RS APPENDIX 10.2: BASELINE ASSESSMENT

Introduction

10.2.1 The objective of the baseline assessment is to provide background context to the Site and to allow for the comparison of the effects of the Revised Scheme (both positive and negative) against the existing situation. This appendix includes a description of the on-site landscape (the ‘landscape fabric’), the landscape character of the Site and its immediate surroundings, and the key visual receptors with the potential to be affected by the Revised Scheme. A brief review of environmental evidence base relevant to the LVIA is also provided.

Key environmental evidence / published documents

10.2.2 The LVIA has had regard to the following documents in the preparation of the baseline assessment. These are referenced as appropriate in the relevant sections below.

10.2.3 Chapter 6, Appendix 6.1 Planning Policy Context provides a detailed description of all relevant policies contained in the Stroud District Local Development Plan. Chapter 10 Landscape and Visual and RS Appendix 10.9 address planning policy at the local and national level, in particular policies relating to landscape and visual resources. The following documents were reviewed for the purposes of the baseline assessment:

Local and Neighbourhood Plan
- Stroud District Local Plan (Adopted November 2015)
- Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan (Adopted October 2016) and supporting assessments

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), and Supplementary Planning Advice (SPA)
- Sustainable Construction SPD (Adopted February 2017)
- Stroud District Landscape Assessment SPG (Adopted 2000);

Technical Guidance, Character Assessments and Other Published Documents

10.2.4 Stroud District Council (SDC) has provided a list of Environmental Evidence on their website which they have indicated may be material considerations in the determination of planning applications. These include:
- Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan (2013-18);
- White Consultants (On behalf of SDC) Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (December 2016);
- URS (On behalf of SDC) Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal (July 2013);

10.2.5 Where relevant regard has been had to cross cutting themes such as biodiversity and heritage in the baseline assessment, assessment of effects and concept design. These include the Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan and SDC’s (SALA) Heritage Impact Appraisal (May 2017).

10.2.6 Additional considerations include:
- Natural England Landscape Character Assessment 2014 – National Character Area profiles
- Gloucestershire (‘Various Vales’) Landscape Character Assessment 2006;
- The Cotswolds AONB Landscape Assessment 2004;
- Cotswolds Conservation Boards (AONB) Position Statements. In particular ‘Development in the Setting of the AONB’ (Revised June 2016) and Tranquility and Dark Skies (with Appendices) (2010)

10.2.7 The various documents listed above are discussed in more detail in the baseline assessment below, and referred to as appropriate in the Chapter 10 main report, the assessment schedules (RS Appendices 10.3-10.5). The landscape strategy and overall design of the Revised Scheme has also been informed by these materials. Further details are provided in the relevant Chapters and Design and Access Statement, and referenced as appropriate in the LVIA materials and supporting figures.

Landscape Fabric

On-Site Landscape

10.2.8 The on-site landscape (the ‘landscape fabric’) incorporates the physical features and individual elements which make up the Site and its immediate surroundings. An outline description of this landscape is provided in Table 10.2.1 Land Use and Boundary Features.

10.2.9 The Site is located next to M5 Junction 13 roundabout and comprises three parcels of land dissected by the M5 and the A419. The total redline area is 39.5ha; the area to the northeast of J13 and north of the A419 comprises 18.9ha, the area to the southeast of J13 comprises 15.3ha and the area to
the southwest of J13 comprises 4.6ha. The existing use of the Site is predominantly agricultural (cattle grazing and hay production).

10.2.10 The Site and Redline Boundary remains the same to reflect the Proposed Development. However, it is important to note that the Revised Scheme involves a reduction on the overall Development Footprint and proposes no built development in the part of the Site to the south of the A419. The stadium would be the only above ground built component of the Revised Scheme (with other aspects at ground level), and would be located to the north of the A419 set amongst ground level sports pitches (all of which would be grass turf with no additional floodlighting), car parking, and a variety of green spaces with tree and shrub planting, and grassland.

10.1.1 For clarity and in the context of the Revised Scheme the following terms are referred to:

- The "Site" = land at M5 Junction 13 west of Stonehouse
- The "Redline Boundary" = the redline boundary of the Site as shown on RS Figures 10.1 – 10.15.
- The "Study Area" = the spatial area extending to 10km from the Redline Boundary within which landscape and visual effects are assessed.
- The "Development Footprint" = the area (north of the A419, east of the M5 motorway) subject to development works in this Revised Scheme.

Table 10.2.1 Land Use and Boundary Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field and Description</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Boundary Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East of M5 and north of A419 (Incorporates Revised Scheme development footprint)</td>
<td>19.1ha</td>
<td>Bounded to the south by the A419 and west by the M5. Bounded by Westend properties and Grove Lane to the north and tree lined track / field to the east. Footpath No. 37 crosses over the A419 into the northern parcel of land and splits off into a 'left fork', with Footpath No38 comprising the 'right fork', both routes pass through an open field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of M5 and south of A419 (No development works proposed in this area for Revised Scheme)</td>
<td>13.5ha</td>
<td>Bounded to the north by the A419 and west by the M5. Bounded to east by residential properties (Chimpans Platt and William Morris House) and to the south by the Stroud Water Canal (currently infilled) and beyond this the fields which lie next to the River Frome. Eastington Footpath No.37 runs in a SW/N direction across the parcel of land to the south of the A419, starting from Eastington Footpath No.41 (which includes Westfield Bridge and the tree lined track near William Morris House on the SE boundary) where Footpath No.37 passes through an open field.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Site Landform

10.2.11 The topography of the Site and its immediate environs can be described as located within the Severn Vale and is relatively flat to gently sloping. The Site itself lies approximately 4km to the east of the River Severn. The northern part of the Site (north of the A419) sits at an elevation of around 20-24m AOD; the southern part of the Site (south of the A419) lies adjacent to the River Frome floodplain at around 13m AOD which slopes very gently west / south west. The landform above the River Frome (which includes the southern part of the Site) is more gently sloping that the land to the south of the River Frome (outside the Redline Boundary – rising towards the Eastington / Alkerton Ridge). This is shown on RS Figure 5.5 Site Cross Sections.

10.2.12 The River Frome is located approximately 125m to the south of the Redline Boundary. The additional fields that directly border the River Frome are part of the Applicant’s land holding, but do not form part of the Site or the Revised Scheme.

Site Vegetation, Boundary Features and Field Pattern

10.2.13 The Site is currently in agricultural use and comprised mainly improved grassland, with a smaller area of semi improved grassland. Fields are delineated by native species hedges with some mature hedgerow trees and small deciduous tree groups / blocks of woodland (particularly near the A419 / J13). These are described in more detail in the baseline in Chapter 8 Ecology and supporting figures (see in particular RS Figure 8.14 Baseline Survey).

10.2.14 Whilst most of the boundary hedgerows intact and in good condition / well established, a number of the internal hedgerows have become gappy and defunct due to lack of maintenance and cattle damage4. Fields are generally medium in size and, notwithstanding the above hedgerow deterioration, the characteristic field pattern has largely been retained since the 1st Edition OS Maps (See RS Figures 10.9a-10.9b).

10.2.15 Hedgerows on Site contained a number of mature trees, particularly Crack Willows (Salix fragilis), close to the River Frome, Mature Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), Sessile Oak (Quercus petrea), Hawthorn

4 Tree diversity within hedgerow lengths on the land east of the M5 and north of the A419 was between 1 and 6 and tree species present were Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa), Crack Willow (Salix fragilis), Elder (Sambucus nigra), English Elm (Ulmus procera), Field maple (Acer campestre), Goat Willow (Salix caprea), Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), Sessile Oak (Quercus petrea), Wild Cherry (Prunus avium), Dogwood and Spindle, and with the addition of Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) and Wild Pear (Pyrus communis). Full details of hedgerows and species present is provided in Appendix 8.1 (Volume 4) The Extended Phase 1 Habitat and protected Species survey, and Figure 8.7 of the Ecology Chapter (Chapter 8).
10.2.16 There are three very small blocks of woodland onsite; two on the north side of the A419 and one on the southern side which contain mature Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), Sessile Oak (Quercus petraea), Field Maple (Acer campestre) and Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna). There are occasional standard mature trees in many of the hedgerows throughout the Site, and in the south area close to the River Frome a number of very large Crack Willow (Salix fragilis), and Goat Willow (Salix caprea). Further details are provided in Appendix 8.3 (Volume 4) Tree Survey and Figure 8.1 Arboricultural Survey of the Ecology Chapter (RS Chapter 8).

10.2.17 There is a ditch than runs along the southern boundary of the Site, near to the former course of Stroudwater Canal which has subsequently been infilled and is currently disused. As described above the fields directly adjacent to the River Frome do not form part of the Revised Scheme and would therefore be retained (Ecotricity may be involved in long term enhancement measures on land adjoining any new canal route as part of the canal restoration project, subject to further discussions).

10.2.18 Adjacent land uses near to the Site are described below and include some commercial and residential uses near to the Redline Boundary.

Other Site Elements

10.2.19 A large metal Dutch barn (and associated smaller agricultural store) are located within an internal hedgerow on the parcel of land south of the A419 and east of the M5. This barn is visible from parts of the surrounding countryside near to the Site to the south.

10.2.20 There is a small cluster of five dilapidated barns on the perimeter of the northern parcel of land which are a mix of concrete / corrugated structures (larger barns) and red brick barns (smaller structures).

10.2.21 Westfield Bridge, is an unlisted but historic brick structure crossing the original alignment of the Stroudwater Canal and is located on the south east boundary of the Site (where the canal is currently in-filled but marking its former use).

Onsite Public Rights of Way

10.2.22 The local Public Rights of Way (PROW) network crosses through parts of the northern and southern fields either side of the A419. These include Eastington Footpaths EEA 41, 37 and 38 and are shown on RS Figures 10.2 and 10.7b. These can broadly described as (starting south and travelling north) as follows:

- Offsite (to the south east) EEA41 forms part of the last section of the existing two path route, where it meets with Westfield Bridge (a former canal structure which now sits within a field due to the former canal route being infilled / dry).
- From Westfield Bridge, PROW EEA41 enters the Site and travels in a northerly direction through a double tree lined track near to William Morris college.
- PROW EEA41 then crosses an existing agricultural access track and merges into EEA 37 where it passes through an open field near to Chipmans Platt on the south of the A419.
- EEA37 then crosses the A419 at grade (no existing crossing facilities) to the northern parcel of agricultural land where it proceeds to split into two paths (EEA37 & EEA38).
- EEA38 runs north east towards Westend Cross / Nupend and EEA37 runs northwest towards Mole Cottage and Westend.

10.2.23 These paths are based on the Definitive PROW Map and are distinguished based on their numbering but often form a continuous linear feature on the ground. In addition there is a small ‘dogleg’ or a remnant PROW near to the northern perimeter of the Site where EEA37 meets the stile on Grove Lane. The additional ‘dogleg’ to the track is the remnant of EEA39 which was severed by the motorway, as confirmed by Gloucestershire County Councils PROW team. This is also shown on RS Figures 10.2 and 10.7b.

Adjacent Landscape Features and Landscape Context

10.2.24 The Site is located next to M5 motorway and Junction 13 roundabout and is bisected by the A419 which links Stroud to the east with the M5 and A38 to the west. The Site is surrounded by agricultural land with some settlement and employment development around the perimeter and in the immediate environs. Thus, the existing landscape context is a combination of built development, major infrastructure and rural land use – a dynamic rural landscape with urban fringe qualities including the hustle and bustle (both aural and visual) of an urban environment.

10.2.25 Properties near to the perimeter of the Site include those at Westend, Chipmans Platt and William Morris College which are shown on RS Figure 10.7b. The hamlets of Nupend and Nastend are situated within 0.5km and 1km to the north east of the Site respectively. The villages of Eastington and Whitminster are located between 0.7km and 1km to the south and northwest respectively.

10.2.26 Eastington Trading Estate is located approximately 100m to the southeast and Stroudwater and Stonehouse Business Parks are located approximately 1-1.5km to the east / southeast. Gloucestershire County Council depot buildings (Eastington Maintenance Compound) is located next approximately 180m to the west on the other side of the M5. There is a 24 hour service station at the Chipmans Platt Roundabout located approximately 80m south east of the Site.

10.2.27 There is a network of footpaths and trails in the surrounding area including the Thames & Severn Way and Stroudwater Canal Tow Path located to the south of the Site. The River Frome (and Thames and Severn Way) is located approximately 125m to the southwest of the Site at its closest point (where is passes through the M5 underpass). The adjoining fields near to the River Frome also form part of the wider land holding and contain a currently disused part of the Stroudwater Canal (known locally as the ‘missing mile’). Westfield bridge marks the southernmost part of the publically accessible tow path route – where it does not continue again until approximately ‘a mile’ north west of the Site near the A38 / Fromebridge. Apart from Westfield bridge itself the Revised Scheme would not be widely visible from the existing towpath route which contains much vegetation and runs in an east / southeasterly direction towards Stroud.

10.2.28 The parcels of land to the south of the A419 are within the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA). There are 4 listed buildings to the north east of the parcel of land located to the north of the A419. The IHCA is a linear conservation area following the valleys of the River Frome and Naisworth Stream, extending to the east, west and south of Stroud. The course of the IHCA follows the various transport infrastructures which developed over the 18th and 19th centuries.

10.2.29 The Cotswolds AONB and Cotswolds Way National Trail are situated approximately 2km and 3.5km respectively at their nearest points. The Cotswolds is a nationally important upland landscape which together with the Forest of Dean to the westframes the Severn Vale and affords broad views across the Severn Vale as well as providing a backdrop to views from the lowland.
The Site is not currently lit. The existing sources of lighting which characterise the immediate and surrounding area within 500m – 2km of the Site are primarily:

- Dairy Crest (renamed Muller) and Ryeford Biusness Park, Stonehouse
- Stonehouse urban / street lighting
- A419 street lighting (Stonehouse to Chipmans Platt)
- Chipmans Platt service station
- William Morris House
- Eastington Trading Estate
- Eastington settlement / street lighting
- M5 Junction 13 highways depot
- Whitminster settlement / street lighting
- A38 street lighting
- A38 transport / logistics depots / quarry
- A38 vehicle auction yards

Landscape Character

This section considers the character of the local landscape. The landscape character of the Study Area has been assessed at various levels (degrees of detail) over the past two decades. The various levels of character assessment and their geographic extent are shown on RS Figure 10.5a Landscape Character with ZTV (National Character Areas and Stroud Landscape Assessment) and RS Figure 10.5b Landscape Character with ZTV (Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds). Further information on landscape character with respect to SDC IHCA is provided in RS Figure 10.5c Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Character Types and the relationship between the different classification levels is set out in RS Figure 10.5d Relationship between Landscape Character Types & Areas. Baseline Information is only broadly summarised here. RS Appendix 10.3 Landscape Character Assessment provides a more detailed description of each of the character units discussed below.

National Character Areas

The Site is located in the central eastern part of the National Character Area 106: Severn and Avon Vales. Natural England describes this character area as:

“The lower valleys of the rivers Severn and Avon dominate this low lying open agricultural vale landscape made up of distinct and contrasting vales, including Evesham, Berkeley, Gloucester, Leadon and Avon, with Cotswold outliers like Bredon Hill punctuating the otherwise flat vale landscape. The M5 Motorway runs through the centre and the eastern edge of the area.”


Local Character Areas

Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment

With reference to Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment, 2006 the Site falls within the Landscape Character Type (LCT) Settled Unwooded Vale and Landscape Character Area: SV6A – Vale of Berkley. Further information on the Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment can be found here http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/article/109519/Landscape

The Vale of Berkeley Landscape Character Area is described as:

“The Vale of Berkeley consists of an open, gently undulating landscape that extends north of the settlement of Dursley to the southern edge of Gloucester and is broadly bounded by the rising landform of the Cotswolds escarpment to the east and by the flat, low-lying floodplain landscape of the River Severn to the west. Views towards the escarpment and Rolling Hills and Valleys landscape type give a distant sense of enclosure in many areas of the vale and the Robins Wiltshire Outlier and Hickley Wood Outlier both form prominent elevated landmark features when viewed from the northern portion of the vale. Distant views towards the Forest of Dean can also be seen from some areas.” (p57 Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment, 2006)

The LVIA (Chapter 10) focuses on the more detailed assessment provided in the Stroud District Landscape Assessment (below) in accordance with Policy ES7 in the emerging Stroud District Local Plan.

Stroud District Landscape Assessment

The purpose of the Stroud District Landscape Assessment (2000) was to provide a description of landscape character across the Stroud District in terms of landscape types, their character and quality and their interaction with each other. Issues relating to key characteristics, landform and context, land
use and landscape patterns, settlement and vernacular character, human response and sensitivity to change are described in this assessment as well as key priorities for action. Further information on the Stroud District Landscape Assessment (2000) can be found here https://www.stroud.gov.uk/info/planning/landscape_assessment.pdf.

10.2.39 Under the Stroud District Landscape Assessment, the Site falls within the Landscape Character Type No.5 ‘Rolling Agricultural Plain’. The Rolling Agricultural Plain is described as being:

“One of the most extensive landscape types within the Stroud District. Stretching from just south of Gloucester it extends to Woodfield and Cam in the south, and is flanked by the Cotswold Escarpment landscape type to the east and to the west by the Severn Vale Grazing Marshes landscape type.” (Stroud District Landscape Assessment, 2000 p831)

10.2.40 The Rolling Agricultural Plain (LCT No.5) is subdivided into three categories / sub types, reflecting local variations in topography, land use patterns, vegetation cover and river systems across the character type as a whole. The Site boundary incorporates sections of each of these subdivisions.

This graduation is characterised to the south by the Frome River Valley (5C) to the north Escarpment Footslopes (5A) and within the central section by the Lowland Plain (5B) which forms a band that spans across both sides of the A419. In practice character types are not defined by ridged boundaries but are more fluid based on a combination of different landscape elements and characteristics.

10.2.41 The Frome River Valley (5C) is defined by gentle and subtle convex slopes, to form a shallow alluvial valley that traverses the landscape from east to west, where the influence of hydrology and river systems contributes to the separate classification of this character type. The relatively flat, and in places gently undulating topography defines the more expansive Lowland Plain (5B). Further to the east the more obviously undulating and westward sloping topography defines the Escarpment Footslopes (5A) which form a transitional fringe to the base of the Cotswold Escarpment LCT.

The component of the Site situated within the Escarpment Footslopes (5A) marks the westerly most component of this character type. Patterns of land use and enclosure vary slightly across each of these sub divisions.

10.2.42 The key characteristics / unifying features of LCT No.5 (and each of these sub types) are listed in the SDLA (2000) and as

- “Varied landscape of open flat plain to more undulating landform towards limestone escarpment.
- Established old, rich, rural lowland, with some woodlands and mature hedgerow trees and occasional fruit trees
- Land dissected by River Cam and Frome.
- Traversed from north to south by M5, railway, Gloucester-Sharpeness Canal and the A38
- Semi-enclosed landscape with some distant views and more restrained views from Frome Valley.
- Churches act as strong foci and landmarks.
- Dispersed pattern of isolated villages.
- Land use is a mix of arable and pasture.
- Strong field pattern medium to small in scale.”

10.2.43 Development components would be located primarily within the Lowland Plain (5B) sub type, with a smaller component located in the Escarpment Footslopes (5A) sub type. Key characteristics within these areas are cited as:

10.2.44 Key priorities for action in Landscape Character Type No.5 ‘Rolling Agricultural Plain’ are:

- “Conserve and protect the river valley and wetland landscapes
- Encourage the continued management of existing hedgerows, hedgerow trees, and farm woodlands
- Review the schedule of conservation areas to protect small settlements
- Control sporadic development along the major routes and at the edges of small settlements.”

(Stroud District Landscape Assessment, 2000 p830)

10.2.45 The key sensitivities of LCT No.5 ‘Rolling Agricultural Plain’ to change are described as

“The flat and relatively open nature of the Rolling Agricultural Plain and the visibility from the AONB make it particularly susceptible to inappropriate development. This landscape is under pressure from the expansion of existing settlement at Stroud, Stonehouse and Gloucester. New development from these settlements has already degraded some areas of the landscape. Major roads that dissect the Lowland Plain also pose a threat of associated developments which could undermine existing landscape quality... Linear development if allowed to occur in the landscape would undermine the traditional and strong pattern of nucleated settlement. The distinctive patterns of field enclosure and their geographical distribution are sensitive to agricultural land use management. Changes in land use which would reduce the amount of pasture land would therefore be detrimental to the character of the landscape, as would the loss of hedgerow trees and small woodland. This is particularly important along the Escarpment Footslopes fringe where the quality of landscape impacts upon the designated areas of the AONB. Similarly it is important to retain the pastoral river valley qualities of the River Frome, as there are few landscapes of this nature within Stroud District.” (Stroud District Landscape Assessment, 2000 p835)

10.2.46 There are no known statutory or non-statutory landscape designations covering the Site area or its immediate environs.

Designated Landscapes

10.2.47 The Cotswolds AONB is a nationally important designated landscape enjoyed by many from the Cotswold Way National Trail which winds its way along the rim of the prominent western escarpment overlooking the Severn Vale.

10.2.48 The Site is not located within the Cotswolds AONB. The closest part of the Cotswolds AONB is situated approximately 2km ENE from the Site at Doverow Hill, Stonehouse. The defining and elevated topography of the escarpment is reflected in the passage of the Cotswold Way which is located 3.7km to the east of the Revised Scheme at its closest point and approximately 5km to the south. The geographic extent of the AONB and its location relative to the Site are shown on RS Figure 10.4a Landscape Designations and Public access / Recreational Resources with ZTV: the AONB character units are included on RS Figure 10.5b Landscape Character with ZTV (Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds). The Cotswold Way is marked on RS Figure 10.6a.
The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is broadly defined by its underlying geology of Jurassic limestone, prominent west facing scarp and elevated open plateau (known as the 'high wold') descending into gentler rolling hills and vales to the east and southeast. The scarp covers a distance of 52 miles along the western edge of the AONB and provides a backdrop to views as well as long views out over the Severn Estuary and Vale.

The supporting text of Policy ES7 (Para 6.45) of Stroud District Local Plan (November 2015) states, that "Proposals for development within or affecting the AONB will be expected to have regard to it and any Cotswold Conservation Board Management Plans. Other documents prepared by the Cotswold Conservation Board may also be relevant, including position statements, woodland and biodiversity strategies, landscape sensitivity and tranquillity studies, and the landscape character assessments."

- Information on the Cotswold Conservation Board’s Position Statements are available here [http://www.cotswoldaonb.org.uk/?page=positionstatements](http://www.cotswoldaonb.org.uk/?page=positionstatements)

The LVIA main report (Chapter 10) submitted considers the likely effects of the Revised Scheme on the landscape and visual aspects of the AONB’s special qualities and management objectives. A full review of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan was undertaken as part of the LVIA, as well as other documents produced by the Cotswolds Conservation Board, relevant position statements on the setting of the AONB and lighting / dark skies. Given the importance / national status of AONBs, a dedicated appendix (RS Appendix 10.6) is provided in relation to the Cotswolds AONBs management plan and position statements and an assessment of effects on the relevant Landscape Character Types / Areas at RS Appendix 10.3.

Wye Valley AONB (Forest of Dean) is located approximately 19km northwest of the Revised Scheme at its closest point. RS Appendix 10.10 (Bareground ZTV out to 25km including Wye Valley AONB) illustrates very limited visibility across Wye Valley AONB.

Local Landscape Designations

No Local Landscape Designations are mapped or described in adopted Stroud District Local Plan (November 2015). Special Landscape Areas were previously described in the Gloucestershire County Council Structure Plan and Stroud District Local Plan (2005). Policy NE9 'Protection of Special Landscape Areas' of the previous local plan ceased to take effect beyond November 2008 and they no longer form part of the statutory framework for the Stroud District.

**Other Relevant Designations**

**Industrial Heritage Conservation Area**

The IHCA is a linear conservation area following the valleys of the River Frome and Nailsworth Stream, extending to the east, west and south of Stroud. The IHCA was first designed by the Stroud District Council in 1987 to link, and form the context to, seven other smaller Conservation Areas, focused on the historic mill complexes and the heritage of the Stroud Valleys. The IHCA extends from Upper Framilode, through Stonehouse, south of Stroud and as far as Chalford, covering a total length of approximately 23km. Additionally there is a southern branch extending south-easterly over 7km from Stroud to Nailsworth. The course of the IHCA follows various transport routes which developed in the 18th and 19th centuries, including canals, roads and railways.

The IHCA was designated to give protection to a variety of components, recognising the value of the industrial nature of the locality as a whole. It is important to note that conservation areas are designated for its ‘special architectural or historic interest’ and are not a landscape designation. However, the IHCA contains a rich source of information in terms of understanding the character and historical context / land use patterns relevant to the area, and is therefore considered in the LVIA.

The ‘Western Leg’ of the IHCA extends along the Frome Corridor on the Severn Vale from Upper Framilode to Stroud, and it is this area in which part of the applicant’s landholding to the south is located (although none of the land north of the A419 is located within the ICHA). The parcel of land under the Applicant’s ownership, to the south of the A419 is partially within The Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (ICHA). It is however important to note that no part of the Revised Scheme will be located within the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area itself or in the agricultural fields south of the A419 adjoining the ICHA’s boundaries.

The Western Leg of the IHCA follows the shallow broad river valley of the River Frome, within the open flat and rolling landscape of the Severn Vale, which broadens towards the River Severn. Along the valley bottoms within the IHCA, both industrial and agricultural land usage have coexisted for centuries. Various land uses are present across the area including orchards, pasture and arable fields, managed parkland, industrial developments and traces of mill ponds. In the far west of the Western Leg (i.e. towards upper Framilode) the land is predominantly open, arable and exposed. In the east of the Western Leg (i.e. towards Stonehouse and Stroud) larger buildings, settlement expansion and new development become dominant and can be conspicuous in long range views. The Stroudwater Canal also runs along the entire length of the Western leg, although the component bordering the Site (known locally as ‘the missing mile’) has been infilled and the former route is now bisected by the M5. Trees and vegetation are often found lining the canal, which also soften the appearance of built form along the banks. The River Frome on the other hand snakes across the valley floor throughout the IHCA, frequently splitting into multiple branches.

Stroud District Council have produced a Supplementary Planning Document and Supplementary Planning Advice on the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area. These documents (although accorded different weight under the Development Plan) are listed on SDC’s, website under the umbrella title of the IHCA Statement. These documents collectively provide policy guidance, design advice and

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6 This figure is based on a bareground ZTV and s therefore illustrative of a worst case scenario. This figure shows a small degree of visibility on the SE boundary of Wye Valley AONB between St Briavels and Tidenham Chase at approximately 22-24km distance from the Revised Scheme.


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management proposals, aimed at ensuring the preservation or enhancement of the character of the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA) 7. This document is available here http://www.stroud.gov.uk/info/IHCA_SPD_Nov08.pdf.

10.2.59 The IHCA Statement provides a description of the character of the IHCA – both in terms of unifying characteristics across the IHCA as a whole, and in terms of differences in character across different parts of the IHCA (in recognition of the fact that given the extent of the IHCA, its variety varies greatly, but that different component parts exhibit certain identifiable characteristics). These different character types / parts have been geographically mapped by SDC, and this information is reproduced on RS Figure10.5d. Whilst there are no detailed descriptions of each of these individual character types / parts (for instance on specific qualities or valued aspects), the background information provided in Volume 1 Chapter 3 of the IHCA Statement provides a description of both the ‘western leg’ of the IHCA (which stretches between Stroud and Framilode) and a section entitled ‘Green Spaces and Gaps’ 8.

10.2.60 As shown on RS Figure10.5c, there are 19 component ‘character types’ within the IHCA, which have also been divided into different character parts. The landscape assessment schedules in RS Appendix 10.3 consider the following IHCA Character Types / Parts which are located outside of the Revised Scheme area, but which form part of the LVIA Study Area.

- Character Type 4: Green Corridor, Rural Frome Vale (Character Part 4.4. Fromebridge to Chipmans Platt) associated with the valley bottom and corridor of the River Frome to the south of the Revised Scheme.
- Character Type 1: Stroudwater Settlement (Character Part 1.2 Newtown and Chipmans Platt) associated with the existing route of the Stroudwater Canal two to the south east of the Revised Scheme and
- Character Type 7: Meadow Mill (Character Part 7.1 Meadow Mill) associated with the former Meadow Mill complex (now Eastington Trading Estate) to the south east of the Revised Scheme.
- Character Type 2: Vale Core Rural Settlement (Character Part 2.2 Church End & Millend at Eastington), associated with the area east of Spring Hill Road and the historic settlement core of Eastington approximately 300m east of the Revised Scheme – although it is acknowledged there are very limited effective visual linkages with the Revised Scheme from this area.

10.2.61 The relocation of the Stadium to the north of the A419 will provide physical and visual separation between the Revised Scheme and the ICHA, due to the physical presence of the A419 and associated vegetation (including outgrown and relatively dense hedgerows and small woodland blocks along the A419).

10.2.62 Again it is important to stress that this LVIA does not seek to assess potential effects on heritage assets which are more appropriately assessed in Chapter 7 Archaeology & Cultural Heritage, which assess the different factors that contribute to the significance of heritage assets, including their setting. The LVIA refers to the IHCA in so far as it provides an understanding of the landscape character of the Site and its surroundings, and the relationship between the Revised Scheme and the character and appearance of the IHCA.

Registered Parks and Gardens

10.2.63 The Historic England ‘Register of Historic Parks was established in 1983. The emphasis of the Register is on gardens, grounds and other planned open spaces that have planned surroundings reflecting the landscaping fashions of their day. The emphasis of the Register is on ‘designed’ landscapes, rather than on planting or botanical importance. More information on Registered Parks and Gardens is available from Historic England and an inventory of sites is available through the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) at http://historicengland.org.uk/listing-the-list/.

10.2.64 There are five Registered Parks and Gardens located between 5-10km from the Revised Scheme. All of these are located outside the bareground ZTV of the Revised Scheme and have therefore been ‘scoped out’ of the assessment.

10.2.65 There are two Registered Parks and Gardens within 5km of the Proposed EcoPark.

- Woodchester Mansion (Grade II) is located 9.8km SSW of the Revised Scheme and is located outside of the bareground ZTV and has therefore been ‘Scoped Out’ of the assessment.
- Frampton Court (Grade II *) is located 2.5km WNW of the Revised Scheme. Approximately 20% of the spatial area with Frampton Court Park and Gardens within the bareground ZTV of the Revised Scheme and the area is outside the Screened ZTV.

Ancient Woodland

10.2.66 Mole Grove ancient woodland is located 500m to the north of the Proposed Ecopark.

Visual Receptors

10.2.67 The baseline assessment examines the visual resource of the study area and identifies key visual receptors lying within the (screened and unscreened) ZTV of the Proposed Eco Park. Several site visits were undertaken to identify receptors with potential views towards the Site. The visual envelope of the Site is described in the main LVIA report.

National Trails and long distance routes

Cotswold Way

Area (Conservation Area No.28) and parts of seven other existing Conservation Areas. Therefore, this landscape assessment appraises the Revised Scheme against the character types of the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Statement referred to from here onwards as the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA).

8 Individual character sheets for each of the character types / parts were not appended IHCA Statement as confirmed in writing by SDC.

9 The description notes that these green spaces offer a juxtaposition between the more developed urban / industrial areas of the historic built environment. Paras 3.85 and 3.86 describe the range of land uses that contribute towards this ‘green gap’ and its sense of open space when travelling along the IHCA, and includes reference to water meadows, mill ponds, previously developed land that has since become redundant open spaces, former tip land, wooded railway cutting / embankments, high quality meadows and sports fields (emphasis added). The IHCA character description includes a photo plate (Plate 10b) of a rugby pitch in the context of describing the ‘spine’ of green corridor at Para 3.86 (pg 33).
10.2.71 Within the 2km Study Area The Severn and Thames Way broadly follows the course of the River Thames and Severn Way. The component of the Cotswold Way within the study area is broadly orientated by Stinchcombe Golf Course 9km SSW and Painswick House 9km to the NE.

10.2.70 The route connects the River Thames and River Severn between Framilode and Lechlade and covers a distance of 45 miles. The Thames and Severn Way primarily follows the towpaths of the Stroudwater Navigation and Thames & Severn Canal but also diverts to other Rights of Way in places. Continued improvements to the route and its status (e.g. becoming a recognised national long distance footpath) are envisaged as part of the Cotswolds Canals Restoration project. At present, the infilled section the canal west of Westfield Bridge is not part of the Thames and Severn Way. From the lock near Chipmans Platt roundabout the Thames and Severn Way diverts to the River Frome (joined through a short stretch of road on Spring Hill Road) until the A38, rejoining the tow path route at Fromebridge roundabout. This section of the route between Chipmans Platt and the A38 is locally called the ‘missing mile’ of the Stroudwater Canal.

10.2.71 Within the 2km Study Area The Severn and Thames Way broadly follows the course of the River Frome and the existing Stroudwater Canal and comprises footpaths; Stonehouse No.13 (to the SE), Eastington Footpath No.77 and Eastington Footpath No 46 (To the NW). In the wider study area to the south east the route travels through Stonehouse and into Stroud. To the north west the route passes Saul Visitor centre approximately at approximately 3.4km from the Revised Scheme (at the intersection with the Sharpness Canal) and continues on to Framilode where it links with the Seven Way at 4.5km from the Site.

10.2.72 The Severn Way follows the course of the Severn Estuary and passes round the Arlingham peninsula. It is located 3.7km west of the Revised Scheme at its closest point.

10.2.73 The Wysis Way is located 9.4km northeast of the Revised Scheme.

National Cycle routes

10.2.74 National Cycle Routes No.41 and 45 are located within the 10km study area. Grove Lane near to Westend on the north east corner of the Site comprises part of NCR No.45. This road also passes over the M5 (See VP 7) and travels through Whitminster (located outside of the ZTV for the Revised Scheme). Information on these routes is available from Sustrans at [http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map/route/severn-and-thames/](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map/route/severn-and-thames/).

Public Rights of Way

10.2.75 Gloucestershire County Council have produced an online map of Public Rights of Way can be viewed at [https://gloucestershire.firmstep.com/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F_Name=B75apJt4Qop&HideToolbars=1](https://gloucestershire.firmstep.com/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F_Name=B75apJt4Qop&HideToolbars=1).

10.2.76 The following footpaths are located within the Redline Boundary and shown on RS Figure10.7b.

- Eastington Footpath No. No.37 - Crossing parcel of land SE of J13 and parcel of land NE of J13 (‘main and left branch’)
- Eastington Footpath No.38- Crossing parcel of land NE of J13 (‘right branch’)
- Eastington Footpath No.41 – Running North of Westfield Bridge through a tree lined track past William Morris House, meeting with Eastington Footpath No. 37.

10.2.77 The following PRoW are located within approximately 1km of the Revised Scheme and have been ‘Scoped In’ to the assessment:

- East of Site around Grove Lane / Westend. Includes: Grove Lane to Rose Cottage (Eastington Footpaths No. 34 & 36); Westend Cross to area north of the Grange (Eastington Footpath No.35); Eastington Bridlepath 33
- North east of M5 to Nupend. Includes: Eastington Footpaths 20.21, 22, 23 (left of Nupend lane); Eastington Footpaths 24 (right of Nupend lane); Eastington footpath 78 (alongside eastern side of motorway and above Mole Grove woodland)
- South east of Site and along Stroudwater Canal. Includes: Eastington Footpaths No 76 & 77 (along canal tow path); Eastington Footpath No.41 (triangular connection between Spring Hill Road / Eastington Footpath No.76 and extending to / including Westfield Bridge and the vegetated track on the SE boundary of Site).
- South of Site along River Frome (“Thames and Severn Way). Includes: Eastington Footpath No.46 (along River Frome)
- South of Site Allerton / Eastington fringe paths connecting to River Frome. Includes: Eastington Footpaths No. 49 & No.50 (triangular connection to River); Eastington Footpaths No.51 & No.80 (or rise of hill near Alkerton).
- North west of M5 towards Whitminster. Includes: Whitminster Paths No.16; No.17 (NW by copse of woodland and adjacent to western side of M5); Whitminster Paths No. 26 & No.15 (west of M5 and north NCR)
- Claypits Footpath. Includes: Eastington Footpath No.48

10.2.78 The PRoW network within 2km is generally formed by a series of short but interlinking clusters of paths. Between 500m the following viewpoints are representative of footpaths from more elevated locations, to reflect the gently undulating topography around the lowland plain and slight ridges created by the River Frome. Viewpoint No. 8 (Eastington Footpath No.51) runs along the northern edge of the settlement of Eastington. Viewpoint No.6 is located near to the village of Nupend on Eastington Footpath No.23, near to the property of Yew Tree Villa.

Settlements and Residential Property

Settlements

10.2.79 The following settlements are located within 2km of the Proposed Ecopark and are at least partially within the bareground ZTV.
10.2.80 The following settlements are within 5km of the Revised Scheme and are at least partially within the bareground ZTV. Stroud itself (the nearest large settlement) is located outside the bareground ZTV.

- Whitminster, Eastington, Nupend, Nastend, Fromebridge

10.2.81 In practice, the topography of the Site combined with frequent hedgerows populated with trees along the boundary and within the immediate surrounding area will provide a moderate / high degree of screening for the majority of properties within 2km of the Revised Scheme. Certain properties may potentially experience more filtered in winter months and these have been scoped into the assessment. Within 500m of the Revised Scheme there are 18 listed commercial premises and 80 individual residences. Within 2km there are approximately 1800 properties and commercial premises (not all of which are located within the ZTV). Appendix 10.4 provides a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment of individual properties and clusters of properties with potential for views towards the Site.

Open Access Areas, Common Land, Country Parks and National Trust Land

10.2.82 Tracts of land with public access located in the 10km Study Area include registered common land and other open access land. Access land is that which is normally accessible to the public on foot incorporates open land designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, common land and areas owned and/or managed by the National Trust.

10.2.83 The following areas are located within the bareground ZTV of the Revised Scheme:

- Common Land: Stinchcombe Golf Course (6km SSW), Selsey Common (5km SW), Rodborough Common (7km ESE).
- Country Parks: Robinswoodhill (9.5km NNE).
- National Trust Land: Haresfield (4km ENE), Rodborough Common (7km ESE).
- Open Access Land (not also classified as Common Land): Cam Lonnond (6.5km S), Coaley Peak (4.5km SSE), Haresfield (4km ENE).

Other Relevant Receptors

10.2.84 Commercial properties within 500m

- Stroudwater Interchange: Gloucester County Council.
- A419 Roundabout: Little Chef, Travel Lodge, Shell Garage.
- Westend Courtyard.

10.2.85 Commercial properties beyond 500m

- Camp site near Claypits (1km to SW).
- Highfield Garden Centre (1km to NW).
- Stonehouse Trading Estate (approx 1-1.5km SE).
- Stroudwater Trading Estate (approx 1-1.5km SE).
- Fromebridge Mill (approx 1km NW).

Places of Interest

- Saul Visitor Centre (Sharpness Canal / Thames and Severn Way).
- Slimbridge Wildfowl & Wetland Trust – Sloane Observation Tower.

Future Baseline

10.2.86 The Cotswold Canals Partnership aims to restore navigation along The Stroudwater Navigation and Thames and Severn Canals. The Cotswold Canals Partnership has already embarked on a £37million restoration project on ‘Phase 1a’ (from Stonehouse Court to Brimscombe Port), while Phase 1b (Westwards to Saul Junction) is being planned. Phase 1b would incorporate the ‘missing mile’ and the area of land which crosses the Site (i.e. where the canal is currently in-filled) as well as the canal engineering works required for the M5 and A38 crossings. Following an unsuccessful bid for funding of Phase 1b in May 2016 is likely that a revised bid will be submitted in late 2017, supported by match funding from a number of bodies (including SDC and Gloucestershire Council Council and the Canals and Rivers Trust, in addition to the cash and volunteer resources provided by the Cotswold Canals Trust). The canal network is a historically important part of the local landscape and its restoration / renaissance will offer a number of social, economic and environmental benefits. The adopted Stroud District Local Plan (November 2015) contains a specific policy on maintaining, restoring and regenerating the District’s canals (Delivery Policy ES11).

10.2.87 Development to the West of Stonehouse (Robert Hitchens Ltd) will extend the existing housing and employment areas to the east of Grove Lane. Land to the West of Stonehouse is a strategic allocation in the SDC Local Plan (See Policy SA2). This LVIA has had due regard to the Master Plan, Parameter Plan, Design and Access Statement and Green Infrastructure Plan in the assessment of landscape and visual effects, including cumulative.

10.2.88 The West of Stonehouse (WoS) development is shown on RS Figure 18.1 as well as RS Figures 10.12a, 10.12b and 10.8a. WoS will comprise a mixed use development, local service centre, public open space and associated landscape works. The WoS allocation covers an area of approximately 98ha (with EcoPark comprising 39.5ha over all three land parcels including the nature reserve). The WoS site is bound to the east by the Bristol to Birmingham Railway line, to the southeast by the settlement of Nastend as well as Oldends Industrial Estate, to the west by Grove Lane and the settlement of Nupend and to the north by agricultural fields. The application documents include proposals for a mix of housing (2, 2.5 and 3 storey) employment uses (B1, B2 and B8) a local service centre which may include A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1, D2 and B1 uses. The parameter plan for WoS shows that employment buildings would have a maximum height of 14.5m to ridge and would be located on the eastern side or near to the centre of the WoS site. Housing would predominantly be 2 storey (up to 10m) and 2.5 storey (up to 11m) with some 3 storey housing (up to 13.0m), with the 3 storey buildings located near to the centre of the WoS site.

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10.2.89 Outline planning permission for WoS was approved in April 2016 (S.14/0810/OUT). In addition the following reserved matters have also been approved or are currently pending consideration.

- Phase 1 Infrastructure Plan (Approved 31/05/2017). Planning Application Number S.17/0219/REM.
- Development of Housing Areas H1, H6 and H7 for 103 new dwellings with associated infrastructure, open space and landscaping. Planning Application Number S.17/0095/REM. Submitted January 2017, Pending Consideration. These housing blocks are on the areas of lower lying topography next to Grove Lane and near to Chipmans Platt Roundabout (Housing area near opposite the Services, extending up to Westend Cross at the bottom of Grove End Lane).

10.2.90 These proposals are addressed in the assessment of cumulative effects in the LVIA main report (Chapter 10) and RS Appendix 10.5 Cumulative Assessment Schedules.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessments (LSAs)

10.2.91 The following landscape sensitivity appraisals were reviewed as part of the baseline assessment as they are listed on SDC’s ‘environmental evidence’ portion of their website. They provide background information on the landscape context and sensitivities on the area encompassing the Site. However, it should be stressed that landscape sensitivity is informed by the both the value of the area and its susceptibility to development and should always be considered in the context of the type and nature of development being proposed. This is emphasised in best practice guidance such as GLVIA3 11. In particular the Revised Scheme provides a mix of (above and ground level) sporting facilities, planting, open space and car parking which may be different in form / character to housing or employment uses.

URS (On behalf of SDC). Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal (July 2013)

10.2.92 In 2013 SDC commissioned URS (2013) to undertake a high level Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal (LSA) of Potential Locations (PLs) for housing and employment growth. This LSA Formed Part of the sustainability appraisal which fed into the Local Development Plan Process (subsequently adopted in November 2015). The area encompassing the Site was previously identified as ‘PL No.9 Employment north of Eastington’ in the URS Sensitivity Appraisal 2013. A map of the relevant areas is provided on page 45 of the LSA12 and incorporates all three land parcels described previously (i.e. land east of the M5 and north and south of the A419 and land west of the M5 and south of the A419).

10.2.93 The Site is located in the previously identified PL No.9 ‘Employment north of Eastington’. PL9 is assessed in the LSA as having ‘medium sensitivity’ and the following key characteristics:

- “Predominantly flat pastoral agricultural landscape dissected by the A419 to the east of Junction 13 of the M5;
- Bound to the north by the Grove Lane, to the west by the M5 road corridor (and Junction 13) and by the River Frome to the south;
- Agricultural character is eroded by the presence of road corridors;
- Hedgerows in some locations appear degraded with landscape elements otherwise in moderate condition;
- Generally, tree cover and vegetation along field boundaries act to provide visual containment although degraded hedgerows act to increase intervisibility in some locations where tree cover is sparse;
- Some distant views are available to the elevated Cotswolds uplands to the east from elevated locations;
- Receptors primarily consist of users of the PRoWs, residents of adjacent farmsteads and users of local roads/M5;
- Tranquility heavily degraded by the influence of context of road infrastructure with traffic noise associated with the A419 and M5 immediately to the west notable from most locations;
- A small number of PRoW along the River Frome and surrounding the village suggest a moderate amenity value.”

White Consultants (on behalf of Stroud District Council). Stroud District Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (December 2016).

10.2.94 In December 2016, SDC appointed White Consultants to undertake a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (hereafter referred to as the ‘2016 LSA’) for land directly around Tier 1, 2 and 3 settlements in Stroud District13. This study forms part of the Council’s Strategic Assessment of Land Availability (SALA), which in turn will inform subsequent reviews of the local plan. The stated aim of this study was to “…determine the sensitivity of the landscape around the principal settlements within Stroud District to accommodate future housing and employment uses…” (2016 LSA, Para 1.1 & 1.2, pg.2). Whilst the 2016 LSA study intended to relate specifically to potential employment and housing uses, it provides some background information on the landscape context and sensitivities on the area encompassing the Site (as well as advice on design and locational considerations at a broad level). Full extracts and figures derived from this study are provided at RS Appendix 10.9.

10.2.95 The 2016 LSA builds upon, and provides a more detailed assessment than, the 2013 appraisal by URS. Around 220 potential land parcels are considered in the 2016 LSA. The land south of the A419 is located in sensitivity parcels ‘S04’ and land north of the A419 in sensitivity parcel ‘S05’. The land west of the M5 and south of the A419 (proposed nature reserve is not included). The 2016 LSA therefore adopts a more fine grained analysis that the preceding 2013 study which covered all 3 land parcels. Under the 2016 LSA land parcel S04 (south of the A419 and east of the M5) is attributed...
medium sensitivity to both housing and employment uses and land parcel St05 (land north of the A419 and east of the M5) is attributed medium / low sensitivity to both housing and employment uses.


10.2.97 For the purposes of the 2016 LSA, housing uses are taken to mean;

- “Housing is taken to be low rise housing around 8m high at medium-low densities ranging from small through to larger estate developments of a size that might be expected to be allocated in a Local Plan. The use classes are C2 and C3.” (2016 LSA, Para 2.11, p5)

10.2.98 For the purposes of the 2016 LSA, employment uses are taken to mean;

- “…medium scale business, commercial or hotel development. The depth of office buildings would typically be expected to be around 15-20m and industrial/warehouse uses a maximum of around 35m. Heights may exceed 8m with office blocks up to 3 storeys high and industrial units up to 12m to 12m. The use classes included are A, B and C1. A typical example of the scale of building and associated infrastructure expected is at Stonehouse Business Park.” (2016 LSA, Para 2.12, p5)

10.2.99 Definitions of the sensitivity classes as cited in the 2016 LSA are reproduced below:

- Medium / Low landscape sensitivity (Area north of A419): “Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the land parcel are resilient to change and/or its values are medium/low and it can accommodate the relevant type of development in many situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are high” (2016 LSA, Table 1, p6).

- Medium landscape sensitivity (Area south of A419): “Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the land parcel are susceptible to change and/or its values are medium/low through to high/medium and/or it may have some potential to accommodate the relevant type of development in some defined situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are intermediate” (2016 LSA, Table 1, p6).

10.2.100 Para 2.2 of the 2016 LSA also notes that whilst there may be variations in sensitivity within a given land parcel, a land parcel which is situated in an area of medium sensitivity is likely to have some opportunity for development within it.

10.2.101 RS Figure 10.8a reproduce maps derived from the 2016 LSA. These maps illustrate that across the entirety of the Stroud District, there only St05 qualifies with medium/low sensitivity to employment uses and there are very few potential sites qualifying under the medium sensitivity category – with most potential employment sites exhibiting a high sensitivity to such uses. Relatively speaking, the Site therefore has notably fewer constraints in landscape and visual terms, when assessed objectively against other locations. This however would be subject to detailed assessment and sympathetic design in relation to landscape and visual criteria identified. A full description of units St04 and St05 have been reproduced from the 2016 LSA below.
Landscape Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitivity Parcel S005 (North of A419)</th>
<th>Landscape Context</th>
<th>Summary of Sensitivity – quoted from 2016 LSA (in relation to employment uses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity Parcel S004 (South of A419)</td>
<td>Landscape Context</td>
<td>Table 10.2.3 Landscape Sensitivity – Reproduced from White Consultants 2016 LSA of Site Land Parcels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Character Unit</td>
<td>Sensitivity ‘rating’ attributed by White Consultants (2016 LSA) (in relation to housing and employment uses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: PROWs cross the area.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Character Area: Severn and Avon Vales Stroud District LCA Landscape Character Type: Lowland Plain, Frome River Valley to south County/AONB LCA: Landscape Character Type: Settled Unwooded Vale HLC type: A2</td>
<td>Medium Sensitivity “Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the land parcel are susceptible to change and/or its values are medium/low through to high/medium and/or it may have some potential to accommodate the relevant type of development in some defined situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are intermediate” (2016 LSA, Table 1, p6).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landform/Water bodies</td>
<td>Very gentle slopes falling to the west</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land cover pattern/use/elements</td>
<td>Semi-regular small to medium-sized fields of pasture with mainly outgrown hedges. There are a few clumps of trees including adjacent to the M5 junction and a residual orchard at Grove Farm, Westend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement pattern within parcel</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape features</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape condition/intensity of use</td>
<td>Moderate/poor condition and intensity of use as pasture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervisibility/openess/enclosure</td>
<td>The area generally feels enclosed, due to the outgrown hedges and the relatively flat land.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyline</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Views</td>
<td>From PROWs through the area and M5 and A419 adjacent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detractors</td>
<td>M5 and roundabout adjacent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tranquillity</td>
<td>Tranquility is limited by the M5 and A419 traffic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement edge character</td>
<td>N/A as adjacent to the allocated sites, not the existing Stonehouse edge. Westend is a traditional linear settlement with some 20c infill.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional and/or visual relationship between the area and the settlement/key features</td>
<td>The area forms part of very gently sloping rural lower valley slopes which form the transitional landscape between Severn Vale and theEscarpment east with associated views. The area contributes to the setting of the linear rural settlement of Westend. The area forms a part of the physical separation between the expanding Stonehouse and the countryside and M5 to the west. PROWs cross the area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential visual receptors</td>
<td>Users of PROWs, minor roads and the M5, and residents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constraints / Designations</td>
<td>Landscape: None Historic: None Biodiversity: None Other: PROWs cross the area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Character Area: Severn and Avon Vales Stroud District LCA Landscape Character Type: Escarpment foot slopes, Lowland Plain to south County/AONB LCA: Landscape Character Type: Settled Unwooded Vale HLC type: A2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.2.3 Landscape Sensitivity – Reproduced from White Consultants 2016 LSA of Site Land Parcels

- HLC type: A2
- Unwooded Vale
- County/AONB LCA: Landscape Character Type: Settled Unwooded Vale
- HLC type: A2

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In a wider context it is worth noting, that out of the 220 land parcels considered across the Stroud District as part of the 2016 LSA, the parcel of land north of the A419 (St04) exhibits the lowest landscape sensitivity to employment uses in relative terms (with unit St04 having the lowest sensitivity rating (medium-low) of all 220 sensitivity parcels outside existing settlement boundaries, currently identified in Stroud District as part of the Strategic Assessment of Land Availability / SALA process). Relatively speaking, the Site therefore has notably fewer constraints in landscape and visual terms, when assessed objectively against other locations.

This is further reinforced in the 2016 LSA, which in addition to the site-specific analysis outlined above, provides additional narrative on the preferred location for growth around the Tier 1, 2 and 3 settlement footprint part of the Site north of the A419 towards Westend (mainly LCT 5A Escarpment Footslopes with some Lowland Plain LCT 5B) and the southern part of the Site, south of the A419 (some Lowland Plain LCT 5B and Frome River Valley LCT 5C as one moves further south).

A bespoke landscape strategy and Green Infrastructure (GI) plan was devised for Eco Park, where these proposals are described in RS Appendix 10.7 Landscape Strategy, RS Figure 10.11c Landscape Strategy, RS Figure 10.11d Landscape Mitigation and RS Figure 5.3 Indicative Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan. This includes more explicit linkages on:

- How project components have been sited to avoid or minimise adverse effects on sensitive landscape and/or visual receptors.
- How the suite of enhancement measures that form an integral part of the Revised Scheme respond to landscape characteristics / opportunities.

The Revised Scheme is considered to respond well to guidance contained in the 2016 LSA, where a fuller response in provided in RS Appendix 10.7 Landscape Strategy.

Landscape Sensitivity and relationship with other Landscape Character Assessments

GLVIA3 stresses that sensitivity should be assessed in the context of the type of development being proposed and that sensitivity should be regarded as part of the assessment of effects (addressed in more detail in the Chapter 10 main report). Notwithstanding this, a brief description of the relationship between and the sensitivity of different LCTs / LCAs is provided below.

In terms of landscape character types, the table below and RS Figure 10.8b have been produced by Ecotricity to illustrate how the sensitivity of different character types varies throughout the Study Area. This was needed to reflect variation in landscape sensitivity both across the Site and the surrounding area, encompassing the different landscape character units identified in the relevant landscape character assessments. These include:

- Natural England Landscape Character Assessment 2014 – National Character Area profiles;
- Gloucestershire ("Various Vales") Landscape Character Assessment 2006;
- The Cotswolds AONB Landscape Assessment 2004; and
- Stroud District Landscape Assessment 2000.

RS Figure 10.8b shows how landscape sensitivity changes between the Development Footprint part of the Site south of the A419 towards Westend (mainly LCT 5A Escarpment Footslopes with some Lowland Plain LCT 5B) and the southern part of the Site, south of the A419 (some Lowland Plain LCT 5B and Frome River Valley LCT 5C as one moves further south).
### Table 10.2.4 Landscape Sensitivity - Stroud District Landscape Assessment 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape Character Unit</th>
<th>LCT Ref</th>
<th>Dist* (km)</th>
<th>Susceptibility</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Sensitivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escarpment Footslopes</td>
<td>5A</td>
<td>Onsite</td>
<td>Medium / High</td>
<td>Medium / High</td>
<td>Medium / High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland Plain</td>
<td>5B</td>
<td>Onsite</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frome River Valley</td>
<td>5C</td>
<td>Onsite</td>
<td>Medium / High</td>
<td>Medium / High</td>
<td>Medium / High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wold Tops</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secluded Valleys</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escarpment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severn Vale Grazing Marshes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* approximate distance from Redline Boundary in km at closest point

10.2.110 The landscape sensitivities recorded for each relevant character unit in the Study Area above inform the assessment of effects on landscape character in both the Chapter 10 main report and RS Appendix 10.3 Landscape Assessment Schedules.

10.2.111 Compared to the 2016 LSA site-level assessment carried out by White Consultants, as depicted in RS Figure 10.8a, Ecotricity’s assessment attributes a slightly higher landscape sensitivity to specific landscape character units comprising parts of the Site and its immediate surroundings (RS Figure 10.8b). However, this is not deemed to be inconsistent with the 2016 LSA study given the spread of geographic areas under consideration. As the character units extend over a wide and varied area they will inevitably exhibit local variations in sensitivity. This LVIA errs on the side of caution in elevating the landscape sensitivity of the Site itself and area immediately surrounding the Redline Boundary.