dDCO, explain and justify how this Article would operate in relation to potential permitted development rights? OCC/CDC – Should the dDCO include a provision limiting specific permitted development rights?
Q1.5.7	The applicant	Article 49 Explain how the applicant intends to interpret the phrase ‘...reasonably believes it to be necessary’. The article also includes no requirement to obtain approval from the landowner, provide further justification to why this is not considered to be necessary and provide examples of instances when the power may be required.
Q1.5.8	The applicant OCC/CDC	Article 57 As drafted, no provision is made within Article 57 (Certification of plans and documents) for copies of each of the plans and documents listed in Schedule 16 to be included under Part 2 of the local planning register. The ExA notes that such a provision was recently included within the dDCO for East Midlands Gateway Phase 2 (EMG2). The applicant is asked to review the dDCO for EMG2 and consider whether similar wording should be included within the dDCO for the proposed development. If not, please explain and justify why you consider such drafting is not necessary in this case. OCC/CDC are asked to comment as to whether they would welcome the inclusion of such wording.
Q1.5.9	The applicant	Requirement 5 Explain and justify: - how the figure of 232,258 sqm has been identified and how it would be managed, monitored and enforced and by whom? - what is meant by ‘capable of handling’ and ‘available for use’ and should these not be worded more firmly (ie ‘handling’ and ‘in use’)? - what prevents the warehousing from being developed to the identified figure but the remainder of the scheme, including further rail capacity, not being delivered?
Q1.5.10	The applicant OCC/CDC	Requirement 5 The ExA notes that the wording applied to Northampton Gateway Correction Order [PDA-010], requires the rail infrastructure to be completed prior to the occupation of any warehousing. R5 of the dDCO [APP-139], is structured differently, in that it would allow occupation of warehousing, prior to the delivery of the rail infrastructure. Please explain and justify the approach taken to the drafting of R5. Should the ExA consider that the SoS should be adopting similar wording to that used in the Northampton Gateway Correction Order, provide your position on whether such wording would be acceptable. If not, please explain why. OCC/CDC are invited to comment.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.5.11	The applicant	Requirement 6 Considering the approach adopted by the applicant in R3, explain and justify why the phrase ‘ <i>unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority</i> ’ is necessary in 6(1) and 6(9).
Q1.5.12	The applicant	Requirement 6 In relation to 6(2), explain how the process of preparing and submitting a unit-specific travel plan would work and who would be responsible for its preparation, monitoring and enforcement.
Q1.5.13	OCC CDC	Requirement 6 Does the LPA and LHA consider the timeframes for the implementation of various strategies required by (3) and (4) to be adequately defined. In relation to 6(6) are the LPA and LHA content with the term ‘ <i>reasonable endeavours</i> .’? If not, please explain why and provide alternative wording they would wish to see.
Q1.5.14	The applicant	Requirement 6 Under 6(8), should the words ‘of this Schedule’ be inserted after ‘Part 3’ to provide more clarity?
Q1.5.15	The applicant	Requirement 8 Explain and justify what is meant by ‘ <i>To be completed prior to the occupation of the first warehouse to be occupied</i> ’. Consider whether it would be more clear and precise to reflect the wording used for 13A, which states ‘ <i>To be completed prior to the occupation of the first warehouse.</i> ’ If not, please explain and justify why.
Q1.5.16	The applicant	Requirement 8 Explain and justify why the figures of 185,806 square metres of warehousing plus up to 61,967 square metres of mezzanine floor space have been specifically identified. Why has mezzanine floor space been specifically included? How has this amount of floor space been assessed the ES?
Q1.5.17	The applicant	Requirement 9 Explain what is meant by the wording ‘ <i>from time to time</i> ’ at the end of (4).
Q1.5.18	The applicant	Requirement 11 To be more clear and precise, should (a) include a reference to Appendix 7.6 Outline planting schedule [APP-251]?
Q1.5.19	The applicant	Requirement 16 As currently drafted the requirement refers only to permanent lighting on the main site. Explain how lighting on other parts of the proposed development, would be delivered and controlled to ensure compliance with the outline lighting strategy [APP-256].
Q1.5.20	OCC/CDC	Requirement 25 Is the LPA content with proposed working hours as set out in (1), (3) and (4)? If not, please explain why and provide an alternative form of wording.
Q1.5.21	OCC/CDC	Requirement 26 Is the LPA content with the approach set out by the applicant in this requirement? If not, please explain why and provide an alternative form of words.
6. Design		
Q1.6.1	The applicant OCC/CDC	Good Design The Applicant is directed to the Advice on Good Design published by the Planning Inspectorate and is asked to: - demonstrate how their design process for the proposed development is robust and aligns with the principles of the PINS advice note - explain how it would achieve ‘Good Design’ in accordance with the criteria in section 4 of the NNNPS and the Design Principles for National Infrastructure (National Infrastructure Commission, 2020)

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
		c. signpost how 'Good Design' would be implemented through all stages of the development including post-decision and construction, and how the process for achieving good design would be secured in the dDCO OCC/CDC are asked to comment on the applicant's approach towards the design of the proposed development and whether they consider the applicant's approach aligns with PINS guidance.
Q1.6.2	The applicant	Good Design The Applicant is directed to the Advice on Good Design published by the Planning Inspectorate and is asked to provide clarity on: - the future design development process and which parties would be consulted - whether the proposed development has been through independent design review - the scope and purpose of the detailed design stage and the engagement expected with parties
Q1.6.3	The applicant	Good Design Has a senior member of the project team been appointed as a Design Champion, ensuring that design options are explored, advice taken and decisions made to achieve a well considered and good design? If not, does the applicant consider that there would be merit in doing so, and how would the remit of the Design Champion be secured?
7. Ecology and nature conservation		
Q1.7.1	The applicant	Loss of habitat The ES chapter 6 [APP-174] concludes that significant adverse effects are largely avoided through embedded mitigation and habitat creation proposals. Can the applicant explain: - why the creation of calcareous grassland, lowland meadow and other replacement habitats should be treated as mitigation within the EclA, rather than compensation for unavoidable habitat losses, and what implications this distinction has for the assessment of residual effects and compliance with the mitigation hierarchy? - what evidence demonstrates that these replacement habitats will achieve ecological value equivalent to, or greater than, the habitats being lost, particularly given the time lag, establishment risks and uncertainty associated with habitat creation? - what provisions within the dDCO provide certainty that the compensation habitats will be delivered, monitored, funded and managed for the full intended period, and what enforcement mechanisms are available if habitat creation targets or ecological outcomes are not achieved? - how the SoS can be satisfied that the long-term management commitments will remain effective for the lifetime of the development?
Q1.7.2	The applicant	Ardley Cutting and Quarry SSSI ES chapter 6, paragraph 6.5.39 [APP-174] identifies areas of habitats including other neutral grassland, broadleaved woodland and ponds that would be removed from the SSSI as a result of the proposed development. Can the applicant explain where these habitats have been taken account of in its mitigation plans (ES chapter 7, para 7.6.5 [APP-175]) and green infrastructure calculations (para 6.5.40 [APP-174])?
Q1.7.3	The applicant	Bats ES chapter 6 identifies the Gagle Brook corridor as a key commuting and foraging route for a range of bat species, including barbastelle, and acknowledges that the proposed MSRR would sever this corridor, resulting in a significant adverse effect in the absence of further mitigation. The applicant proposes to mitigate this impact through the provision of an oversized box culvert and green infrastructure intended to encourage bats to pass beneath the new road. Can the Applicant explain: - why a box culvert represents the optimum mitigation solution - what alternatives, including bridge structures and/or road alignments, were assessed and why were these alternatives discounted - what evidence demonstrates that the residual effect on bats will not be materially greater than predicted
Q1.7.4	The applicant	Ancient woodland In Figure 7.3 of the ES [APP-253] and ES Appendix 6.2 [APP-235] all of the ancient woodland mentioned in ES chapter 6 [APP-174] (e.g. at the SSSI and at Padbury Brook) is not shown. The botanical survey of the SSSI [APP-235] also identifies broadleaved woodland, however it does not identify whether this is the ancient woodland that is identified in the description of the SSSI (para 6.4.3 ES chapter 6). Can the applicant provide further clarification.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.7.5	The applicant	Ancient woodland buffer widths The Ecological Assessment identifies several areas of ancient woodland in proximity to the proposed development, along with other ancient woodland parcels. Can the Applicant provide plans identifying the minimum and maximum buffer widths proposed around each area of ancient woodland and explain whether any parts of the buffer will contain infrastructure, drainage features, earthworks, public access routes or habitat creation areas which could themselves alter woodland conditions? Given the scale of development, the introduction of new roads, lighting, earthworks and increased human activity, what evidence supports the conclusion that the proposed buffers will be sufficient to prevent deterioration of ancient woodland habitat quality over time, and what monitoring and intervention measures would be secured through the DCO should adverse edge effects emerge after construction? The ExA also notes the comments from OCC [RR-109] and CDC [RR-024] on the need for 50m buffers. Can the applicant confirm whether a greater buffer could be provided in areas where ancient woodland is present, and what the implications for the design would be. If not, please explain and justify why.
Q1.7.6	The applicant	Ancient woodland ES chapter 6, paragraph 6.3.62 [APP-174] identifies an area of ancient woodland alongside the Padbury Brook Tributary. Within the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), paragraph 21.19 [APP-189], a 10m buffer to the Padbury Brook would be established. Can the applicant confirm whether a greater buffer could be provided in this location and what the implications for the design would be. If not, please explain and justify why.
Q1.7.7	The applicant	Veteran tree The Ecological Assessment identifies a veteran ash tree (T170) as a receptor of national importance and states that it will be retained and protected through the provision of an enhanced root protection buffer and construction controls. Can the applicant: - provide evidence that this buffer is sufficient given the tree's status as irreplaceable habitat, and explain whether any works, access routes, drainage infrastructure, services, lighting or landscape works would be permitted within the buffer area during construction or operation? - explain what provisions within the dDCO, CEMP and any subsequent management plans would secure the protection, monitoring and long-term management of veteran tree T170, and what remedial measures would be implemented if monitoring identifies deterioration in the tree's condition or damage to its veteran features attributable to the proposed development?
Q1.7.8	The applicant	Irreplaceable habitats ES chapter 6 [APP-174] acknowledges impacts to habitats that are identified as irreplaceable or of the highest ecological importance, including ancient woodland and a veteran tree, and relies on avoidance, buffering, habitat creation and long-term management measures to mitigate those effects. Can the Applicant explain how it has demonstrated compliance with the mitigation hierarchy in respect of these irreplaceable habitats, what consideration was given to alternative designs or layouts that would further reduce impacts, and why the ExA should be satisfied that the residual effects have been minimised as far as reasonably possible?
Q1.7.9	The applicant	Lighting The ES identifies a number of protected and notable species, including bats, great crested newts, badgers and breeding birds, which may be sensitive to artificial lighting. Can the Applicant explain how the lighting strategy has been designed to avoid or minimise adverse effects on these species, what evidence demonstrates that predicted lighting levels within retained habitat corridors and ecological buffers would remain below thresholds likely to disturb sensitive species, and why the ExA should be satisfied that the residual effects have been reduced to a non-significant level?
Q1.7.10	The applicant	Lighting and bats The assessment identifies Ashgrove Brook, Gagle Brook and parts of the Ardley Cutting and Quarry SSSI corridor as important bat foraging and commuting routes, including for light-sensitive species such as barbastelle. Can the Applicant explain how the proposed lighting strategy has been tested against the ecological survey data, what maximum light levels would be expected within these corridors, and what monitoring and adaptive management measures would be implemented if post-construction surveys identify evidence of behavioural change or reduced use by bats?

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.7.11	The applicant	Lighting What provisions within the dDCO would secure the detailed design, operation, maintenance and future modification of lighting infrastructure, and how can the ExA be satisfied that future lighting changes, replacement luminaires or operational requirements would not result in increased light spill into ecologically sensitive areas over the lifetime of the development?
Q1.7.12	The applicant	Lighting Has the Applicant assessed the potential cumulative effects of lighting in combination with other sources of artificial illumination in the wider area, including highways infrastructure, neighbouring developments and operational rail freight activities, and if so, what evidence supports the conclusion that sensitive protected species would not experience significant cumulative disturbance?
Q1.7.13	The applicant	Habitat loss Taking account of habitat loss, increased recreational activity and changes in land use across the site, can the applicant explain why the ExA should be satisfied that the proposed mitigation package would maintain the favourable conservation status of notable bird and invertebrate populations, particularly skylark, barn owl and the butterfly assemblages associated with the Ardley Cutting and Quarry SSSI, and identify the mechanisms within the dDCO that would secure monitoring, adaptive management and remedial action should the anticipated ecological outcomes not be achieved?
8. Geology and ground conditions		
Q1.8.1	The applicant	Clarification: non-technical summary The non-technical summary (NTS) [APP-307] appears to contain two paragraphs 1.6.32: please comment and advise. With reference to the second paragraph 1.6.32, given that the NTS [APP-307] is a non-technical document, please explain - what is CL:AIRE:DoW CoP? - who is the Independent Qualified Person? See also paragraph 16.5 of the Construction Environmental Management Plan [APP-189].
Q1.8.2	The applicant Natural England (NE)	Clarification: rock exposure strategy In paragraph 11.2.7 of the ES chapter 11 (Ground Conditions) [APP-179], NE is quoted as saying that it encourages a strategy which maintains integrity and enables re-exposure of stratigraphy if required; also that <i>"The strategy may include works which could ... create new exposures in the rock face ..."</i> . However, in paragraph 11.2.8 of ES chapter 11 the applicant notes that the areas mentioned by NE are not within the designated SSSI and are not publicly accessible, being within a railway cutting. To the applicant: Please confirm that <i>"within a railway cutting"</i> should read <i>"within an operational railway cutting"</i> as distinct from, for example, a disused railway cutting. To NE: Noting that the Unit 3 areas you refer to are not within the SSSI, and noting from our USI that the existing rock faces are within an operational railway cutting, please give examples of circumstances when re-exposure might be required in the future. For example, was the exposure only created when the railway was built? and is there any loss of amenity if exposures are not publicly accessible?
Q1.8.3	The applicant	Clarification: abbreviations There appears to be no glossary of abbreviations in ES chapter 11 (Ground Conditions) [APP-179]. To aid understanding: - in paragraph 11.2.19, what is a 'CSM'? - in paragraph 11.4.36, please confirm that bgl means below ground level.
Q1.8.4	The applicant	Clarification: meanings In relation to ES chapter 11 (Ground Conditions) [APP-179] - In paragraph 11.2.24, please confirm that dermal contact means skin contact. - In paragraph 11.4.36, please confirm that an aquitard is a geological formation which significantly restricts groundwater flow due to its low permeability, and slows the movement of water and contaminants between aquifers/groundwater bodies.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.8.5	The applicant	Clarification: Hazardous Ground Gas Assessment Paragraph 11.4.45 of ES chapter 11 (Ground Conditions) [APP-179], bullet point 4 states that a potential source of hazardous ground gas is at Ardley Wood Landfill approximately 10m north of the Main Site, beyond the railway cutting. Does “beyond” mean to the north or south?
Q1.8.6	The applicant	Clarification: Ardley landfill contamination assessment With reference to paragraph 11.4.58 of the ES chapter 11 [APP-179], please explain what PAHs and VOC are; and their significance in respect of the leachate.
Q1.8.7	The applicant	Clarification: unexploded ordnance (UXO) After ES paragraph 11.4.64 [APP-179] at the foot of page 39, and before paragraph 11.4.65 on page 41, a paragraph numbered 11.4.41 has been inserted at the top of page 40 under this heading. - this appears to be included under the bold Contamination Assessment subheading (page 36): should this be paragraph 11.4.65 rather than 11.4.41, subsequent paragraphs being renumbered to suit? - aside from the risk of explosion, are there any contamination-related hazards associated with UXO? and - if so, what risk rating do they carry?
Q1.8.8	The applicant	Clarification: refuelling areas In ES chapter 11 paragraph 11.5.20 [APP-179], what is meant by "<i>constructed on impermeable cover</i>."?
Q1.8.9	The applicant	Clarification: ES Appendix 11.9 The current version of Appendix 11.9 to the ES is titled “Ardley Trackways Technical Note” and is marked as Rev P05 on the front cover. - as Ardley Trackways is designated as a SSSI, it would assist understanding if this document were titled “Ardley Trackways SSSI Technical Note” - there does not appear to be a tracked change version to enable identification of changes made since issue of revision P02 which was issued with the application (APP-294). Please advise.
Q1.8.10	OCC	Clarification: ES Table 11.3 In ES Table 11.3 [APP-179] OCC says that mitigation is inadequate and is currently considered contrary to NNNPS paragraph 5.916. Should this be a reference to NNNPS paragraph 5.196?
Q1.8.11	The applicant	Remediation of pre-existing ground contamination Reference is made in paragraph 11.2 of the Construction Environment Management Plan [APP-189] to remediation measures to be undertaken in accordance with Requirement 28 (Contamination risk). What is meant by “such time as is appropriate”?
Q1.8.12	The applicant	Remediation of pre-existing ground contamination Reference is made in paragraph 11.4 of the Construction Environment Management Plan [APP-189] to suspected contaminated material uncovered during the works. - What is an “appropriate area”? - how is such an area determined and verified? - what is a suitable strategy? and - what regulations and practice govern this area?
Q1.8.13	The applicant	Pollution and contamination: governance Paragraph 11.10 of the Construction Environment Management Plan [APP-189] refers to daily inspections of watercourse sections located in proximity to construction activities in order to detect any pollution risks, spillages, leaks or non-compliance. Noting that inspection results would be recorded on each occasion, and any requirement for remediation or other necessary action reported immediately to the Project Manager, please explain what happens next.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.8.14	The applicant EA	Groundwater levels In Table 11.2 and paragraph 11.5.7 of the ES [APP-179], EA expresses concerns about impacts on groundwater levels, private water supplies and aquifers; also about encountering Artesian conditions. to the applicant: what progress has been made towards addressing these concerns and agreeing the necessary EA permit? to the EA: noting ES paragraphs 11.4.33 to 11.4.39 and paragraph 11.5.27 [APP-179], does EA have outstanding concerns, for instance in respect of excavation and/or the possible use of piled foundations? In respect of the EA permit to be agreed, please advise on progress.
Q1.8.15	The applicant OCC	Loss of mineral resource In Table 11.3 of ES chapter 11 [APP-179] OCC disagrees with the applicant's estimate of loss of mineral resource due to the proposed development. The parties are invited to comment and give an update on the current position and its relevance to the examination.
Q1.8.16	The applicant	Rochdale envelope In ES paragraph 11.2.15 [APP-179] you say that <i>"This assessment reflects one potential way to construct the earthworks following the Illustrative Masterplan."</i> - how do you know that it is also the way with the greatest potential impacts and/or overall residual effects? - how is the flexibility "built in"?
Q1.8.17	The applicant	Construction sequence In paragraph 11.2.15 of the ES [APP-179] it is stated that <i>"Construction of the rail terminal will commence, and buildings will follow in several phases."</i> Does this mean that rail access would be used to construct the rail terminal and if so how? (for instance if the planned road bypasses are not in place before construction starts.)
Q1.8.18	The applicant	Contamination in the vicinity of Upper Heyford Airfield In ES paragraph 11.4.9 [APP-179] you state that <i>"By the 1980s, several storage tanks were present in the vicinity of the airfield ..."</i>. Upper Heyford airfield was opened for the Royal Flying Corps (later the RAF) in 1916. It was also in extensive use by Bomber Command throughout World War II and by the USAF in the Cold War. - does this mean that significant ground contamination may well predate the 1980s? - has this been taken into account in your assessment?
Q1.8.19	The applicant	Ground investigation We note from ES paragraph 11.4.9 [APP-179] that the ground investigation was conducted back in 2021. - Have there been any significant changes since then (for instance the existing Heyford Park development) which might influence your findings? - Do you expect any significant changes in the future (for instance the planned new town)?
Q1.8.20	The applicant	Ardley landfill: leachate conditions With reference to ES paragraph 11.4.36 - how do you know that the leachate from the landfill material is not polluting the groundwater below? - noting that Gagle Brook runs along the eastern edge of Ardley landfill, has it been tested for leachate?
Q1.8.21	The applicant	Ardley landfill: ground gas With reference to ES paragraphs 11.4.46 and 11.4.62 <i>"the proposed earthworks will disturb current management measures."</i> [APP-179]: - are carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides and particulate matter also present? - what will the effects on current gas management measures be? - how will current gas management measures be managed during excavation and then stabilised afterwards?

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.8.22	The applicant	Ardley landfill: contamination assessment With reference to ES paragraph 11.4.52 [APP-179], please explain how attenuation and dispersion will reduce the concentrations to acceptable levels before the water reaches the aquifer.
Q1.8.23	The applicant	Ashgrove Farm contamination assessment ES paragraph 11.4.52 [APP-179] makes reference to former and current fuel and oil storage uses, and also to the existing IVC Facility currently operated by Biffa and to the underground reservoir and says that these were not accessed. a. how do you know that there is no contamination? b. how has contamination from previous uses been assessed?
Q1.8.24	The applicant	Smiths Ardley Dewars Farm Quarry ES paragraph 11.4.65 [APP-179] states: <i>"The construction of the Middleton Stoney Relief Road will not impact the ability of the existing and operational Ardley/Dewar's Farm Quarry to excavate the full extent of the rock which as (sic) permitted in 2018."</i> Please explain a. the reference to 2018 b. whether this statement will still apply at the time of construction.
Q1.8.25	The applicant	Landfill gases With reference to ES paragraph 11.5.8 [APP-179]: a. are any other gases produced (eg due to partial oxidation, incomplete chemical reactions)? b. if so, are they (like methane) toxic and/or explosive? c. what does the active ground gas management system do at present and how will it be affected? d. will open-air excavation help during construction? and e. what happens during operation of the proposed development?
Q1.8.26	The applicant EA	Ardley Landfill: remediation strategy Paragraph 11.5.9 of the ES [APP-179] says that <i>"For works within Ardley Landfill, a detailed Remediation Strategy will be prepared to meet EA requirements and comply with EA permit / licensing requirements"</i> and that <i>"ES Appendix 13.1 Landfill Reprofilling Technical Note provides an overview of the works proposed."</i> With reference to licensing and any other requirements, what has been agreed, and what is outstanding/not agreed?
Q1.8.27	The applicant	Off site disposal Paragraph 11.5.10 of the ES [APP-179] refers to off site receiver sites. Could the Ardley landfill site and other parts of the proposed development be used to dispose of material without it having to be transported off site?
Q1.8.28	The applicant	Asbestos at Ashgrove Farm Paragraph 11.5.13 of the ES [APP-179] refers to the demolition of existing structures and a pre-demolition asbestos survey. Will this include all asbestos, including in the retained part of Ashgrove Farm? If not, what is proposed?
Q1.8.29	The applicant	Jurassic rock exposure With reference to ES paragraph 11.5.13 [APP-179] and ES Appendix 11.10 [AS-081], some exposed rock face will disappear but some will be created by the proposed development. a. Presumably the rock face was originally exposed when the railway was constructed? b. How do you know that the quality of the newly exposed rock face will be as good as existing and how would this be secured?
Q1.8.30	The applicant	Assessment of likely effects - construction phase Paragraph 11.5.21 of the ES [APP-179] says that there will be <i>..."up to 12.0m of cut required in places."</i> Clarify which places? Our understanding is that there is a maximum of only 8m at Ardley landfill.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.8.31	The applicant	Ardley landfill: variation of current waste licence Paragraph 11.5.24 of the ES [APP-179] says that ...<i>"remodelling of the landfill will be required so that the final developed area of the Application Site does not fall within the EA licensed landfill area. The current proposal ... will require a variation of the current waste license (sic). Discussions have been held with the EA to agree the exact mechanism and requirements for this ..."</i>. - Is this variation temporary or permanent? - Please give an update on the discussions and any requirements, and how and where these are secured.
9. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)		
Q1.9.1	The applicant Natural England	Conclusions Annex I of this document summarises the ExA's understanding of the conclusions of the applicant's HRA screening exercise (from [AS-074]) and the level of agreement with Natural England (as per [RR-101]). Can both parties review the ExA's position summary table and confirm this is an accurate representation or make any amendment through tracked changes to the word version provided (see page 2 for link to word version).
Q1.9.2	The applicant	Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Shadow HRA table 3 [AS-074] suggests that the affected road network lies beyond 200m from the Oxford Meadows SAC; however ES chapter 4 (paragraph 4.2.70) [APP-172] suggests the SAC is located in proximity to multiple affected roads. - Provide figures denoting the (worst case) affected road network for construction and operation in relation to the Oxford Meadows SAC. Clarify in writing whether the affected road network lies within 200m of the SAC during either phase. - Provide a figure of the SAC in relation to the rail routes discussed in Shadow HRA table 3 [AS-074] to evidence scoping out emissions from rail freight.
10. Historic environment		
Q1.10.1	The applicant	NNNPS Can the Applicant explain how the applicant's assessment has demonstrated compliance with paragraph 5.218 of NNNPS, in particular: - how the proposed development would sustain and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of affected heritage assets and the contribution made by their settings - what assessment has been undertaken of the extent to which the conservation of heritage assets would contribute positively to sustainable communities, including economic vitality - how the proposed development would make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment - how considerations of scale, height, massing, alignment, materials, land use and landscaping, including screen planting, have influenced the design of the scheme to avoid, minimise or offset harm to heritage assets and their settings.
Q1.10.2	The applicant	Assessment methodology Table 10.3 of ES chapter 10 [APP-178] defines heritage receptor sensitivity using the categories "<i>High, Moderate, Low, No Importance and Unknown</i>", whereas Table 10.4 [APP-178] assesses significance of effect using the categories "<i>High, Medium, Low and No Importance</i>" for sensitivity. Can the applicant clarify whether the terms "<i>Moderate</i>" and "<i>Medium</i>" are intended to represent the same level of sensitivity? If so, can the applicant explain why different terminology has been used within the assessment and confirm that this has not affected the assessment of effects or the conclusions reached in respect of the significance of impacts on heritage receptors.
Q1.10.3	The applicant	Barn approximately 30m north of Ashgrove Farmhouse (BHR1) ES chapter 10 (Heritage – Built and Archaeology) [APP-178] concludes that the Grade II Listed Barn north of Ashgrove Farmhouse (BHR1) would experience less than substantial harm (paragraph 10.6.5 and Table 10.8) arising principally from the loss of its wider agricultural setting. Can the applicant identify the public benefits relied upon to outweigh that harm, distinguishing between heritage and non-heritage benefits, and explain why those benefits would be sufficient to justify the permanent change to the Barn's historic rural context.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.10.4	The applicant	Barn approximately 30m north of Ashgrove Farmhouse (BHR1) Which specific elements of historic fabric within BHR1 would be lost, altered or replaced as part of the proposed restoration, conversion and change of use? Explain how the applicant has applied a heritage-led design approach to avoid, minimise and justify those interventions, while preserving the building's significance.
Q1.10.5	The applicant	RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area and Ardley Conservation Area Can the applicant explain which aspects of the settings of RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area and Ardley Conservation Area contribute to their significance, how those settings would change as a result of the proposed development, and what mitigation measures are proposed to avoid or minimise harm.
Q1.10.6	The applicant OCC	Archaeology – unsurveyed areas For those parts of the site which could not be evaluated during the pre-application stage due to ecological constraints, what confidence can the applicant provide that the archaeological significance of those areas is adequately understood, and how would any unexpected discoveries be managed through the mitigation strategy? Is the applicant's approach acceptable to OCC?
Q1.10.7	The applicant	Listed building consent Paragraph 10.5.12 of ES chapter 10 [APP-178] states that <i>"the forthcoming Listed Building Consent application will be in accordance with the conclusions of the ES relating to impacts on BHR1"</i>. However, the Other Consents and Licences Statement [APP-160] explains that the DCO would authorise all permanent and temporary works and provide powers intended to remove the need for separate listed building consent. Can the Applicant clarify: - whether a separate Listed Building Consent application is intended to be submitted in relation to the Grade II listed Barn at Ashgrove Farm (BHR1), or whether all proposed works to the listed building would instead be authorised through the dDCO powers - whether any elements of the works to BHR1 are intended to be reserved for subsequent approval, and if so, how the SoS can be satisfied at this stage that the effect of those works on the significance of the listed building has been properly assessed - how the proposed works affecting BHR1 have been assessed and secured through the dDCO, and whether the level of detail currently provided is equivalent to that which would ordinarily accompany an application for listed building consent.
11. Landscape and visual, including lighting		
Q1.11.1	The applicant	Assessment methodology The LVIA methodology, as set out in ES chapter 7 [APP-175], indicates that only major and major/moderate effects were considered significant, with effects assessed as moderate not generally treated as significant. For all those effects which have been identified as being moderate landscape or visual, explain and justify why each one is considered not to be significant.
Q1.11.2	The applicant	Zone of Theoretical Influence The submitted ZTV in ES Appendix 7.4 [APP-249] identified that the proposed development would be visible from across a relatively extensive area, with the supporting text explaining that the ZTV is based on the Parameters Plan [AS-008]. Can the applicant explain how the ZTV has been prepared, what assumptions have been made and how it reflects the intended changes of levels that the applicant has identified would be introduced with the proposed development. In addition, it would assist ExA if the ZTV could include range rings (1km, 2km etc from the site) to help understand the extent of the likely visibility. It would also be helpful to show on a single drawing, using different colours to clarify, where construction and operational impacts overlap or otherwise.
Q1.11.3	The applicant	Green Infrastructure The ExA notes that paragraph 7.5.73 of ES chapter 7 [APP-175] identifies that the proposed development would include extensive landscape and Green Infrastructure (GI) setting (or 'framework') extending to around 60% of the total application site area. Can the applicant provide further clarification on the GI aspects of the proposed development, in particular whether any consideration has been given to the multifunctionality of the proposed greenspace.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.11.4	The applicant	Building heights The ExA notes that the Parameters Plan [AS-008] refers to height above AOD. The ExA consider it would be helpful to add maximum building heights to the schedule of development parameters. Similarly, for the proposed landscape bunds, this is shown in mAOD and does not provide the actual height of the bunds, nor the surrounding levels. To enable an understanding of how high the proposed bunds would be, the ExA considers maximum heights of the bunds should be provided.
Q1.11.5	The applicant	Avoidance of adverse effects NNNPS paragraph 5.177 states that, in relation to locally important landscape areas, consideration should be given to whether the project has been carefully designed, taking account of environmental effects on the landscape and relevant siting, operational and other constraints, in order to avoid adverse effects or minimise harm, including through appropriate mitigation. Can the applicant explain how the design of the proposed development has sought to avoid adverse effects on locally important landscape areas in the first instance, and minimise remaining harm through the application of the mitigation hierarchy? In particular: - what alternative site layouts, parameters, land uses, building heights, infrastructure alignments, or operational arrangements were considered to reduce landscape effects on locally important landscape areas? - what landscape constraints informed the evolution of the design, and how have these influenced the final scheme? - how has the applicant demonstrated that opportunities to avoid or reduce landscape harm through design have been fully explored before reliance on mitigation measures? - what evidence supports the conclusion that the current proposals represent the least harmful practicable option from a landscape perspective, having regard to operational and other relevant constraints? - where significant adverse landscape and visual effects remain, why does the applicant consider that these effects could not reasonably have been avoided or further minimised through changes to the design of the proposed development?
Q1.11.6	The applicant	Landscape change Paragraph 7.5.84 of ES chapter 7 [APP-175] states that the proposed green infrastructure would result in a beneficial landscape cover change because land currently in arable agricultural use would be replaced by habitats including native woodland, scrub and species-rich grassland. Can the applicant explain the basis for concluding that the replacement of arable farmland with these habitats should be regarded as a beneficial landscape change and, in particular: - what assessment has been undertaken to determine that the loss of arable farmland represents a landscape benefit rather than a landscape change with both beneficial and adverse characteristics? - how has the applicant taken account of the contribution that existing arable farmland makes to the character, pattern, openness and rural qualities of the receiving landscape? - does the applicant consider that the replacement of a substantial area of agricultural land with woodland, scrub and other habitat types would alter the existing rural and agricultural character of the area and, if so, how has this been reflected in the assessment? - what evidence supports the conclusion that the proposed habitats would be more consistent with the existing landscape character than the current arable land use? in reaching the conclusion that the change would be beneficial, what consideration was given to any receptors who may value the existing farmed landscape character and the contribution of arable farmland to local landscape distinctiveness?
Q1.11.7	The applicant	Visual impact NNNPS paragraph 5.178 states that the SoS would need to determine whether the visual effects on sensitive receptors, outweigh the benefits of the proposed development. Can the applicant explain how its assessment assists the SoS in undertaking this balancing exercise and, in particular: - how has the applicant identified and assessed the visual effects on sensitive receptors, including residents, users of public rights of way, and visitors to the local area? - what consideration has been given to the extent to which the magnitude, duration and geographical extent of visual effects may influence the weight that should be attributed to those effects in the overall planning balance?

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
		c. how has the applicant assessed the combined effects of multiple elements of the proposed development on individual visual receptors, particularly where views may be affected by large-scale built form, infrastructure, lighting and other ancillary development? d. what mitigation measures have been incorporated to reduce visual impacts on sensitive receptors, and how has the effectiveness of those measures been demonstrated? e. where significant adverse visual effects remain following mitigation, what is the applicant's justification for concluding that these effects are acceptable when weighed against the stated benefits of the proposed development? f. has the applicant undertaken any assessment of the relative weight that should be attributed to significant adverse visual effects in the overall planning balance and, if so, what conclusions were reached? g. in circumstances where significant adverse visual effects are predicted for local residents and visitors, what evidence supports the conclusion that the scale and nature of those effects would not outweigh the benefits of the proposed development?
Q1.11.8	The applicant	Landscape planting Explain how the applicant has demonstrated that the proposed landscape mitigation would establish successfully and remain effective over the lifetime of the proposed development, including: a. the assumptions made regarding tree growth rates and climate change b. soil preparation and management c. species selection and resilience d. the timing and phasing of planting e. the arrangements for long-term and adaptive management. In responding, please clarify what is meant by the "<i>instant native hedgerow</i>" referred to in Appendix 7.7.
Q1.11.9	The applicant	Mitigation Paragraphs 7.5.5 and 7.5.6 of ES chapter 7 [APP-175] state that woodland and tree planting on mitigation mounding would begin "<i>relatively early in the overall construction process</i>" and that woodland and tree planting associated with the Highway Works would be undertaken at the "<i>earliest opportunity</i>" following construction of the respective works. Can the Applicant clarify: a. what is meant by "<i>relatively early in the overall construction process</i>" including the anticipated timing of planting relative to the commencement of construction and key construction milestones?? b. what is meant by the "<i>earliest opportunity</i>" following construction of the respective highway works? c. whether the timing of this planting is secured through any requirement, management plan, phasing plan, Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, or other mechanism, and if so, where this secured in the DCO? d. what safeguards are in place to ensure that planting is not delayed beyond the periods anticipated in the assessment, and what would occur if construction activities or other constraints prevent planting from being undertaken within the expected timeframe? e. how has the assessment of landscape and visual effects taken account of any delay between the completion of earthworks/highway works and the establishment of the proposed planting, and what would be the implications for the assessment if planting were delivered later than currently assumed.
Q1.11.10	The applicant OCC/CDC	Schedule of planting Paragraph 7.6.7 of ES chapter 7 [APP-175] states that an indicative and outline schedule of planting mixes and species is provided in ES Appendix 7.6 [APP-251] and is intended to form the basis for the subsequent preparation of detailed landscape and habitat proposals in consultation with ecological specialists and other relevant parties. Can the applicant clarify: a. to what extent the planting mixes and species identified in ES Appendix 7.6 are secured through the application proposals and associated control documents? b. whether the detailed landscape and habitat proposals must accord with, or be substantially based upon, the planting schedules set out in Appendix 7.6 and, if so, where this is secured? c. given that the planting schedules are described as indicative and outline, what confidence can be placed on the landscape, visual and ecological benefits attributed to them in the assessment, and how are those benefits secured through the DCO? Are OCC/CDC content with this approach? If not, please explain and justify why not.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.11.11	The applicant	Landscape mitigation The LVIA [APP-175] concludes that landscape and visual effects would reduce substantially over time because of the establishment and maturation of strategic woodland planting, habitat creation and mitigation mounding. Can the applicant explain how the long-term landscape mitigation will be secured, managed, monitored and enforced throughout the operational life of the development, including arrangements for funding, replacement of failed planting and remedial action where the mitigation does not achieve the outcomes assumed in the LVIA?
Q1.11.12	The applicant	Mitigation The LVIA concludes that the proposed development plateaus and strategic mitigation bunds would result in a Major Adverse effect on local landform and acknowledges that the bunds would appear materially different from the existing gently rolling topography. Can the Applicant explain how the final engineered landform reflects local landscape character, and provide evidence that the proposed earthworks would not introduce artificial landform features that are inconsistent with the existing topography of the Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands landscape.
Q1.11.13	The applicant	Proposed earthworks Paragraph 7.5.15 of ES chapter 7 [APP-175] states that “<i>the earthworks operations and the resultant landform changes will represent a notable Site wide landscape change, yet the proposed plateau levels will remain within the range of existing levels within the Site.</i>” Can the applicant clarify what is meant by this statement and, in particular: - what is meant by the proposed plateau levels remaining “<i>within the range of existing levels within the site</i>”? - what existing ground levels across the site are being referred to, and what is the range of existing levels that has been used for this comparison? - how can the earthworks and resultant landform changes be described as a “<i>notable site wide landscape change</i>” whilst also concluding that the proposed plateau levels remain within the existing range of levels? - to what extent does this statement reflect the overall height of the developed landform, as opposed to localised changes in topography, cut-and-fill operations, embankments, mounding and retaining structures? - has the applicant assessed the implications of the proposed plateaued landform on landscape character and visual receptors separately from the comparison of absolute ground levels, and if so, where is this assessment presented? - what evidence supports the conclusion that maintaining plateau levels within the existing range of site levels reduces the landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed earthworks and changes in landform?
Q1.11.14	OCC/CDC	Use of maximum parameters The ExA notes that paragraph 7.2.32 of ES chapter 7 [APP-175] states that the LVIA is based upon the ‘worst case’ or ‘maximum parameters’, as defined for the proposed development. Are the local authorities content that this is the case? If not, please explain why not.
Q1.11.15	The applicant OCC/CDC	Photomontages Do the submitted photomontages represent the maximum development parameters that could be delivered under the DCO? If not, please explain and justify why not. Are CDC and ODC satisfied that the photomontages accurately represent the proposed development. If not, why not?
Q1.11.16	The applicant	Cumulative Assessment The cumulative assessment [APP-175] considers a number of schemes individually against the proposed development. Has the Applicant undertaken any assessment of the aggregate or a "combined " scenario, whereby OxSRFI, Heyford Park New Town, Baynards Green logistics development and Puy du Fou are all assumed to be present simultaneously? If not, why does the applicant consider the assessment sufficient to understand the true cumulative effects on landscape character, visual amenity and tranquillity across the area?
Q1.11.17	The applicant	Rail interchange What would be the worst-case visual impact of the rail interchange, sidings, highway infrastructure and warehousing if developed to the limits permitted by the DCO? Has this been assessed in the ES? If so, what are the predicted effects on rural character, dark skies and surrounding receptors.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.11.18	The applicant	Tranquillity and dark skies The LVIA [APP-175] makes reference to the issues of tranquillity and dark skies as part of the baseline. Explain how the ES has considered these issues, how have they been assessed, what mitigation, if any, is proposed to address any impacts, and what is the overall conclusion in relation to the effects of the proposed development?
Q1.11.19	The applicant	Lighting The Outline Lighting Strategy identifies lighting heights of up to 18m for rail freight loading/unloading areas and lighting affixed to loading cranes, and up to 15m for some highway lighting. Can the applicant confirm whether the lighting impact assessment and LVIA were undertaken using these maximum mounting heights and, if so, identify where this is demonstrated in the modelling and assessment? If not, what evidence is there that the assessed lighting scenario represents the maximum development permitted by the Order? How does the applicant propose to secure that these are the maximum heights?
12. Materials and Waste		
Q1.12.1	The applicant	Clarification: Ashgrove Farm in-vessel composting (IVC) facility currently operated by Biffa The location of the Biffa operated Ashgrove Farm IVC facility on Camp Road is not shown in Appendix 2 to the Non-Technical Summary [APP-308] (Components of Development Plan). Can the applicant add this to the plan.
Q1.12.2	The applicant	Clarification: Ashgrove Farm in-vessel composting (IVC) facility currently operated by Biffa In response to point 2.3.2 of the ES Scoping Opinion, Table 2.1 of the ES says that <i>“The IVC facility is no longer included as part of the Proposed Development ...”</i> but para 2.2.3 says that <i>“Also within the Main Site is the Biffa operated ‘In-Vessel Composting’ (IVC) Facility ...”</i> and bullet point 7 of paragraph 2.3.1 says that <i>“the IVC Facility will be demolished after the lease ends in 2030 ...”</i> . Please explain and/or signpost - how and in what condition the IVC food and waste composting facility would be left at the point when Biffa vacates the site; - what cleanup would be required; - who would do the cleanup; - what residual contamination there would be; - how this has been assessed in the ES.
Q1.12.3	The applicant	Clarification: existing waste material and management facilities ES paragraph 13.4.18 line 2 reads ... <i>“Vale of Waste Horse ...”</i> Should this read Vale of White Horse?
Q1.12.4	The applicant	Clarification: Storage of fuel, oil and other chemicals Paragraph 17.2 of the CEMP [APP-189] makes reference to PPG7 for above ground storage tanks and PPG22 for spills. Please confirm that: - you are referring to Pollution Prevention Guidance documents PPG7 The safe operation of refuelling facilities; and PPG22 Dealing with spills; PPG7 was withdrawn on 14 December 2015; please advise - what has replaced PPG7; - whether PPG22 is still current and, if not, what has replaced it.
Q1.12.5	The applicant OCC EA	Ashgrove Farm in-vessel composting (IVC) facility currently operated by Biffa We note from the OCC relevant representation [RR-109] Annex 1 paragraphs 113 to 117 and from ES Tables 13.2 and 13.3 [APP-181] that - removal of the Ashgrove Farm IVC facility currently operated by Biffa would create a potential conflict with the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan policy W11; - a full Waste Needs Assessment needs to be prepared (OCC RR Annex 1 paragraph 114) and - there is a <i>“lack of clarity regarding the fate of the Biffa Green Power IVC facility ...”</i> (ES Table 13.3, ID EA28).

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
		Noting your responses in ES Tables 13.2 and 13.3, in ES paragraphs 13.4.23 to 13.4.32 and at procedural deadline A, please explain your assessment of future need in more detail and how your approach would ensure that the shortfall created by removal of this facility would be made up, with particular reference to OCC policies W1 and W11, the current and future waste needs of neighbouring authorities and any changes needed to the current Biffa licence. OCC and the Environment Agency (EA) are invited to comment.
Q1.12.6	The applicant	Ardley Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) currently operated by Viridor With reference to ES paragraph 2.2.5 [APP-170], ES Table 13.20 [APP-181] and ES section 13.4 [APP-181], please explain what impacts the proposed development is expected to have on continuity of operation of this facility, particularly during the construction phase.
Q1.12.7	Viridor	Ardley Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) currently operated by Viridor ES paragraph 13.2.7 [APP-181] says that <i>"Preliminary conversations with facilities Ardley Energy Recovery facility ("Viridor ERF") have been undertaken to inquire about the exact types of waste materials they accept and their capacity to receive waste arising from the Proposed Development, both during the construction and operational phases."</i> Please comment and advise on the capacity of your facility to receive waste from the proposed development during both the construction and operational phases.
Q1.12.8	The applicant	Ardley Fields Household Waste Recycling Centre operated by OCC With reference to ES paragraph 2.2.5 [APP-170], ES Table 13.20 [APP-181] and ES section 13.4 [APP-181], please explain what impacts the proposed development is expected to have on the continuity of the operation of this facility, particularly during the construction phase.
Q1.12.9	The applicant	Ardley Dewars Farm Quarry (Smith and Sons) - sterilisation of resources We note from the relevant representation from Smith and Sons (Bletchington) Ltd [RR-130] that it objects to the proposed development on the grounds that <i>"it does not accord with Oxfordshire's Minerals and Waste Local Plan ..."</i> and requests that certain areas are <i>"safeguarded (sic) for future mineral extraction"</i>. Please explain whether, and if so how, the proposed development will <i>"ensure that those resources will not be needlessly sterilised and remain potentially available for future use ..."</i> (RR-130).
Q1.12.10	The applicant	Ardley Landfill site: maximum height The fourth (final) paragraph of ES Appendix 13.1 Landfill reprofiling technical note [APP-299] says that the reprofiled height of the landfill in cells A and B will be up to 8m higher than the existing railway and paragraph 3.3 of ES Appendix 13.1 Landfill Reprofiling Technical Note [APP-299] says that this will ... <i>"not exceed 128m above ordnance datum (sic) which is the same height as the existing highest point of restored levels on the wider Ardley Landfill Site."</i> reference is also made to the reprofiled parameter in ES chapter 2 paragraph 2.3.7 [APP-170]. - Should "ordnance" read Ordnance? - Given that the land is shown on sheets 5 and 7 of the Land Plan, should the extent of the reprofiled landfill be shown and labelled on the Parameters Plan? " - Paragraph 11.5.21 of the ES (APP-179) says that there will be ...<i>"up to 12.0m of cut required in places."</i> Which places? Our understanding is that there is a maximum of 8m at Ardley landfill.
Q1.12.11	The applicant	Ardley Landfill Site: existing permit We note from section 3.4 of ES Appendix 13.1 Landfill reprofiling technical note [APP-299] that <i>"all the landfill works will be completed under a variation of the existing permit ...so that the new rail connections and principle (sic)access are not included within the varied permit."</i> We also note the voluntary land arrangements with Valencia Waste Management and that <i>"The Environment Agency has been extensively consulted ..."</i>. - do you mean the principal access to the main site (Work No 11)? - please give an update on the current status of the proposal to vary the existing environmental permit, how this enables delivery of the proposed development and where the applicant's position is secured in the DCO.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.12.12	The applicant	Ardley Landfill Site: monitoring With reference to ES Appendix 13.1 Landfill reprofiling technical note [APP-299] section 4.1, please give details of the proposed access and monitoring arrangements before, during and after the proposed works to Ardley Landfill.
Q1.12.13	The applicant	Ardley Landfill Site: gas and leachate With reference to ES Appendix 13.1 Landfill reprofiling technical note [APP-299] section 4.2, please give details of the proposed arrangements for continuing to use the existing on-site leachate treatment and gas utilisation infrastructure during construction and operation of the proposed development.
Q1.12.14	The applicant	Ardley Landfill Site: existing EA licence With reference to paragraph 12.1 of the CEMP [APP-189]: - will any additional measures or variation of the existing EA licence be required; - if so, in what respects?
Q1.12.15	The applicant	Ardley Landfill Site: groundwater monitoring With reference to paragraph 12.1 of the CEMP [APP-189]: - is the project duration both construction and operation? - is groundwater monitoring proposed in any other areas and, if so, how is this secured?
Q1.12.16	The applicant	Construction waste: reduction options With reference to paragraph 16.8 of the CEMP [APP-189] please give examples of how each option could realistically be used on the proposed development.
Q1.12.17	The applicant	Construction waste: reuse options Bullet point 2 of paragraph 16.9 of the CEMP [APP-189] says <i>“Licensed waste carriers will where possible identify possibilities of local community re-use of waste materials.”</i> . - in what circumstances is reuse not possible - what happens then?
Q1.12.18	The applicant	Construction waste: recycling Bullet point 2 of paragraph 16.10 of the CEMP [APP-189] says <i>“Discussion with licenced (sic) waste carriers in respect to (sic) the feasibility/efficiency of specific materials recycling.”</i> . - presumably “licenced” should read “licensed” as in paragraph 16.9; - presumably “in respect to” should read “with respect to” for clarity; - in what circumstances do you consider that recycling would not be feasible? - what do you mean by efficiency; and - what happens if you consider that recycling is not possible?
Q1.12.19	The applicant	Construction waste: disposal With reference to the final bullet point of paragraph 16.11 of the CEMP [APP-189], how would deficiencies be corrected?
13. Need, location and delivery		
Q1.13.1	The applicant	Government rail freight objectives Can the applicant explain: - how the proposed development would contribute to the overall Government’s rail freight objectives - why that need is considered to justify the scale of development proposed at this location, considering the role of existing, consented, and emerging SRFIs elsewhere within the national rail freight network - how demand within the proposed catchment area is expected to result in a modal shift from road to rail, and how this has been distinguished from growth arising from wider logistics and distribution activity

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.13.2	The applicant	Market Analysis Report The Market Analysis Report [APP-311] identifies strong current and future demand for logistics floorspace. What sensitivity testing has been undertaken to assess whether that demand would remain at the levels forecast if economic growth, e-commerce growth or logistics sector expansion were lower than assumed?
Q1.13.3	The applicant	Occupier demand Can the applicant provide evidence on the nature and scale of identified occupier demand for the proposed development, including the proportion of occupier requirements that specifically require direct rail access or location within, or in close proximity to, an SRFI, and how this compares with demand for logistics facilities that do not rely on rail freight connectivity? What evidence exists that occupiers would choose this location because of rail connectivity rather than because of its strategic road access alone?
Q1.13.4	The applicant	Availability of logistics floorspace Can the applicant explain the approach taken in assessing the availability of logistics floorspace within the region, including the weight given to any current vacancy rates relative to the anticipated supply from consented, allocated, and proposed logistics developments, and how the future development pipeline has been taken into account in evaluating the need for the proposed scheme? Did the Applicant assess whether the demand identified in the Market Analysis Report [APP-311] could be accommodated through a number of smaller sites rather than a single SRFI of the scale proposed? If so, what were the conclusions?
Q1.13.5	The applicant	Existing SRFIs The NNNPS recognises both expansion of the SRFI network and the potential expansion or upgrading of existing facilities. What consideration has the Applicant given to whether the identified need could be met through increased utilisation or expansion of existing SRFIs? Could greater utilisation of existing or consented SRFI capacity contribute towards the Government's rail freight growth target without the effects associated with construction of an entirely new facility?
Q1.13.6	The applicant	Existing SRFIs Paragraph 4.10 of the NNNPS requires consideration of the proximity of existing SRFIs, including whether a proposal would abstract traffic from an existing SRFI. What assessment has been undertaken of potential abstraction from existing facilities, and what are its conclusions?
Q1.13.7	The applicant	Identified catchment area The applicant identifies a large catchment extending into London and the Midlands. How has potential overlap with the catchment areas of existing and proposed SRFIs been assessed? Could the identified need not be met through expansion of existing rail freight facilities or enhancement of existing logistics locations elsewhere?
Q1.13.8	The applicant	Trainline capacity What evidence supports the applicant's assumption that the interchange could ultimately handle up to 12 trains per day, and how does this compare with actual utilisation rates at recently consented or operational SRFIs?
Q1.13.9	The applicant	Future operation Can the applicant explain the measures, controls, and operational requirements that would ensure the proposed development continues to function as a rail-served freight interchange in the event that rail freight demand grows at a lower rate than currently forecast, and how the potential for the site to operate predominantly as a road-based logistics facility has been considered within the assessment?
Q1.13.10	The applicant	Proposed floorspace Can the applicant explain: a. how the proposed total area of net lettable warehousing floorspace has been determined, including the extent to which it is required to support the efficient operation and viability of the SRFI b. how the proposed scale has been assessed against broader market demand for logistics and distribution floorspace within the region c. what assessment has been undertaken of whether a smaller SRFI could achieve the same strategic objectives

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.13.11	The applicant	Market area The Market Analysis Report [APP-311] uses a 4.5-hour drive-time to define the wider market area for assessing demand. Please explain the justification for selecting a 4.5-hour drive-time, including whether this represents a recognised market catchment for occupiers likely to use the proposed development, and how sensitive the conclusions on market demand are to the use of a shorter drive-time.
Q1.13.12	The applicant	Delivery of rail interchange Why could the rail interchange not be operational before occupation of the first warehouse, particularly given that the fundamental justification for the proposed development is its function as an SRFI?
Q1.13.13	The applicant OCC/CDC	Delivery of warehousing Paragraph 4.88 of the NNNPS recognises that some warehousing may need to precede final rail commissioning but requires rail connections to come forward in a timely manner. Explain and justify how the applicant considers that allowing approximately 232,258 sq m of occupied warehousing before rail operation satisfies that test? OCC/CDC – Do you consider that the approach of the applicant meets the test set out in the NNNPS? If not, please explain and justify and outline what changes would be required to satisfy the test.
Q1.13.14	The applicant	Level of warehousing R5 of the dDCO [APP-139] proposes that no more than 232,258sqm of warehouse can be occupied prior to the delivery of the rail freight terminal. Clarify what would 232,258sqm would represent in terms of: - number of warehouses - percentage of total floorspace - number of employees - daily HGV movements.
Q1.13.15	Network Rail	Suitability of rail network Confirm whether sufficient train paths and network capacity exist, or are reasonably expected to exist, to accommodate: - four trains per day - the forecast level of operation - ultimately 12 trains per day Could the development be delivered without unacceptable effects upon passenger services or other freight movements?
Q1.13.16	The applicant	Permitted development Are there permitted development rights that would allow a change of use from logistics/warehousing to another use that might give rise to other environmental effects to those assessed that would not be compatible with existing neighbouring development? Consequently, should the dDCO include a provision limiting specific permitted development rights?
14. Noise and vibration		
Q1.14.1	The applicant	Assessment scenarios Paragraph 5.2.37 of ES chapter 5 Noise and Vibration [APP-173] identifies three scenarios considered as part of the assessment. However, it appears that the descriptions provided for the first and second scenarios are identical. Could the Applicant clarify whether this is correct and, if not, explain the distinction between these scenarios? In addition, could the Applicant confirm what the third assessment scenario comprises and how it differs from the others?
Q1.14.2	The applicant	Low-noise road surface and noise mitigation effectiveness It is mentioned in paragraph 5.5.3 of ES chapter 5 Noise and Vibration [APP-173] that “ <i>regarding the operational phase of the proposed development the design of the main site and Ardley bypass have been developed through an iterative process, as set out in the Design Approach Document (Document 5.5A), which has sought to maximise the mitigation of operational noise provided by the inherent design of the scheme. This has included a low noise road surface on the Ardley bypass.</i> ” Paragraph 5.5.4 states that “ <i>inherent mitigation has also been included in the design of the Middleton Stoney Relief Road (MSRR) including the associated bunding to minimise operational noise impacts at the surrounding receptors.</i> ”

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
		Could the applicant describe the proposed low-noise road surface on Ardley bypass and the inherent mitigation in MSRR and demonstrate their effectiveness in reducing noise impacts?
Q1.14.3	The applicant CDC / OCC	Justification for the proposed construction operation times Paragraph 5.5.15 of ES chapter 5 Noise and Vibration [APP-173] states that “<i>construction working hours are to be controlled through the DCO requirements which are set to the following timings (unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority): 07:00 – 19:00 hours weekdays; 07:00 – 16:00 hours Saturdays; and no works on Sundays or public holidays, unless in exceptional circumstances only and with prior notification to the local planning authority (LPA).</i>” Could the applicant clarify whether the proposed working hours encompass site set-up and close-down activities and explain the rationale for requiring these extended hours? Could CDC / OCC confirm whether the proposed working hours are acceptable?
Q1.14.4	The applicant	Potential night-time noise impacts and mitigation measures for properties within 36m of the eastbound MSRR It is stated in paragraph 5.5.45 of ES chapter 5 Noise and Vibration [APP-173] that “<i>even with the effect of the Framework Travel Plan (ES Appendix 3.2), a significant adverse effect is expected to remain at T10 during the night only.</i>” Paragraph 5.5.46 maintains that “<i>while the predictions are made at a single receptor in this area (i.e. T10), analysis shows that this result would likely be the case at all properties north of this section of Middleton Stoney Road, which have façades located within approximately 36m of the edge of the eastbound carriageway.</i>” Could the applicant identify and describe the properties, including T10, that have façades located within approximately 36 metres of the edge of the eastbound MSRR, and clarify whether any night-time noise mitigation measures are proposed for these properties?
Q1.14.5	The applicant	Additional mitigation for properties within 36m of the eastbound MSRR Paragraph 5.6.5 of ES chapter 5 Noise and Vibration [APP-173] states that “<i>the only practicable option for mitigation is the provision of enhanced sound insulation to affected bedrooms. This would typically comprise secondary glazing and alternative means of ventilation to openable windows. This would be secured under the S106 Agreement, an agreed sum would be available to each eligible property for enhanced glazing (if required) and alternative ventilation for bedrooms only (as the effect is limited to the nighttime period).</i>” Could the applicant clarify whether any residential properties eligible for additional mitigation have been identified, particularly the property referred to as T10, and confirm whether a financial sum has been agreed in relation to this as part of the proposed Section 106 Agreement? The applicant is also requested to confirm whether this mitigation has been, or will be, secured through the DCO requirements.
Q1.14.6	The applicant	Mechanisms for securing and maintaining the proposed mitigation measures in perpetuity It is stated in paragraph 5.6.10 of ES chapter 5 Noise and Vibration [APP-173] that “<i>the bunding adjacent to the rail terminal, would be up to approximately 17m above the level of the rail terminal ground surface. A 3m high acoustic barrier will also be included along the top of the bunding between the rail terminal and Ardley, with the detail confirmed through DCO requirements at the detailed stage of design. This will create an equivalent barrier height of 20m above the level of the rail terminal ground surface.</i>” Could the applicant confirm how the proposed mitigation measures would be secured and maintained in perpetuity, including any relevant provisions within the dDCO requirements, Section 106 Agreement, or other legal instruments?
Q1.14.7	The applicant	Potential overlap of the construction programme with concurrent developments in the area Paragraph 5.7.5 of ES chapter 5 Noise and Vibration [APP-173] states that “<i>while it is not possible to compare the specific alignment of construction phasing between this scheme and the proposed development, it is unlikely any receptors would experience a cumulative impact above that already accounted for from the proposed development alone. It is anticipated there would not be any cumulative operational noise impacts related to the Richborough Estates scheme and the proposed development.</i>” Could the applicant confirm whether the construction programme for the Richborough Estates development is expected to coincide with that of the proposed development, and if so, identify any anticipated overlap in construction activities and associated cumulative effects?
15. Socio-economics and health		
Q1.15.1		The ExA has no questions at this stage.

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
16.	Soil resources and agricultural land	
Q1.16.1	The applicant	Soil management plan Requirement 13 [APP-139] states at 13 (1) (a) that <i>“No component of the authorised development on the main site is to commence until details of ... an earthworks strategy including a soil management plan for the protection of soils ... have been approved in advance and in writing by the local planning authority.”</i> Paragraph 14.1 of the CEMP [APP-189] says that <i>“Each relevant P-CEMP and in accordance with Requirement 13, should incorporate a soil management plan to be undertaken by a suitably qualified practitioner ...”</i>. - What are the components of the earthworks strategy and how is it engaged? - What is a relevant P-CEMP? - Please confirm that each relevant P-CEMP will incorporate a soil management plan in accordance with Requirement 13; - What is a suitably qualified practitioner? and - NE suggests [RR-101] what should be in the soil management plan. Do you propose to amend the CEMP [APP-189] to incorporate the points proposed by NE and, if so, when do you propose to submit the revised CEMP?
Q1.16.2	The applicant	Land classification: areas of BMV agricultural land The summary of ES Appendix 14.1 Agricultural Quality of Land [APP-300] states that ... <i>“The land is principally limited by droughtiness and topsoil stoniness and in a small number of places by wetness/ workability limitations. These limitations restrict the land to predominantly subgrade 3b ... with smaller areas of subgrade 3a.”</i> and notes that the surveys were undertaken in September 2021 and September 2022. - Do you mean that the land quality is limited? - Is there any particular reason for conducting the surveys in September? - Do you have any reason to suppose that the percentages and/or locations of the grade 3a, 3b and other land have changed significantly since September 2022? - Are there any areas where actual quality and yield are, or are capable of being, better than suggested by the ALC?
Q1.16.3	The applicant	Minimisation of effects on BMV agricultural land At paragraph 3.14.7 of its RR [RR-124] CDC states that <i>“Despite these losses of best and most versatile land, the applicants do not identify any embedded mitigation to reduce the impact of the scheme by moving built development away where possible”</i>. On page 5 of its relevant representation [RR-109] OCC <i>“considers that the applicant has not demonstrated how poorer quality land has been preferred, how BMV impacts have been avoided or minimised through design, or how sterilisation has been mitigated, resulting in a stated failure to demonstrate compliance with NNNPS paragraphs 5.189, 5.192 and 5.197.”</i> Please comment and explain how you consider that you have satisfied these policy tests.
17.	Traffic and transport	
Q1.17.1	The applicant	Adequacy of HGV parking facility Paragraph 4.61 of ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment - part 1 of 11 [AS-055] states that <i>“OCC’s parking standards do not provide rates for the provision HGV parking and HGV parking is not defined at this stage in any case, because the masterplan is illustrative. However, each warehousing unit and the rail terminal will provide an appropriate level of on-plot HGV parking. The main site will also include an area of secure, dedicated, HGV parking”</i>. In the absence of a specific HGV parking standard within the Cherwell Local Plan, could the applicant set out the justification for considering the proposed level of HGV parking provision to be sufficient?
Q1.17.2		Provision of electric vehicle charging for HGVs Referring to paragraph 4.61 of ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment - part 1 of 11 [AS-055] and the discussions held during ISH2 on 30 September 2026, could the applicant confirm whether electric vehicle charging facilities for HGVs are proposed as part of the development? If so, could the applicant provide details of the number of charging points proposed and identify their locations within the site?
Q1.17.3	The applicant	Enforcement of new speed limits It is mentioned in paragraph 4.75 of ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment - part 1 of 11 [AS-055] that <i>“the highway design for the proposed improvement is shown on the highway plans document. The proposals include a change to the speed limit on the A34 approach</i>

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
		<i>to the junction, with the aim of slowing down vehicles which enables drivers to better react to queueing traffic ahead and will provide a safety improvement on the A34 approach, where an existing collision problem was identified in Chapter 3". Paragraphs 4.85 to 4.89 and paragraph 4.52 of Appendix 1 discuss further amendments to the existing speed limits in locations where highway improvements are proposed.</i> Could the applicant explain how compliance with the new speed limits would be enforced?
Q1.17.4	The applicant	Pedestrian accessibility of diverted routes Paragraph 4.57 of Appendix 1 of ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment - part 1 of 11 [AS-055] states that <i>"stopping up and diversion of public bridleway 109/26 that runs alongside the M40 from the Chiltern Main Line railway and Ardley Road would include the closure of the existing level crossing on the Chiltern Main Line railway. The diverted bridleway route would cross the new rail sidings via a new bridge and would cross the Chiltern Main Line railway via an existing bridge. The diverted route would run alongside the Ardley Bypass, before connecting back to Ardley Road".</i> Could the applicant clarify how the proposed diverted routes, including the new bridge, will accommodate all pedestrians, particularly those with mobility impairments?
Q1.17.5	The applicant	Specific accident-mitigation measures at M40 Junction 10 and M40 Junction 9 Paragraph 2.1 of ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment - part 2 of 11 [APP-193] indicates that 6 of the 46 recorded accidents at M40 Junction 10 were classified as fatal or serious. Paragraph 3.4 further identifies 7 serious accidents out of 83 recorded incidents on the A34 approach to M40 Junction 9. Considering this accident history, could the applicant confirm what road safety mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design of these junctions to address existing safety concerns and reduce the risk of future collisions?
Q1.17.6	The applicant	Status of the unnamed road within the Order limits and consultation on the proposed stopping-up Paragraph 2.13 of Appendix 25 of ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment - part 8 of 11 [AS-062] states that <i>"the unnamed road passes through the main site area, connecting the B430 to Camp Road and therefore providing access to Heyford Park and Upper Heyford. It is not desirable for the SRFI development to retain this route for through traffic and hence a new Heyford Park Link Road (HPLR) is proposed, connecting Camp Road and the B430 south of the development site. This would form part of the embedded highway mitigation associated with the SRFI development."</i> Could the applicant clarify whether the unnamed road is adopted highway and, if so, whether engagement has been undertaken with affected users to establish the acceptability of the proposed stopping-up and diversion arrangements, and confirm that any objections or concerns raised have been satisfactorily addressed and resolved?
Q1.17.7	The applicant	Potential scope for enhancing the proposed improvements at M40 Junction 9 Paragraph 11.90 of ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment - part 1 of 11 [AS-055] presents Table 11.18, which summarises the detailed modelling results for M40 Junction 9. Given that the southern arm of the junction is forecast to perform significantly better than the northern arm in terms of degree of saturation, could the applicant explain why no sensitivity testing has been undertaken to assess whether additional enhancements to the proposed junction improvements may be warranted, particularly in relation to the northern arm?
Q1.17.8	The applicant	Proposed pedestrian highway safety features at B430/B4030 crossroads junction Paragraph 11.110 of ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment - part 1 of 11 [AS-055] presents Figure 11.10, which shows the proposed new bus stops in Middleton Stoney and pedestrian safety improvements at this Junction. Could the applicant clarify whether the proposed zebra crossing on Ardley Road is intended to be at-grade or raised, and explain why no new crossing is proposed on the B4030 Bicester Road arm of the junction?
Q1.17.9	The applicant OCC	Traffic assessment method and associated traffic monitoring for the A43 Barleymow roundabout It is mentioned in paragraph 11.138 of ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment - part 1 of 11 [AS-055] that <i>"it has been agreed with National Highways and OCC that due to the uncertainty around the traffic forecasts at the junction, the cost of the works would be secured by OCC on behalf of National Highways via a S.106 contribution to be made by the applicant. The scheme would be implemented should pre-agreed traffic growth thresholds be reached. The exact mechanism for the monitor and manage arrangement will be agreed with National Highways."</i> Could the applicant clarify the pre-agreed traffic growth thresholds that would trigger the implementation of these works, and explain how compliance with this threshold would be monitored?

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
		Could the applicant also confirm whether OCC would undertake these works, funded by the applicant through a Section 106 agreement? Could OCC to confirm if it is happy with this approach?
Q1.17.10	The applicant OCC/ CDC	Proposed Albion Land and Tritax Big Box improvement schemes for Baynard's Green junction It is stated in paragraph 2.53 of Appendix 1 of ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment - part 1 of 11 [AS-055] that <i>"the Albion Land and Tritax Big Box schemes were required to improve the A43 Baynard's Green Roundabout. The improvement scheme included staggered Toucan crossings on the B4100 east and west and A43 south arms of the junction and new shared use footway/cycleway links, including a link to the Baynard's Green services. The schemes were also required to provide a footway/cycleway alongside the B4100 between Bicester and their sites, which would have connected with the new facilities provided at the Baynard's Green junction. However, following the refusal of these schemes, these works are not committed."</i> Could the applicant confirm whether this scheme has been, or is intended to be, incorporated into the proposed improvements at this junction? Could OCC and/or CDC provide an update of the current position regarding the proposed Albion Land and Tritax Big Box improvement schemes.
Q1.17.11	The applicant OCC / CDC	Management of the proposed bus contribution Paragraph 4.76 of Appendix 1 of ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment - part 1 of 11 [AS-055] states that <i>"to manage the implementation of the PTS, including the control of the expenditure on the Bus Service Contribution, a Sustainable Transport Working Group (STWG) for the OxSRFI development will be established. This approach has been adopted successfully at other SRFIs. The STWG would include representatives from various stakeholders, though voting rights would be restricted to key stakeholders (likely to be OCC, CDC, and the applicant). The STWG could also include the Site Travel Plan Co-ordinator, Unit Travel Plan Co-ordinators."</i> Given that this bus contribution would ordinarily be secured through a Section 106 agreement with CDC, the applicant, OCC and CDC are invited to explain why the process could not be managed by the Council's Sustainable Transport Team and Section 106 monitoring officer.
Q1.17.12	The applicant	Timetable enhancements and aggressive 'pathing' Paragraph 17 of GB Rail Freight Supporting Statement [APP-313] states that <i>"The industry is not complacent though; it understands and accepts that it has constantly to search for improvements in performance and efficiency. Initiatives currently include assets being used more productively; timetable enhancements and aggressive 'pathing' (optimising running time over a given route) allow fleets to be used twice per day instead of just once"</i>. Could the applicant confirm whether this initiative would be adopted to increase the projected number of trains per day?
Q1.17.13	The applicant	Ability of Chiltern Railways to accommodate the proposed development It is stated in the final paragraph of the appendix to GB Rail Freight Supporting Statement [APP-313] that <i>"OCC's Freight and Logistics Strategy outlines that while our priority is to support the mode shift of freight to rail, it is important that this does not affect our passenger rail network. OCC therefore requires robust evidence from the applicant that the provision of 4 return freight paths per day along the Chiltern Main Line will not adversely impact the capacity on the Chiltern Main Line to the point where additional passenger services are not possible."</i> Could the applicant explain how the proposed SRFI would avoid adversely affecting existing passenger rail services, including maintaining operational performance and preserving opportunities for future capacity enhancements and service growth?
Q1.17.14	The applicant	P-CEMP management approach Paragraph 4.2 of ES Appendix 2.3 Construction Environmental Management Plan [APP-189] states that <i>"a P-CEMP must be prepared for each component of development. Where necessary, for example if several contractors are involved in the delivery of a particular component, it may be necessary for multiple P-CEMPs (each specific to individual contractors) to be prepared"</i>. Could the applicant clarify why a coordinated approach, involving the appointment of a lead contractor responsible for preparing and managing the P-CEMP across all project components delivered by multiple contractors, cannot be adopted?
Q1.17.15	The applicant	Measures for controlling emission of dust Paragraph 14.6 of ES Appendix 2.3 Construction Environmental Management Plan [APP-189] identifies a range of actions that contractors are expected to consider as a minimum requirement. Could the applicant confirm whether all the measures identified in the referenced

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
		paragraph will be incorporated within the P-CEMP? If not, please identify any measures that are proposed to be excluded and provide justification for their omission.
Q1.17.16	The applicant	Maximisation of prefabricated construction elements It is mentioned in paragraph 15.2 of ES Appendix 2.3 Construction Environmental Management Plan [APP-189] that “<i>contractors will be required, where practicable, to ensure that prefabricated elements will be delivered to site ready for assembly in order to reduce on site construction waste and reduce vehicle movements as part of the construction process.</i>” Could the applicant clarify how the use of prefabricated construction elements will be maximised across the proposed development, including details of the specific measures, targets and procurement strategies that will be adopted? The applicant should also explain how compliance with these commitments will be monitored and enforced throughout the construction process.
Q1.17.17	The applicant OCC/ CDC	HGV routeing strategy and related enforcement actions Could the applicant explain how the proposed HGV routeing strategy would be monitored and enforced, including details of any physical measures and the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology, considering concerns raised in relevant representation (RR046) regarding existing highway constraints within Clifton, Fritwell and Somerton? Referring to the discussions held during ISH2 on 30 September 2026, could the Applicant confirm whether the proposed HGV routeing arrangements, including any penalties or enforcement measures for non-compliance, will be secured through contractual agreements with HGV operators? If so, could the Applicant explain how compliance with those arrangements would be monitored and enforced? Have CDC and OCC any comments?
Q1.17.18	The applicant	Principal site access junction's capacity assessment Could the applicant clarify why Table 12.3 of ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment - part 1 of 11 [AS-055] indicates that the principal access would operate with substantially greater practical reserve capacity during the PM peak than during the AM peak in both the ‘with travel plan’ and ‘without travel plan’ scenarios, and explain the factors and assumptions underpinning this difference?
18. Water environment		
Q1.18.1	The applicant Anglian Water Services	Impact on Anglian Water Services's assets within the order limits and possible mitigation Paragraph 9.4.30 of ES chapter 9 [APP-177] states that “<i>the proposed development is located within TW's sewerage area, with the exception of parts of the Ardley Bypass and M40 Junction 10 highway improvement works which fall within Anglian Water's sewerage area.</i>” Could the applicant explain how the proposed development would affect the assets of Anglian Water Services and how any resulting impacts would be mitigated, including the provisions that would be required within the DCO? In doing so, the applicant should have regard to concerns raised in relevant representation (RR-009), including the request for bespoke protective provisions to be incorporated into the DCO. Could Anglian Water Services confirm if the applicant's approach would sufficiently mitigate any effects on Anglian Water Services assets and whether these are adequately secured in the DCO?
Q1.18.2	The applicant CDC / OCC	Water storage Paragraph 3.21 of ES Appendix 9.4 (Sustainable Drainage Statement - Offsite and Highways) [APP-266] identifies a range of proposed sustainable drainage measures. Could the applicant explain why rainwater harvesting and water reuse systems have not been included within the proposed drainage strategy, particularly considering the concerns raised in relevant representation (RR-009)? Has the LLFA any comments on this issue?
Q1.18.3	The applicant CDC / OCC	DCO requirements and flood risk assessment Could the applicant explain whether, and if so how, it has addressed the concerns with the dDCO requirements and flood risk assessment, including matters relating to hydraulic modelling, floodplain compensation, culvert design, watercourse diversions and compliance with the Water Framework Directive? The applicant should also outline the proposed mitigation and management measures for watercourses, aquatic ecology and in-channel works. In responding, the applicant should have regard to the concerns raised in Relevant Representation (RR-042). Has the LLFA any comments on this issue?

ExQ1	Question to:	Question:
Q1.18.4	The applicant CDC / OCC	Assessment of water quality and maintenance of Sustainable Drainage Systems Could the applicant explain how operational water quality impacts, the long-term maintenance and management of the proposed SuDS, drainage control measures, and any pollution risks associated with the proposed solar photovoltaic (PV) infrastructure have been assessed and addressed? In doing so, the applicant should have regard to the concerns raised in Relevant Representation (RR-042). Has the LLFA any comments on this issue?
Q1.18.5	The applicant CDC / OCC	Management of surface water runoff within the development site It is stated in paragraph 4.22 of ES Appendix 9.2 FRA [AS-076] that <i>“there is potential for shallow groundwater to be present within the site. Should groundwater be encountered during construction a specialist should be consulted and appropriate dewatering undertaken as necessary. It is considered that the raised development plateaus, finished floor levels and profiling of ground levels will provide mitigation for any potential groundwater flooding post-development.”</i> Could the applicant explain any proposed methods for groundwater protection, contamination risks, dewatering, monitoring, remediation and the interface between contaminated land management and environmental permitting? Has the LLFA any comments on this issue?
Q1.18.6	The applicant CDC / OCC	Padbury Brook culvert maintenance and blockage prevention arrangements Paragraph 6.12 of Appendix 1 (Padbury Brook Hydraulic Modelling Report) of ES Appendix 9.2 FRA [AS-076] states that <i>“in line with the above, a 50% blockage has been applied to the twin 1.5m diameter culvert. In the blockage scenario, the flood levels upstream of the culvert are predicted to increase by up to 40mm. During this scenario, flood extents are predicted to remain in channel. It is therefore expected that blockage of the culvert will not significantly affect flood levels and extents within the Order Limits; however, it is recommended that the proposed culvert should be regularly maintained to ensure it remains free of blockages.”</i> Could the applicant explain what measures would be put in place to ensure the proposed Padbury Brook culvert is regularly maintained and kept free from blockages and how these would be secured? Has the LLFA any comments on this issue?
Q1.18.7	The applicant CDC / OCC	Design of the drainage systems Could the applicant explain how the drainage design would meet the criteria set out in the Oxfordshire Standards, particularly considering the CDC's Relevant Representation (RR-024). Has the LLFA any comments on this issue?

ExQ1 Annex A: Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) – Applicant and Statutory Nature Conservation Body (SNCB) position summary table

Responses are due by deadline 2: 26 October 2026

The following table sets out a summary of the ExA’s understanding of the applicant’s HRA screening exercise, and agreement with Natural England (NE) at the time of publication of ExQ1.

Abbreviations used:

LSE Likely Significant Effect

Key to table:

- C Construction
- O Operation and Maintenance
- D Decommissioning
- LSE LSE cannot be excluded
- No LSE LSE can be excluded
- ? Unclear
- N/A Not applicable

Note that the conclusions recorded in the table below apply to impacts from the proposed development alone and in-combination, unless otherwise stated.

European site and qualifying feature(s)	Impact pathway	Applicant’s conclusions on LSE			NE conclusion on LSE		
		C	O	D	C	O	D
- Annex 1 habitat 6510: Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) - Annex II species 1614: Creeping marshwort (<i>Apium repens</i>)	Habitat loss	No LSE	No LSE	N/A	No LSE	No LSE	N/A
	Invasive non-native species	No LSE	No LSE	N/A	No LSE	No LSE	N/A
	Hydrological impacts	No LSE	No LSE	N/A	No LSE	No LSE	N/A
	Air pollution	No LSE	No LSE	N/A	No LSE	No LSE	N/A