Planning Application
by Puy du Fou UK
Land North-West of Bicester

EIA NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Savills

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PUY DU FOU
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Land north west of Bicester

EIA Non-Technical Summary

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Prepared on behalf of

PUY DU FOU®

savills

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Non-Technical Summary

1. Introduction

Background

1.1 This Environmental Statement ('ES'), prepared by Savills UK on behalf of Puy du Fou UK, supports an Outline Planning Application (the 'Planning Application') submitted to Cherwell District Council ('CDC') for a major tourism development at Land north west of Bicester (the 'Site'). The Proposed Development spans approximately 158 hectares and includes:

- Outdoor and indoor theatres
- Hotels, restaurants, and conference facilities
- Offices, warehousing, and workshops
- Medical and security centres
- Animal facilities (stables, aviary, sheds)
- Infrastructure such as waste and water treatment, energy centres, solar panels, and landscaped areas
- Detailed proposals for Site access.

1.2 The ES outlines the Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') process undertaken, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations'). It details the project's likely environmental effects, proposed mitigation measures, and residual impacts. The EIA process included:

- Screening (not formally requested due to the project's scale)
- Scoping (to define assessment focus with input from statutory consultees)
- Baseline data collection and evaluation of likely significant effects

1.3 The full findings are presented in the ES, with this Non-Technical Summary ('NTS') providing an accessible overview.

Environmental Impact Assessment

1.4 EIA is a process that formally considers the construction and operational aspects of a proposal that may have significant effects on the environment. The findings of an EIA are described in a written report known as an ES. An ES provides environmental information about the scheme, including a description of the development, its predicted environmental effects and the measures proposed to mitigate adverse effects: information that is taken into account in the planning decision.

1.5 The ES has been prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations. This document is the NTS which provides a summary of the main findings of the ES, including the significant environmental effects, mitigation and residual effects predicted to result from the Proposed Development.

1.6 During the preliminary stages of the EIA process, a request was made to CDC for its EIA Scoping Opinion (7 February 2025). The purpose of this was to identify what CDC considers to be the main environmental issues associated with the Proposed Development. CDC consulted with statutory consultees and issued a formal EIA Scoping Opinion confirming that the technical chapters to be included in the ES are:

- Chapter 6: Transport and Travel
- Chapter 7: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
- Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Effects
- Chapter 9: Noise
- Chapter 10: Lighting
- Chapter 11: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology
- Chapter 12: Hydrology and Flood Risk
- Chapter 13: Ground Conditions
- Chapter 14: Air Quality
- Chapter 15: Socioeconomic Effects
- Chapter 16: Human Health
- Chapter 17: Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases
- Chapter 18: Minerals

1.7 Initially, Materials and Waste were scoped in due to the scale of the development. However, following further consultation with Oxfordshire County Council ('OCC') and submission of detailed waste projections and methodology, it was agreed that a separate waste chapter was not required. A standalone Outline Waste Management Plan is part of the Planning Application Submission, but outside the ES.

1.8 Minerals were scoped into the ES due to the northern part of the Site being within a Minerals Safeguarding Area, as requested by CDC.

1.9 The EIA methodology involved assessing potential direct and indirect impacts on baseline environmental conditions, identifying likely significant effects, proposing mitigation measures, likely effects once these mitigation measures are implemented and any cumulative effects with surrounding developments. The approach aligns with statutory requirements and best practice guidance.

2 Site and Local Context

2.1 The Site spans approximately 158 hectares of agricultural land located north of Bucknell village and around 3.5 km north of Bicester, Oxfordshire (and includes some land within the B4100 as required for the detailed access designs). The B4100 is to the east and lies close to Junction 10 of the M40, offering strategic road access to London and Birmingham. Rail connections are available via Bicester North and Bicester Village stations.

2.2 The Site includes:

- Agricultural fields and buildings

- Small woodland areas including Ancient Woodland (including Twelve Acre Copse, Great Copse and Nettle Copse)
- Sections of the B4100 for proposed highway works

2.3 Access is currently via agricultural tracks from Bainton Road (south) and the B4100 (north). The surrounding area is predominantly farmland, with nearby features including Stoke Wood, Bucknell village, and local amenities such as a hospital, church, and public house.

2.4 In planning terms, the Site is not allocated in the current Cherwell Local Plan (adopted 2015), but parts fall within:

- Conservation Target Areas
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Ancient Woodland
- Public Rights of Way ('PRoW')
- Minerals Safeguarding Zone

2.5 Relevant planning policies are addressed in the Planning Statement and throughout the Environmental Statement's technical chapters.

3 Proposed Development

The Development Proposals

3.1 The Proposed Development by Puy du Fou UK is a large-scale tourism and leisure destination covering approximately 158 hectares. It includes:

- 4 period villages with food, beverage, and retail outlets
- 13 theatres for world-class live shows (6 outdoor, 7 indoor including immersive experiences)
- 3 hotels, one with a conference centre
- Back-of-house facilities: offices, warehousing, medical centre, animal facilities, laundry, workshops
- Infrastructure: car parking, waste and water treatment, energy centre, solar panels, lakes, landscaping, internal roads and paths, and active travel routes
- Three new vehicle access points are proposed from the B4100, including a main visitor entrance, hotel/conference access, and staff/service access.

3.2 The Proposed Development will be delivered in phases, with Phase 1 (Opening Year) expected to complete by 2029, delivering around 60–70% of the project. Subsequent phases will follow based on operational and commercial factors.

3.3 The EIA is based on a defined development envelope, setting parameters for land use, building heights, and access and movement to allow flexibility for subsequent details while ensuring robust evaluation.

3.4 A Construction Environmental Management Plan ('CEMP') will guide construction practices, including noise, dust, light, runoff control, and safe fuel storage. Construction traffic, access, and compound locations will be managed to minimise environmental impacts.

Background, Alternatives and Design Evolution

3.5 A thorough site selection process considered multiple locations, evaluating factors such as:

- Geographic suitability
- Site size and accessibility
- Planning risk and environmental constraints
- Economic viability

3.6 The site identification process involved analysis of national and local planning policies, site designations (in particular environmental factors), site visits and technical due diligence (such as noise and ecology). The 'Bucknell, Oxfordshire' site – subject of this Planning Application – was selected as the preferred Site based on these criteria.

3.7 The design of the Proposed Development evolved through multiple iterations, informed by:

- Technical assessments
- Public and stakeholder feedback
- Lessons learned from Puy du Fou Parks in France and Spain

3.8 An extensive consultation process has been undertaken to support the evolution of the Proposed Development, from project inception to submission of this Planning Application including:

- Pre-application engagement included regular meetings with CDC, OCC and technical stakeholders.
- Public consultations were held in July 2024 and February 2025, involving in-person events and online platforms. Feedback was gathered from residents, businesses, and interest groups.
- Sector-specific events focused on topics such as hotels and heritage assets, with targeted discussions involving relevant stakeholders.

3.9 The final design reflects a balance between operational needs, environmental considerations, and stakeholder / community input, and forms the basis of the Planning Application.

4 Findings of the EIA

Transport and Travel

4.1 Chapter 6 'Transport and Travel' (prepared by Steer) presents a comprehensive assessment of the potential transport-related impacts of the Proposed Development. It is supported by a full Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, and informed by consultation with statutory bodies, technical stakeholders, and local authorities. The chapter is grounded in national and local planning policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF'), and follows established environmental assessment methodologies.

4.2 Baseline conditions are described in detail, including existing traffic volumes, road safety data, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and public transport services in the vicinity of the Site. Traffic surveys and modelling tools, such as the Bicester Transport Model were used to establish current and future traffic scenarios, including a 2042 baseline with and without the Proposed Development. The assessment identifies sensitive receptors likely to be affected by

changes in traffic flow and evaluates potential impacts on accessibility, safety and user experience.

4.3 The assessment methodology draws on guidance from the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment ('IEMA') guidelines, and relevant planning legislation. It includes a step-by-step evaluation of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, informed by technical consultations and policy reviews. The methodology incorporates modelling of traffic flows, analysis of pedestrian and cyclist safety, and consideration of severance, fear and intimidation, and amenity impacts.

4.4 A range of mitigation measures are proposed to address potential adverse effects. These include new vehicle access points, junction upgrades, and improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes. Sustainable transport initiatives are also planned, such as enhanced public transport provision, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and travel demand management strategies. Measures to reduce noise, air pollution, and traffic congestion are integrated into the design and operational plans for the Proposed Development.

4.5 The chapter also considers residual effects – i.e., those that remain after mitigation measures are implemented. It concludes that, with the proposed interventions, impacts on highway safety, congestion, and environmental quality will be reduced to acceptable levels. The assessment includes analysis of changes in hazard levels and user experience, particularly in relation to pedestrian and cyclist safety.

4.6 **The Proposed Development is anticipated to result in no significant adverse transport effects**, with some minor adverse impacts on severance, delay, and safety, and beneficial outcomes from infrastructure upgrades and improved connectivity.

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

4.7 Chapter 7 'Biodiversity and Nature Conservation' (prepared by EDP) assesses the potential ecological impacts of the Proposed Development and outlines measures to protect and enhance biodiversity across the Site. The assessment was undertaken by qualified ecologists and is based on extensive field surveys, desk studies, and consultation with statutory bodies. It follows best practice guidance and complies with relevant national and local legislation.

4.8 The Site supports a diverse range of habitats and species, including ancient woodland, hedgerows, grassland, watercourses, and agricultural land. Protected and notable species recorded include bats, breeding birds, great crested newts, reptiles, badgers, and a variety of invertebrates and plant communities. These ecological features were identified through a suite of surveys conducted in accordance with recognised methodologies and standards.

4.9 The assessment methodology follows guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management ('CIEEM') and considers legislation such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and policies within the NPPF and the adopted and emerging Local Plan. The methodology evaluates the significance of effects on Important Ecological Features ('IEFs') and considers both direct and indirect impacts during construction and operation.

4.10 Potential impacts of the Proposed Development include habitat loss and fragmentation, disturbance to protected species, changes to hydrology affecting aquatic habitats, and increased lighting and noise affecting nocturnal wildlife. To address these, a comprehensive suite of mitigation measures is proposed. These include the retention and enhancement of key habitats, creation of new habitats such as wildflower meadows and ponds, installation of bat boxes and bird nesting features, and sensitive lighting design. A CEMP and Biodiversity Management Plan ('BMP') will be implemented to ensure effective delivery of these measures.

4.11 The Proposed Development will also deliver Biodiversity Net Gain ('BNG') in line with national policy, ensuring that the development results in an overall improvement in ecological value.

4.12 Following the implementation of embedded and additional mitigation measures, **the Proposed Development is expected to result in no significant effects on designated sites, habitats, or species**, with temporary impacts such as dust, disturbance, and displacement effectively managed, and long-term biodiversity net gain exceeding 10% anticipated through sensitive design and habitat enhancement.

Landscape and Visual Effects

4.13 Chapter 8 'Landscape and Visual Effects' (prepared by Radcliffes Environmental) presents a detailed assessment of how the Proposed Development may affect the character and appearance of the surrounding environment. The assessment follows the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('GLVIA3') and evaluates both landscape character and visual amenity across the Site.

4.14 The elements of the Proposed Development have been assessed in terms of their potential to alter the landscape and affect views from nearby properties, PRoW, and other sensitive receptors.

4.15 Baseline conditions were established through field surveys and desk studies, identifying key landscape features and visual viewpoints (in conjunction with CDC and their expert advisers). The assessment considers the Site's location within the local and district landscape character areas, referencing relevant planning policies and designations. It also evaluates the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors, and the magnitude of change resulting from the Proposed Development.

4.16 A robust suite of mitigation measures has been incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development to minimise landscape and visual impacts and ensure integration with the surrounding environment. These measures have been informed by landscape character assessments and follow best practice guidance.

4.17 Key mitigation strategies include the creation of new landscape features that reflect the local character, such as native hedgerows, woodland edge planting, mixed scrub, and tree planting designed to resemble roadside and field boundaries. Planted earthworks, although not typical of the local area, are designed with flowing lines to appear as natural boundary features. These elements aim to soften the visual impact of built structures and infrastructure.

4.18 Structural landscape mitigation is a central component of the design. Earthwork screen bunding combined with advanced nursery stock planting is proposed along all Site boundaries:

- Northern boundary: 5m wide, 2m high bund with woodland edge planting and trees spaced at 6m intervals.
- Southern boundary: up to 40m wide, 7m high bund with woodland and edge planting.
- Eastern boundary: new and infilled hedgerows with linear tree planting.
- Western boundary: up to 40m wide, 7.5m high bund with woodland planting.

4.19 Planting densities and heights are carefully specified to ensure effective screening from Day 1 (with whips and transplants ranging from 0.3m to 1.2m) and to achieve continuous canopy cover by Year 15 (up to 8m high and 5m wide). These measures are designed to reduce visibility of the Proposed Development from sensitive viewpoints and enhance the landscape setting over time.

4.20 During the construction phase, no additional mitigation is proposed beyond containment of works within the Site boundary, except for access-related works on the B4100.

4.21 Despite these mitigation efforts, some residual effects will remain. While key landscape features such as woodlands and hedgerows are retained and strengthened, the legibility of the existing field pattern will be altered due to infill with new planting and built forms. The scale and massing of buildings, particularly grouped structures, will introduce noticeable changes to the landscape character and visual experience, especially from close-range viewpoints and PRoW.

4.22 Following mitigation, **the Proposed Development is expected to result in no significant residual landscape or visual effects** at national and district levels, with temporary moderate adverse impacts during construction and localised significant visual effects for a small number of receptors, which reduce over time and may become beneficial beyond Year 15.

Noise

4.23 Chapter 9 'Noise' (prepared by AECOM) assesses the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on the surrounding acoustic environment, considering both construction and operational phases. The assessment is informed by baseline noise monitoring, predictive modelling, and relevant legislation and planning guidance, including the NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance on Noise ('PPGN'), and policies from the adopted and emerging Local Plan.

4.24 Baseline noise levels were established through site surveys, identifying key receptors including residential properties, public rights of way, and sensitive community facilities. The assessment considers the nature, duration, and frequency of noise sources.

4.25 A range of mitigation measures has been proposed to manage and minimise noise impacts associated with both the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. The accuracy of this was informed by acoustic measurements taken at Puy du Fou's Parks in France and Spain.

4.26 During the construction phase, standard best practicable means will be employed to control noise. These include working hours, using modern low-noise equipment, scheduling noisy activities to avoid sensitive times, and implementing physical barriers where appropriate. Construction traffic is not expected to generate significant noise increases, and no additional mitigation beyond standard practices is required.

4.27 For the operational phase, more tailored mitigation strategies are proposed, particularly for theatre and pyrotechnic noise. Theatre noise will be managed through detailed design interventions, including:

- Strategic placement and orientation of speakers
- Use of set features and barriers to control sound breakout
- Optimisation of theatre orientation to direct sound away from sensitive receptors
- Consideration of sound frequency characteristics to enhance directional control

4.28 A Noise Management Plan ('NMP') will be developed to govern operational noise control. This will include permissible noise levels, maintenance protocols, complaint handling procedures, and staff responsibilities to ensure ongoing compliance and responsiveness.

4.29 Pyrotechnics for the night show – occurring on a few occasions weekly during the Park's open season – have been specially selected so that the only substantial source of noise is at ground

level when they are launched with minimal noise emitted when they burst at height. This allows mitigation to be applied at ground level to screen pyrotechnics noise.

4.30 Pyrotechnic noise will be mitigated through the use of absorptive barriers surrounding launch areas. These barriers are designed to absorb sound and prevent reflections. Additional options such as launch tubes, blast mats, or enclosed pits will be explored during detailed design to further reduce impulsive noise from displays.

4.31 Following implementation of these mitigation measures, residual effects are expected to be minimal. Construction and traffic-related noise impacts are predicted to remain below significant thresholds. Operational theatre noise, once design-based mitigations are applied, is not expected to exceed levels that would cause adverse effects, even during simultaneous performances. Pyrotechnic noise, due to its short duration and infrequent occurrence, is also predicted to remain within acceptable limits when mitigation is in place.

4.32 Overall, the assessment concludes that with the proposed mitigation strategies, **the Proposed Development is expected to result in no significant noise effects** during construction or operation, with targeted design measures effectively managing theatre, show, pyrotechnic, and traffic noise to remain below relevant thresholds.

Lighting

4.33 Chapter 10 'Lighting' (prepared by AECOM) assesses the potential effects of artificial lighting associated with the Proposed Development. Lighting will be introduced across various external areas such as car parks, outdoor theatres, pedestrian and cycle routes, and internal roads. The assessment considers both the construction and operational phases of the development.

4.34 The chapter outlines the legislative and policy context, including the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, the Fireworks Act 2003 and associated regulations, and national planning guidance such as the NPPF. These frameworks provide standards for managing artificial light to prevent nuisance and protect health, amenity, and ecological receptors.

4.35 Baseline lighting conditions were established through surveys and desk studies, identifying sensitive receptors such as nearby residential properties and habitats used by light-sensitive species. The assessment evaluates the potential for obtrusive light, sky glow, glare, and light spill, and considers the cumulative impact of lighting across the Site.

4.36 Mitigation measures have been carefully developed to manage potential lighting impacts during both the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development.

4.37 During the construction phase, lighting will be required primarily during periods of low natural light, such as winter months or inclement weather. A Lighting Management Plan ('LMP') will be implemented as part of the CEMP to control lighting use and minimise nuisance. Measures include:

- Prioritising daytime working hours near sensitive receptors
- Using shielded lighting equipment to prevent light spill and glare
- Establishing buffer zones around receptor locations
- Ensuring lighting is only used when necessary through controlled scheduling and equipment selection

4.38 These strategies aim to reduce obtrusive light, sky glow, and brightness contrast, particularly near residential properties and ecologically sensitive areas.

4.39 For the operational phase, the lighting strategy is embedded within the Site's design and layout. The masterplan positions light-intensive areas – such as the night show arena and car parks – away from key residential and ecological receptors. Additional mitigation includes:

- Strategic placement of buildings and bunds to screen light sources
- Introduction of over 20,000 new trees and structural landscaping to absorb and block light
- Use of low-glare, directional luminaires with controlled intensity and spectral output
- Implementation of lighting curfews and dimming protocols
- Seasonal closure of the park during darker months, limiting night-time activity to specific areas such as the conference centre and hotels

4.40 These measures are informed by best practice and experiences from existing Puy du Fou Parks in France and Spain, and are designed to preserve night-time visual amenity and protect wildlife from light disturbance.

4.41 Residual effects, following mitigation, are expected to be minimal. The assessment concludes that impacts such as light spill, glare, sky glow, and flicker will be reduced to levels that are not significant. Sensitive receptors – including residents, road users, and wildlife – will not experience adverse effects, and the lighting environment will remain compliant with national and local planning policies. The combination of embedded design, operational controls, and ongoing management ensures a resilient and well-considered lighting strategy.

4.42 Overall, **lighting effects from the Proposed Development are expected to be not significant** during both construction and operation, with embedded design and management strategies effectively controlling light spill, glare, and sky glow, and ensuring impacts on residential and ecological receptors remain negligible to minor adverse across all seasonal scenarios.

Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

4.43 Chapter 11 'Cultural Heritage and Archaeology' (prepared by EDP) assesses the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on heritage assets and archaeological resources within and surrounding the Site. The assessment follows national planning guidance and best practice methodologies.

4.44 Baseline studies confirm that there are no designated heritage assets within the Site itself. However, several Grade II listed buildings are located nearby, including Manor Farmhouse and elements of Swift's House, which contribute to the historic character of the area. Archaeological investigations (including some 250 trenches investigated by Cotswold Archaeology) have identified potential remains dating from early settlement periods through to the medieval era, which were further explored through geophysical surveys and trial trenching.

4.45 The assessment evaluates the sensitivity of these assets and the magnitude of potential impacts, considering both direct physical effects and changes to their visual setting. Consultation with Historic England and local conservation officers informed the approach and mitigation strategy.

4.46 Mitigation measures have been embedded into the design of the Proposed Development to avoid or minimise adverse effects on cultural heritage assets and archaeological resources. These measures are informed by baseline assessments, consultation with statutory bodies, and national planning policy. Embedded design mitigation includes:

- Maintaining a substantial undeveloped buffer of at least 350 metres between the development and the nearest designated heritage assets, including Swift's House and listed buildings in Bucknell
- Restricting building heights and massing to reduce visual intrusion into the setting of heritage assets
- Preserving existing woodland copses and limiting the loss of hedgerows, which contribute to the historic landscape character
- Incorporating landscape planting and bunding along Site boundaries to screen built form and soften visual impacts

4.47 These measures are designed to protect both the physical integrity and the visual setting of heritage assets, ensuring that the development integrates sensitively with its historic context.

4.48 In addition to design-based mitigation, archaeological mitigation will be undertaken prior to and during construction. This includes:

- Field investigations, recording, and publication of findings in accordance with best practice and guidance from Historic England
- Implementation of a Written Scheme of Investigation ('WSI') to guide archaeological work and ensure preservation by record where necessary

4.49 Following the implementation of these mitigation strategies, residual effects are predicted to be neutral or minor adverse. These may include subtle changes to the setting of nearby heritage assets due to the visibility of new structures, but such effects are not considered significant. The overall approach demonstrates a proactive commitment to conserving cultural heritage and archaeology, ensuring compliance with planning policy and safeguarding the historic environment. As such, **no significant effects are expected as a result of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage or archaeological receptors**.

Hydrology and Flood Risk

4.50 Chapter 12 'Hydrology and Flood Risk' (prepared by AKT II) assesses the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on surface water, groundwater, and flood risk during both construction and operational phases. The assessment was undertaken by AKT II and follows national guidance including the NPPF, the Water Resources Act, and best practice standards for flood risk and drainage design.

4.51 Baseline conditions were established through Site investigations and mapping, identifying existing drainage characteristics and potential sources of flood risk, including surface water, groundwater, and geological factors. The Site currently lacks formal attenuation measures, and the Proposed Development presents an opportunity to improve drainage and reduce flood risk.

4.52 A Flood Risk Assessment ('FRA') and Surface Water Drainage Strategy were developed to ensure the Site can be safely drained without increasing flood risk to surrounding areas. A comprehensive suite of mitigation measures has been embedded into the design of the Proposed Development to manage potential impacts on surface water, groundwater, and flood risk. These measures are informed by site-specific assessments, national policy, and consultation with relevant authorities.

4.53 During the construction phase, mitigation will be guided by a CEMP, which will include:

- Temporary drainage systems to manage surface water

- Silt traps and sediment control to prevent pollution of watercourses
- Impermeable storage areas for fuels and chemicals to avoid contamination
- Controlled dewatering procedures to manage groundwater safely

4.54 These measures are designed to prevent runoff-related pollution, maintain water quality, and avoid temporary increases in flood risk during construction activities.

4.55 For the operational phase, the Proposed Development incorporates a robust SuDS. Key features include:

- Attenuation basins and swales to manage peak rainfall and reduce runoff rates
- Full retention petrol interceptors in parking areas to improve water quality
- Drainage infrastructure designed to accommodate climate change allowances and extreme rainfall events
- Runoff restricted to greenfield rates, ensuring no increase in flood risk downstream

4.56 The strategy also includes landscape-based interventions such as bunding and planting, which contribute to water management and ecological resilience.

4.57 Residual effects, following implementation of these mitigation measures, are predicted to be negligible. The development will result in a net improvement to drainage conditions compared to the existing Site, which currently lacks formal attenuation. Peak runoff will be significantly reduced, and water quality will be enhanced through filtration and treatment measures. The hydrological characteristics of the Site and surrounding area will be maintained or improved, ensuring compliance with environmental and planning standards.

4.58 In summary, **the Proposed Development is expected to result in no significant effects on hydrology and flood risk**, with embedded mitigation measures ensuring improved drainage, reduced flood risk, and enhanced water quality across both construction and operational phases.

Ground Conditions

4.59 Chapter 13 ‘Ground Conditions’ (prepared by AECOM) assesses the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on soil quality, geology, hydrogeology, land contamination, and associated receptors. The assessment considers both construction and operational phases and follows best practice guidance, incorporating site-specific investigations and environmental baseline data.

4.60 The Site comprises Agricultural Land Classification (‘ALC’) Grade 3 soils, superficial deposits, and bedrock geology. Receptors include construction workers, future Site users, nearby residents, water supply infrastructure, and proposed buildings. Risks assessed include soil sealing, chemical degradation of foundations, permeation of water supply pipes, and potential ground gas hazards.

4.61 Mitigation measures are primarily embedded within the design and construction strategy. These include:

- Tailored foundation design to resist chemical attack and aggressive ground conditions
- Specification of water supply pipes to withstand permeation risks

- Preservation of woodland copses and hedgerows to maintain soil structure and reduce erosion
- Implementation of a CEMP to manage ground disturbance, contamination risks, and groundwater protection
- Ground gas monitoring to confirm low-risk conditions and avoid unnecessary exclusion systems
- Supplementary Site investigations to refine understanding of ground conditions and inform detailed design

4.62 Despite these measures, the sealing of Grade 3 agricultural soils during construction is identified as a major adverse effect and considered significant. This impact is unavoidable due to the nature of the development and cannot be mitigated through design alone.

4.63 Residual effects, following mitigation, range from minor to major adverse. Most risks to infrastructure and enclosed spaces are considered not significant due to the low magnitude of impact and effective design responses. However, the permanent loss of agricultural soil function remains a key residual concern.

4.64 The assessment acknowledges that certain effects on the Site as a result of the Proposed Development are considered **significant**, particularly the sealing of Grade 3 agricultural soils, which is classified as having a **major adverse** impact. However, the chapter concludes that with the application of both inherent and supplementary mitigation measures, ground condition impacts are effectively managed. **Residual effects are limited to specific, unavoidable outcomes, with the overall approach demonstrating a strong commitment to responsible environmental stewardship.**

Air Quality

4.65 Chapter 14 ‘Air Quality’ (prepared by AECOM) assesses the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on ambient air quality, dust, and odour during both construction and operational phases. The assessment considers effects on human health, ecological receptors, and local amenity, and is informed by detailed dispersion modelling, site-specific monitoring, and national guidance.

4.66 During the construction phase a comprehensive CEMP and Dust Management Plan (‘DMP’) will be implemented to control dust emissions and minimise nuisance. Measures include:

- Dust risk assessments and site-specific mitigation schedules
- Monitoring at sensitive receptor locations
- Controlled working hours and dust suppression techniques
- Use of low-emission construction vehicles and equipment
- Track-out controls to prevent dust from spreading onto public roads

4.67 These measures are tailored to the Site’s classification as medium risk for dust soiling and low risk for human health impacts, ensuring effective control of particulate matter (PM_{10}) and dust emissions.

4.68 When operational, the Proposed Development is predicted to have a negligible impact on local air quality. Nonetheless, embedded mitigation includes:

- Traffic management strategies such as park-and-ride and shuttle services

- Design of access roads and car parks to minimise emissions
- Use of low-emission transport infrastructure

4.69 Odour control measures will be implemented at sources such as stables, livestock facilities, wastewater treatment, and waste centres. Odour emissions are managed at source to prevent nuisance both on-site and at nearby receptors. The qualitative odour assessment concludes a negligible risk of exposure, even at high-sensitivity receptors.

4.70 With mitigation in place, during the construction phase, residual effects from dust and PM_{10} emissions are expected to be not significant. Impacts on human health and amenity are controlled through best practice measures, and ecological receptors are protected through buffer zones and dust suppression.

4.71 Dispersion modelling shows that during the operational phase the predicted concentrations of NO_2, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ at all sensitive receptors are well below national Air Quality Strategy ('AQS') objectives. No exceedances are expected, and the development will not trigger the declaration of new Air Quality Management Areas ('AQMAs').

4.72 Overall, **the construction and operational air quality impacts of the Proposed Development is are considered not significant** and are consistent with planning policy and environmental standards.

Socio Economic Effects

4.73 Chapter 15 'Socio Economic Effects' (prepared by Savills) evaluates the wide-ranging impacts of the Proposed Development on the local and regional economy, workforce, housing, and public services. During construction, the project is expected to generate significant employment, supporting over circa 2,600 full-time equivalent ('FTE') jobs through direct, indirect, and induced effects. This includes opportunities for apprenticeships and skills development, particularly in traditional construction methods, contributing to long-term workforce upskilling. The capital investment of over £280 million prior to opening, rising to £577 million once fully operational, will stimulate economic activity and generate substantial Gross Value Added ('GVA') across the region.

4.74 Operationally, the Proposed Development will create up to approximately 2,100 direct jobs, with a diverse range of roles across artistic, technical, hospitality, and administrative functions. These roles are expected to support above-market wages and offer career progression through in-house training. The project will also benefit local supply chains and stimulate visitor spending, both within the Park and in surrounding areas, contributing to sustained economic uplift. Accommodation demand will increase, with three on-site hotels planned and additional overnight stays expected to benefit off-site providers.

4.75 While some adverse effects are anticipated – such as minor displacement of agricultural employment and potential affordability pressures in the housing market – these are mitigated through embedded design features and proposed enhancements, including wage uplifts and partnerships with local accommodation providers. Public services are expected to absorb increased demand through existing funding mechanisms, and the development includes on-site mitigation such as security and medical facilities.

4.76 Overall, **the Proposed Development is expected to deliver significant beneficial socio-economic effects**, particularly through permanent improvements in construction skills and accommodation provision, while mitigation measures help reduce adverse impacts on affordability – resulting in **residual effects that remain significant adverse for some occupational groups but overall enhance local outcomes**.

Human Health

4.77 Chapter 16 'Human Health' (prepared by Savills) provides a comprehensive assessment of how the Proposed Development may influence public health and wellbeing during both construction and operational phases. It considers a wide range of health determinants, including environmental factors such as air quality, noise, and traffic, as well as social and economic influences like employment, access to services, and community cohesion. The assessment is grounded in national and local planning policy, including the NPPF, PPG and the adopted and emerging Local Plan, and follows best practice guidance from the IEMA.

4.78 The analysis identifies potential health risks during construction, such as temporary increases in noise and air pollution, and changes in traffic flow, which may affect nearby residents. However, these are mitigated through embedded design measures, sustainable construction practices, and monitoring strategies. Operationally, the Proposed Development is expected to deliver positive health outcomes by improving access to green spaces, encouraging active travel, supporting local employment, and enhancing social infrastructure. The design also promotes mental wellbeing by reducing social isolation and fostering opportunities for community interaction.

4.79 The assessment uses local health data and demographic trends to evaluate baseline conditions and predict future impacts, considering both direct and cumulative effects. It concludes that, with appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures, the Proposed Development will contribute to the creation of a safe, inclusive, and resilient environment that supports long-term health and wellbeing for residents, workers, and visitors. Therefore, **the Proposed Development is expected to have no significant residual effects on human health and wellbeing**.

Climate Change

4.80 Chapter 17 'Climate Change' presents a comprehensive evaluation of how the Proposed Development contributes to and is affected by climate change. It quantifies greenhouse gas ('GHG') emissions from both construction and operational phases, expressed in carbon dioxide equivalents, and assesses their significance in the context of national carbon budgets and climate targets.

4.81 The assessment identifies a range of mitigation measures aimed at reducing emissions, including the use of low-carbon energy sources, energy-efficient building design, sustainable transport infrastructure, and circular economy principles in material use and waste management. In parallel, the chapter evaluates the Proposed Development's vulnerability to climate-related risks such as extreme heat, flooding, and changing precipitation patterns. Adaptation strategies are proposed to enhance resilience, including SuDS, climate-responsive landscaping, and robust infrastructure design to withstand future climate conditions.

4.82 The assessment is framed within a strong legislative and policy context, referencing international climate agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement, and aligning with national strategies including the UK Net Zero Strategy and local planning policies. It also draws on best practice guidance from professional bodies such as the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals ('ISEP').

4.83 The chapter integrates climate risk into the wider environmental assessment, considering interdependencies with other topics such as biodiversity, water resources, and human health. Overall, it demonstrates a proactive and integrated approach to climate change, ensuring the Proposed Development not only minimises its carbon footprint but also contributes positively to

climate resilience and long-term sustainability. Therefore, **the Proposed Development is expected to have no significant effects during construction and operation.**

Minerals

4.84 Chapter 18 'Minerals' presents a comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on mineral resources and safeguarding priorities. The Site lies partially within a designated Mineral Safeguarding Area ('MSA') for limestone and is in proximity to the Ardley Fields mineral extraction site. The assessment responds to comments from CDC and OCC – the Mineral Planning Authority – and is framed within national and local policy contexts, including the NPPF, PPG and the adopted and emerging Local Plan. These policies emphasise the importance of protecting non-renewable mineral resources from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

4.85 The chapter outlines the baseline geology of the Site, which is predominantly farmland underlain by limestone-bearing strata, and evaluates how the construction and operation of the Proposed Development may affect future mineral extraction potential. It applies a structured impact assessment methodology to determine whether the Proposed Development could conflict with mineral safeguarding objectives. The assessment concludes that while the Site overlaps with safeguarded mineral areas, the risk of sterilisation is low due to the nature of the Proposed Development and the absence of active extraction on-site.

4.86 Mitigation measures are proposed to ensure compliance with mineral safeguarding policies, including design modifications, consultation with mineral authorities, and consideration of prior extraction where feasible. The chapter also highlights the importance of sustainable land use and resource management, ensuring that the Proposed Development aligns with broader environmental and planning objectives.

4.87 Overall, **the Proposed Development is expected to have no significant residual effects on mineral resources**, with minor adverse impacts during construction and operation effectively managed through inherent design mitigation measures such as careful excavation planning and foundation strategies.

5 Cumulative Effects

5.1 The assessment has considered the potential for effects in combination with the cumulative developments identified through a review of planning applications as set out in Chapter 4 of the ES.

5.2 The cumulative assessment concluded that no significant adverse effects are likely to occur from the implementation of the Proposed Development with nearby existing or approved developments.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The ES has considered how the environment and the local community would be affected by the Proposed Development.

6.2 A range of likely effects have been predicted to occur as a result of the Proposed Development, both beneficial and adverse, and mitigation measures have been identified either within the scheme design or additionally to minimise or offset identified adverse effects where possible. After the proposed mitigation is taken into account, there are no significant effects predicted to occur as a result of the Proposed Development.

Next Steps

6.3 The ES has been submitted alongside other documents in a planning application to CDC. Prior to making a decision, CDC will consult with relevant statutory and non-statutory bodies for advice on the proposals. Members of the general public, including near neighbours and groups, are also welcome to make comments on the application during this time. The feedback from these consultations will be taken into account by CDC in reaching their decision.

6.4 A copy of the ES is available to inspect at CDC's offices: Castle Quay Shopping Centre, 39 Castle Quay, Banbury OX16 5FD. It is also available to view on CDC's website: View and comment on planning applications – Cherwell District Council.

6.5 A copy of the ES can be obtained from Savills for a fee using the following address: PlanningConsultation@savills.com or telephone 02920 368 900. A printed copy of the NTS can also be obtained free of charge from Savills.

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EIA Non-Technical Summary

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