Appendix D – Appellant's Request for EIA Screening (7 October 2024)

Our ref: Q230660.EIA Screening.01.EF
Email: elin.fradgley@quod.com
Date: 7th October 2024

Alex Harrison
Slough Borough Council
Observatory House
25 Windsor Road
Slough
SL1 2EL

By email

Dear Alex,

Manor Farm, Poyle Road, Slough, SL3 0BL

Request for an EIA Screening Opinion under the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) – Regulation 6

Tritax (the 'Applicant') intends to submit a full planning application to redevelop land at Manor Farm, Poyle Road, Slough (the 'Site') to deliver a Data Centre ('DC') and Battery Energy Storage System ('BESS') (the 'Development'). On behalf of the Applicant, we write to request an Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') Screening Opinion from Slough Borough Council ('SBC') in accordance with Regulation 6(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017[1] (as amended[2]) ('EIA Regulations').

To assist SBC in its adoption of a Screening Opinion, we enclose figures at Annex 1 and an EIA Screening Appraisal at Annex 2 which satisfy Regulation 6(2) by providing:

- A plan sufficient to identify the Site;
- A description of the development, including physical characteristics of the development and, where relevant, of demolition works;
- A description of the location of the development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected;
- A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;

[1] Her Majesty's Stationary Office (HMSO), 2017. The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. May 2017.
[2] HMSO, 2018. The Town and Country Planning and Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2018. November 2018.

- A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant; and the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity; and
- Measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.

The Site and Development

The Site lies immediately west of Poyle Road and is approximately 6.3km southeast[3] of Slough town centre. The Site comprises two portions of land (the northern parcel (Parcel A) and southern parcel (Parcel B)) to the north and south of Poyle Farm which are connected by a corridor of land ("link road parcel") to the west of Poyle Farm. The Site boundary extends to approximately 8.6 ha. The northern parcel, located to the north of Poyle Farm, is known as Manor Farm and comprises Manor Farm House (a residential House of Multiple Occupation (HMO)), industrial units and associated hardstanding. The industrial units comprise a building supplies yard, haulage depot, metal fabricators, vehicle repair workshop and an area set aside for car parking. The southern parcel is located to the south of Poyle Farm and comprises agricultural land. The link road parcel comprises industrial buildings and hard standing associated with the Thames Wire Metal works and agricultural land. The Site location and extent is shown in Annex 1 (Figure1).

The Applicant will be seeking a single full planning permission for the redevelopment of the industrial site at the northern parcel as a Data Centre and the development of the southern parcel as a BESS. Together, the Data Centre and BESS are known as the "Development". The proposals are not yet fixed and are subject to ongoing design development and pre-application consultation with SBC and the public. However, for the purposes of this screening, it assumed the Data Centre has a gross internal area of 39,433 sqm over three levels and the BESS with the substation and Guard House covers an area of 13,932.50 sqm. Annex 2 provides a more detailed description of the Site and the surrounding areas.

Planning History and Context

The northern parcel of the Site has a complex planning history associated with the following principal uses:

- Residential uses within the former Manor Farm farmhouse and adjoining buildings.
- Industrial buildings and areas of hardstanding and open land used in connection with the processing of concrete to produce hardcore (including concrete crushing and screening). The extant licence makes provision to accept 85,000 tonnes per annum and for the storage of approx. 80,000 m^3 on-site.

[3] All distances are taken from the closest point of the Site boundary to the closest point of the feature.

- Storage and distribution (including ancillary offices) and areas for the open storage of non-perishable, salvaged and/or reclaimed materials arising from works undertaken by a demolition contractors.
- Use of land for the importation, storage and delivery/distribution of primary aggregates; and use of land for vehicle parking and storage.

EIA Context

The Development does not fall within any of the descriptions of development listed in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations and is therefore not a 'Schedule 1 development'. The Development proposals fall under Category 10(a) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations, which is applicable to 'industrial estate development projects'. Schedule 2 development means development of a description referred to in Column 1 of the table in Schedule 2 where:

> *"a) Any part of that development is to be carried out in a sensitive area; or*
>
> *b) Any applicable threshold or criterion in the corresponding part of Column 2 of that table is respectively exceeded or met in relation to that development."*

No part of the Development is to be carried out in a 'sensitive area' as defined in Part 1 of the EIA Regulations (i.e. a Site of Special Scientific Interest, National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty[4], World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument or European Site[5]).

The thresholds for Category 10(a) projects is:

> *The area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.*

The Development **does** exceed this threshold.

Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations states that [the potential effects of] a development must be considered in *"cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development".* Given the proximity and relationship of the Site to other approved development (see Future Development section in Annex 2), an EIA Screening Appraisal has been carried out to aid SBC in screening the development, and is provided at Annex 2.

Potential for Likely Significant Effects

The Government's online EIA guidance[6] for considering Schedule 2 development and the need for EIA states, *"Only a very small proportion of Schedule 2 development will require an Environmental Impact Assessment"* (Paragraph 018). The key stage in the screening process is to consider whether

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[4] Now termed 'National Landscapes'

[5] Now known as the national site network (NSN), as defined by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

[6] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2020. Environmental Impact Assessment: Guidance. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment

the Development is *'likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as nature, size or location'*. As required by Regulation 5(4)(c), where a relevant planning authority has to decide whether Schedule 2 development is EIA development, they must take into account the relevant selection criteria set out in Schedule 3. The Screening Appraisal (Annex 2) has considered the characteristics of the Development in respect of this criteria, including the potential for cumulative effects with other existing and approved developments.

Mitigation Measures

The EIA Regulations allow mitigation measures, that would avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse environmental effects, to be taken into account by the decision maker when considering whether a development is an EIA development. Where primary or tertiary mitigation is considered applicable, this is discussed in the relevant technical sections of the Screening Appraisal.

Conclusion and Screening Opinion Request

Based on the findings of our Screening Appraisal, it is our considered opinion that the Development is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects and, as such, does not constitute an EIA development. However, we request formal SBC's Screening Opinion.

As you will be aware, Regulation 5(5) requires that in their screening opinion, the local authority should state: *'the main reasons for their conclusion with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Schedule 3'*. We would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this request and therefore the start date for the 21-day decision period and that you are satisfied you have sufficient information to make your screening opinion. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Elin Fradgley
Director

Encl. Annexes 1 and 2

cc. Phil Murphy, Quod

ANNEX 1

Figure 1: Site Boundary Plan

Figure 2: Environmental Sensitivities – Sheet 1 of 2

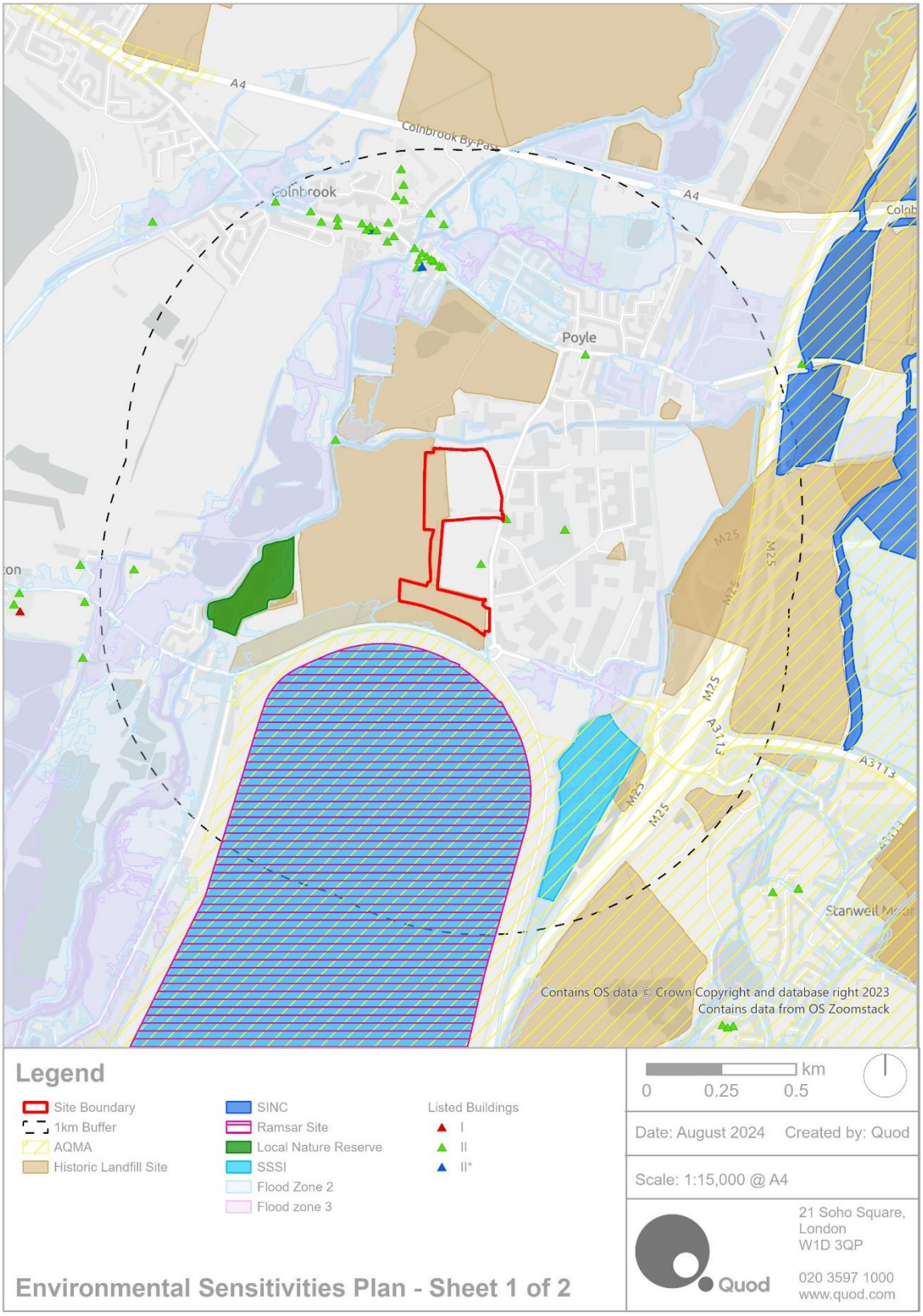
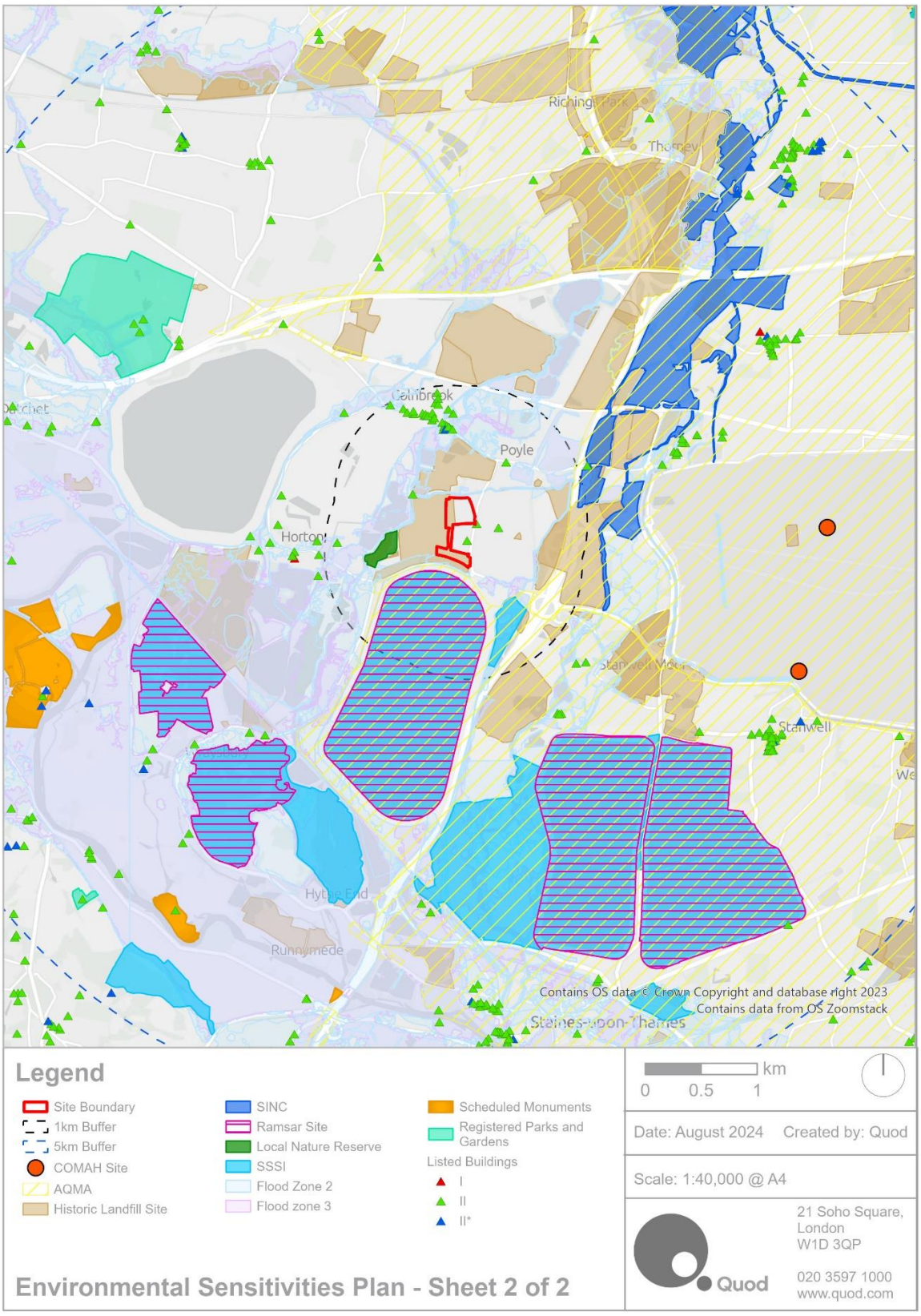


Figure 2: Environmental Sensitivities – Sheet 2 of 2



ANNEX 2

EIA Screening Appraisal: Manor Farm, Slough

Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations sets out selection criteria that should be considered, including the characteristics of the development, its location, the type and characteristics of the potential impacts and the possibility of effectively reducing the impact. This Annex provides an appraisal of the Development with reference to these criteria.

a. Site Location and Description

The Site covers a total area of 8.6 hectares ('ha'). The Site is centred at National Grid reference ('NGR') TQ 02857 76019. The Site lies immediately west of Poyle Road and is approximately 6.3km southeast[i] of Slough Town Centre. The Site is approximately 1.6km west of Heathrow Airport and 1.9km west of Heathrow Terminal 5 London Underground station. The Site is entirely within the administrative area of SBC.

The northern parcel and part of the link road parcel of the Site comprise previously developed land, currently in commercial/ industrial use, with hardstanding areas used for car parking and material storage. The land has previously been licensed to accept waste. Present occupiers of the northern parcel include a building supplies yard, haulage depot, metal fabricators, vehicle repair workshop and an area set aside for car parking. The majority of the southern parcel and the remainder of the link road parcel of the Site comprise undeveloped land currently used for agriculture and grazing. An agricultural building is located on the eastern boundary of the southern parcel. Parts of the Site have previously been used as a landfill, up until the mid-1980s, before the present use.

The Site is bounded by the Poyle Channel to the north, Poyle Road and agricultural land to the east, woodland (known as Poyle Poplars) to the south and agricultural land to the west.

Access the Site is from Poyle Road. Poyle Road connects to Bath Road to the north, which provides access to the A3033 and A4, and Horton Road to the south, which links with Junction 14 of the M25.

Future Development

Environmental Sensitivities

The Site is not located within a 'sensitive area' (as defined in Part 1 of the EIA Regulations) (i.e. a Site of Special Scientific Interest, National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument or European Site) and is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory designations for nature conservation or heritage. It should be noted that the list of Sensitive Areas has

[i] All distances are taken from the closest point of the Site boundary to the closest point of the feature.

not been adjusted since the late 1990's therefore, designations such as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), are not included. However, Local Planning Authorities can include such designations when developing Screening Opinions and so this report has considered other designations that might be reasonably be considered 'sensitive' in the context of EIA.

There are five Sites of Special Scientific ('SSSI') located within 5km of the Site:

- Wraysbury Reservoir SSSI is located approximately 150m south of the Site;
- Wraysbury No. 1 Gravel Pitt SSSI is located approximately 2.5km southwest of the Site;
- Wraysbury & Hythe End Gravel Pits SSSI is located approximately 2.2km southwest of the Site;
- Staines Moor SSSI is located approximately 4.4km southwest of the Site; and
- Langham Pond SSSI is located approximately 1.7km southeast of the Site.

All of the above SSSIs, with the exception of Langham Pond SSSI, are also part of the wider South West London Waterbodies Ramsar site. The Lower Colne Site of Importance for Nature Conservation ('SINC') is located 900m east of the Site. There is a Local Nature Reserve, known as the Arthur Jacob Nature Reserve, approximately 450m west of the Site. The Queen Mother Reservoir is located 1.7km west of the Site. The Queen Mother Reservoir is designated a Local Wildlife Site by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council.

A Grade II Listed Building, Poyle Farmhouse, is located 100m north of the southern parcel of the Site. There are an additional three Grade II Listed Buildings within 500m of the Site, the closest of which is The Hollies, located approximately 20m east of the Site on Poyle Road. The closest Registered Park and Garden is Ditton Park, a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, located 2.8km northwest of the Site. The closest Scheduled Monument is the early medieval and medieval palace and associated monuments, Kingsbury, which is located 4km south west of the Site. Windsor Castle's grounds, known as The Royal Estate, Windsor: Windsor Castle and Home Park is a Grade I Registered Park and Garden and is located 4.2km west of the Site. Windsor Castle is located 5.7km west of the Site. Windsor Castle is a Grade I listed building and is also a Schedule Monument.

According to the Environment Agency, the Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 indicating a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. The Site is predominantly at a very low risk of surface water flooding. The perimeter of southern parcel of the Site is at a high risk (more than 3.3% each year) of surface water flooding and some patches of the northern parcel of the Site are of a high to medium risk (between 1% and 3.3% each year) whilst the rest of the Site is at a very low risk (under 0.1% chance each year). The closest waterbody to the Site is the Poyle Channel, which is adjacent to the northern boundary of the Site. The Poyle Channel is a tributary of Colne Brook, which is located 300m west of the Site.

The Site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area ('AQMA'). The closest AQMA is the Spelthorne Borough Council AQMA located 30m south of the Site, which was declared in 2003 for exceedances in the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) objective.The Hillingdon AQMA is located 800m east of the Site, which was also declared in 2003 for exceedances in the annual mean NO_2 objective.

The closest residential receptors are located to the northeast of the Site on Poyle Road, approximately 390m to the east. The Hilton London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 Hotel is located 75m north of the Site.

The entirety of southern parcel,the link road and the majority of the northern parcel of the Site have historically been used as a landfill, known as Poyle Manor South. The landfill was operational from 1948 to 1983 and used for inert waste from industrial, commercial, household and special sources, and included liquid sludge waste.

b. Size and Design of the Development

The Applicant is seeking full planning permission for demolition of the existing buildings and construction of a Data Centre and BESS.

The Data Centre will be located in the northern parcel and has a gross internal area of 39,433sqm over three levels and includes associated car parking, gantry and substation. The building will feature a parapet height of 23 meters and maximum screen height of 30 meters, which is required to support the equipment contained within both the building and service equipment at roof level. The Data Centre will have a 72 MegaWatt ('MW') IT load. Ancillary equipment associated with the development will be placed in a screened equipment yard at ground level and on a screened platform at roof level. The screening will be designed to soften and minimise visual impact via use of sympathetic material.

The BESS will be located in Parcel B. The BESS will comprise 72 containerised battery units and associated infrastructure (invertors, switchgear, cooling units). The BESS with the substation and Guard House covers an area of 13,932.50 sqm. At this stage, it is assumed the BESS will have an output of 100MW 2hr system.

The two sites will be connected via a utility line and link road.

The Development will include landscaping, including native tree planting.

The Development is expected to come forward over 2-3 years (subject change) following grant of consent.

c. Use of Natural Resources and Production of Waste

Development of the Site would, by its very nature, require the use of a range of natural and man-made construction materials to complete the build and fit-out of the scheme.

Demolition of the existing buildings and hardstanding on the Site and any earthworks required to facilitate future development would generate some waste. Re-use of surplus material will be dependent on it meeting relevant specification requirements and being inert and not contaminated. Opportunities to minimise volumes of waste going to landfill would be sought by the contractors in line with good site practice, so that construction materials are used efficiently on-site and that wastes are recovered, re-used or recycled where practicable. The use of natural materials such as ply and timber will be kept to a minimum. The removal of wastes during the demolition and construction phase may

lead to some indirect localised temporary effects, e.g. disruption on the road network for other road users, dust and noise, but is not considered to be significant.

The Data Centre will require a continual energy supply to support its operations. The Development will include diesel generators, that will only be used if the first two power sources fail. It is expected the Development will utilise modern techniques to provide energy efficient buildings, such as orientation the buildings so that the offices with the Data Centre are facing north, which reduces solar heat gain. Additionally, an Energy and Sustainability Strategy will be submitted as part of the planning application.

Overall, the Development would be designed to minimise use of energy, water and other natural resources.

The operational Development would generate minimal waste which would not be hazardous or likely to give rise to significant effects. Replacement of components is likely to be required although the frequency is such that this is unlikely to lead to significant effects on waste infrastructure. The Development will provide the necessary waste requirements based on BS 5095: 2005 and in line with SBC's requirements.

d. Socio-Economics and Human Health

During construction, the Development is likely to result in indirect and induced employment opportunities, as well as spending by the construction workforce in the local area. However, due to the size of the Development this would be a temporary beneficial effect and is not considered significant.

The Development will provide new employment opportunities following its completion. This will contribute towards the SBC's Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy[1] aim to provide a diverse range of jobs for local people. In the context of the region, the provision of new employment is beneficial in contributing towards meeting local requirements, although it is not considered to be significant in EIA terms

e. Pollution and Nuisances

Transport and Access

The Site is approximately 1.9km west of Heathrow Terminal 5 London Underground station. There are two bus stops on Poyle Road (northbound and southbound), which is adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Site. Access to the northern and southern parcel will be obtained from an existing access on Poyle Road which connects to Bath Road to the north providing access to the A3033 and A4, and Horton Road to the south, which links with Junction 14 of the M25. Access to the southern parcel will be provided along an existing track to the rear of the agricultural field.. A secondary emergency access to the northern parcel will be provided to the north of the main access and to the southern parcel from the Poyle Road/Blackthorne Road roundabout.

Due to the scale of the Development, construction traffic effects are not expected to be significant. Construction traffic routes, movements and associated effects such as driver disruption, dust and dirt

nuisances would be dealt with through standard management measures to be secured within a Construction Management Plan ('CMP') or Construction Logistics Plan. The net change in Heavy Goods Vehicles ('HGVs') and light vehicular traffic flows on the local road network during construction is not expected to be significant in the context of existing traffic flows on the surrounding roads. The Site is well placed in terms of gaining access to the strategic road network.

A Traffic Assessment will be submitted with the planning application. The Development will be designed to promote the use of sustainable transport, including public transport, walking and cycling. The number of car park spaces is to be confirmed, although the total provided for employee use would be a reduction from the current number of available spaces. The number of trips generated by the Development would be a reduction compared to the existing uses, which includes car parking (i.e. not significant). Overall, the Development is unlikely to result in significant traffic and transport effects once it is complete and occupied.

The planning application will be supported by a Transport Assessment which will assess the existing conditions of the local area and the proposed changes brought forward by the Development.

Noise and Vibration

The Site is in a mixed-use area of residential, commercial and agricultural uses. Nearby residents have been considered as sensitive receptors. The ambient noise and vibration environment is primarily influenced by road traffic sources, including the M25 motorway which is located 0.8km east of the Site, and Heathrow Airport, located 1.6km to the east. The closest residential receptors are located on Poyle Road, approx. 390m to the northeast of the Site. The Hilton London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 Hotel is located 75m north of the Site.

Following a grant of consent, the Development is expected to be constructed in approximately 2 -3 years (subject to change). There would be temporary short-medium term increases in noise and vibration during the construction works, including noise and vibration resulting from construction plant and vehicles, although these would be intermittent and short duration. Noise and vibration sources will be controlled by best practice measures, as set out in BS 5228: *Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites Part 1 and 2*. Due to the implementation of such measures, it is not anticipated that there will be any significant noise and environmental effects during construction.

The nature of the Development will result in some noise due to the technology utilised in the Data Centre and BESS. A Noise Impact Assessment will be submitted alongside the planning application. The Noise Impact Assessment will provide details of any necessary mitigation. There will be a noise criterion for the plant which can be controlled through a planning condition. Due to the mitigation and noise planning condition, it is not anticipated that there will be significant noise effects related to the operation of the Development.

Vibration from the Data Centre and BESS during the operational phase of the Development will be negligible, and therefore not likely to have as significant impact on sensitive receptors.

Air Quality and Odour

The Site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area ('AQMA'). The closest AQMA is the Spelthorne Borough Council AQMA, which is located 30m south of the Site and was declared in 2003 for exceedances in the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) objective. The closest residential receptors which may be affected by the Development include housing located to the northeast of the Site on Poyle Road.

During the construction phase, good practice measures as defined by IAQM guidance will be implemented to avoid or minimise dust. With effective implementation, effects are unlikely to be significant. Construction plant and equipment used for construction works will be modern and compliant with current EU emissions standards. Associated exhaust emissions would not likely be significant.

Development-generated vehicle trips are expected to be substantially less than that of the existing baseline. As such, road traffic emissions associated with the Development would not be significant in the context of existing traffic flows. No sources of odour have been identified.

With standard good practice construction and designed-in air quality mitigation measures, no significant effects are likely. An Air Quality Assessment will be submitted alongside the planning application.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

British Geological Survey ('BGS') maps for the area show the Site is underlain by bedrock geology of the London Clay Formation. There are superficial deposits of Alluvium (Clay Silt, Sand and Gravel) and Shepperton Gravel member within the Site.

As above, sections of the Site have historically been used as a landfill site. Environmental monitoring at the Site was undertaken in Quarter 1 of 2024. The monitoring included groundwater sampling and ground gas monitoring. Following analysis of the results, no significant concerns were identified. A full Geotechnical Assessment will be submitted with the planning application and necessary remediation works will be undertaken if required.

Any necessary remediation works and construction of the Development will be undertaken in line with standard practice and legislative requirements to ensure appropriate management of contamination associated with the Site's historic uses, and minimise pollution risks to controlled waters (i.e. the adjacent Grand Union Canal) and to the health of construction workers. These measures will be secured through the remedial strategy and CMP. As such, significant environmental effects are not considered likely to occur during construction.

On completion of the Development, much of the Site will be covered with new buildings and hardstanding. As such, the risk to receptors (namely human health) is considered to be low and there would be no likely significant effects related to ground conditions or contamination.

Water Resources, Flood Risk and Drainage

There are no surface water features within the boundary of the Site. The nearest watercourse is the Poyle Channel, which is adjacent to the northern boundary. The Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 indicating a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea and is predominantly at a very low risk of surface water flooding. The perimeter of southern parcel is at a high risk (more than 3.3% each year) of surface water flooding and some patches of northern parcel are of a high to medium risk (between 1% and 3.3% each year), whilst the rest of the Site is at a very low risk (under 0.1% chance each year).

A Flood Risk Assessment ('FRA') will be prepared in line with the National Planning Policy Framework[2] and SBC requirements and will accompany the planning application. In line with the policy, the FRA will ensure that the proposals do not result in increased flood risk off-site and sufficient measures are incorporated into the design to achieve the required runoff rates.

Potential water pollution during construction will be controlled through standard measures, which would be agreed with SBC. These measures are likely to include industry standard measures such as bunding of storage areas, petrol interceptors and good construction site management. Potential pollution sources within the completed Development (e.g. car park runoff) will be dealt with through standard design measures. The Development will incorporate the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

The completed Development will lead to an increased demand for potable water and foul water discharge. However, it is not considered that the demand would be significant. A Foul Sewage and Utilities Assessment will be submitted alongside the Planning Application.

No likely significant effects with respect to water resources, flood risk and drainage are identified are expected.

f. Archaeology

The entirety of southern parcel and the link road parcel has been subject to landfill (following quarrying) over an extended period of years. Borehole data for the southern parcel shows a consistent 4m to 5m depth of Made Ground across the southern parcel and therefore no Holocene period archelogy will have survived. Consequently, there is no archaeological potential within southern parcel or the Link Road Parcel. There is also some evidence of landfill in the western area of the northern parcel; however, it is not possible to determine whether this extended into the remainder of the northern parcel site. It is possible that archaeology may have survived within the Site but it is determined that this would likely be of low / local significance. The planning application will be supported by an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment which will include details of any mitigation required, and discussion with the Archaeological Officer at Berkshire Archaeology. It is considered unlikely there will be any significant impacts on buried archaeology.

g. Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact

The northern parcel of the Site is presently in industrial use, with little townscape or visual amenity value. The southern parcel is agricultural land of low landscape value. The topography of the Site and surrounding area is broadly flat. The immediate environment surrounding the Site is one of

predominantly industrial uses to the east, agricultural and residential use of the north, and agricultural land to the west and south. The M25 and Heathrow airport are to the east.

The Site is not located within a Conservation Area. The closest is the Colnbrook Conservation Area located 0.6km north of the Site. There are no Scheduled Monuments or Registered Parks and Gardens or other landscape designations within the vicinity of the Site. Listed buildings within close proximity to the Site include the Grade II Poyle Farmhouse 100m north of southern parcel and the Grade II The Hollies, located approximately 20m east of the Site.

Anticipated to reach a maximum height of 3 storeys (maximum of 30m) the Development will be visible but not prominent in the landscape and would be read in conjunction with its local, industrial context.

Considering the proposed scale, and the existing and emerging townscape character of the area, the potential effects of the Development are not considered to be significant in townscape or visual terms. Further consideration of the setting of the Development and views to and from the Site will be given as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, which will be submitted as part of the planning application.

h. Biodiversity and Arboriculture

There are no statutory ecological designations within the Site. The nearest non-statutory ecological designated site is the Wraysborough SSSI, located approximately 150m to the south of the Site.

There are a number of trees that line the northern, western and eastern perimeter of northern parcel and the northern, eastern, southern and western boundaries of southern parcel. There are also a number of trees within both the northern and southern parcel, set back from the Site boundary. The majority of the northern parcel comprises existing hardstanding and industrial buildings. Additionally, as the Site is close to the M25 and Heathrow Airport, it is subject to high levels of noise and light pollution, which is a general deterrent for bats to forage and commute. An Ecological Impact Assessment will be submitted alongside the final planning application.

Based upon the existing proposals, the trees located within the northern and southern parcel will need to be removed to facilitate the Development. These trees include one moderate quality (Category B) group of trees, the partial removal of one low quality (Category C) group of trees and the full removal of a further three low quality groups. Given the localised nature of the tree removal, the impact is considered negligible from an arboriculture perspective, subject to the adoption of standard tree protection measures during the construction stage and the planting of new trees as part of the landscape design for the Development. Therefore, the impact on arboriculture is not likely to be significant. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment will be submitted as part of the planning application.

The Development will deliver a biodiversity net gain of a minimum of 10% compared to the existing baseline. A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment will be submitted alongside the Planning Application.

Appropriate measures will be adopted during the construction phase to limit the occurrence of adverse effects on any sensitive ecological receptors from noise, dust and lighting. Consequently, it is anticipated that the Development will not result in significant ecological effects.

i. Microclimate: Wind

The wind climate of Slough is dominated by southwesterly winds. The northern parcel of the Site is currently occupied by industrial buildings and hard standing. The southern parcel of the Site is agricultural land with only one small agricultural building. The Site is surrounded by minor roads, the M25 and Heathrow airport. The Site is relatively exposed to westerly winds due to the nature of the surrounds in that direction, which consists of open space for several hundred metres.

The Development will likely result in a decrease in pedestrians walking in and around the Site. The Development will also introduce new buildings and structure. This may lead to wind impacts including potential downdraught of faster-moving, high-level winds, particularly off the west-facing elevations, in particular on the southern parcel which is currently agricultural land.

However, due to the scale of the Development (three storeys), strong winds and significant wind effects are not expected.

j. Microclimate: Daylight, Sunlight, Overshadowing, Light Pollution and Glare

The Site is relatively unobstructed by any nearby existing neighbouring properties or obstructions. The only potential receptors sensitive to daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects are the residential properties to the north of the Site.

The maximum height of the Development is proposed to be approx. 30m high and therefore it is not likely there will be any significant overshadowing effects.

Facade details for the design proposals are currently unconfirmed, but they will not have a significant reflective value and consideration of solar glare and impacts on aviation will be incorporated within the ongoing design development to ensure that road and aviation receptors would not be adversely affected by the completed Development. Subject to confirmation upon design completion, significant solar glare effects are considered to be unlikely.

k. Risk of Major Accidents and Disasters

There are no Control of Major Accidents Hazards ('COMAH') registered activities within the Site. The closest COMAH sites to the Site are associated with and located within Heathrow Airport:

- Heathrow Airport Perryoaks Fuel Terminal; and
- Sandringham Road Tank Farm.

The Development will not interact with the COMAH sites within Heathrow Airport. It is assumed that both these COMAH sites will be operated in line with HSE guidance and therefore the risk of major accidents or disasters associated with these COMAH sites is not considered to be significant.

Construction of the Development will be undertaken in accordance with current health and safety regulations and guidance, in order to minimise the risk of accidents.

The Data Centre will also comprise a standby diesel generator. The diesel will be stored in belly tanks at the individual generators. A total of approximately one million litres of fuel will be stored in

accordance with current health and safety regulations and guidance, in order to minimise the risk of accidents and thereby the risk of a major accident or disaster is not considered to be significant.

The BESS has an increased risk of fire when compared to other development types. A Baseline Fire Strategy will be submitted as part of the application which will set out measures to be undertaken in the event of a fire. Emergency access to the BESS southern parcel will be obtained from the Poyle Road/Blackthorn Road Roundabout and to the Data Centre northern parcel from Poyle Road to the north of the main access.

The Site is located under the main approach path for runway 09L of Heathrow Airport. The Applicant has commissioned an Aviation Safeguarding Design Advice Report which will provide recommendations for how the Development should be designed to ensure safe airport operations. These measures will include bird management measures, construction crane height restrictions and external lighting design in line with requirements to ensure they are not dangerous, or dazzling to pilots.

Therefore, the risk of a major accidents or disaster is not considered to be significant.

l. Risk to Human Health

The most significant risks to human health relate to poor ambient air quality and noise conditions. As set out above, these issues are capable of being addressed through design and best practice measures. The Development is not expected to introduce any activities that would adversely affect the health of the local population. As such, no significant effects are anticipated.

m. Climate Change

The operational Data Centre will have a significant energy demand. The BESS will store energy from the grid, notably that produced from renewable energy sources, and will provide additional backup power. The BESS provides greater independence from the grid and decreased reliance on the need for diesel generators.

Energy consumption has the potential to contribute to global greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. However, as the grid is increasingly powered through renewable energy, the impacts of this are likely to be limited.

An Energy and Sustainability Appraisal will be submitted alongside the planning application.

Cumulation with Other Development

Table 1 provides a schedule of other approved development schemes (known as ‘Cumulative Schemes’) which have been identified in proximity to the Site. The list was principally compiled based on the proximity of each scheme to the Site as well as the scale and massing in consideration of townscape, heritage and views and distance to nearby public transport hubs. Material cumulative visual and transport effects (which have the greatest extent of potential cumulative effect) are considered to not occur.

Table 1: Schedule of Cumulative Schemes

Cumulative Scheme	Distance and direction from Site boundary
Jupiter House, Horton Road (ref: P/09811/001) – Demolition of the existing buildings (Valerie House and Jupiter House) and the development of 7,320m² GEA of flexible light industrial, general industrial and storage and distribution employment floor space, with associated service yards, car parking and landscaping. *Approved April 2022*	140m east

The nature, scale and use of the Development is such that, when considered in cumulation with the other approved development outlined in Table 1, the effects are unlikely to be significant.

In the absence of mitigation there would otherwise be the potential for cumulative effects from construction works relating to traffic, air quality, noise, biodiversity, land quality and flood risk, should these works overlap. However, such effects would be of a temporary nature and managed to an acceptable level through standard widely applied good practice environmental management measures as part of a CMP for each scheme. Significant cumulative effects related to construction would therefore not occur.

With respect to the potential for cumulative traffic effects, the Development and the cumulative scheme in Table 1 are well served by the existing local strategic road network, which is suitable for HGVs during construction. In addition, appropriate operational assessment of transport and access for the aforementioned schemes would have been undertaken in line with SBC's planning application requirements to ensure sufficient capacity on the existing local strategic road network and incorporate any mitigation measures, where required.

The Development's massing and design is in keeping with the industrial area to the east of the Site. As such, it is considered unlikely that the completed Development will result in any significant effects in cumulation with other development.

The proposed development for the Site and surrounding area would bring beneficial cumulative effects with respect to employment. Whilst there is potential for adverse cumulative effects, including noise and traffic, these would be appropriately mitigated through strategies agreed as part of the application, where required. Overall, it is considered unlikely that there would be significant effects of the cumulative schemes in-combination with the Development.

References

[1] Slough Borough Council, (2006). Slough Local Development Framework: Core Strategy 2006-2026.
[2] Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2023). National Planning Policy Framework. December 2023.