



Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction

Preface

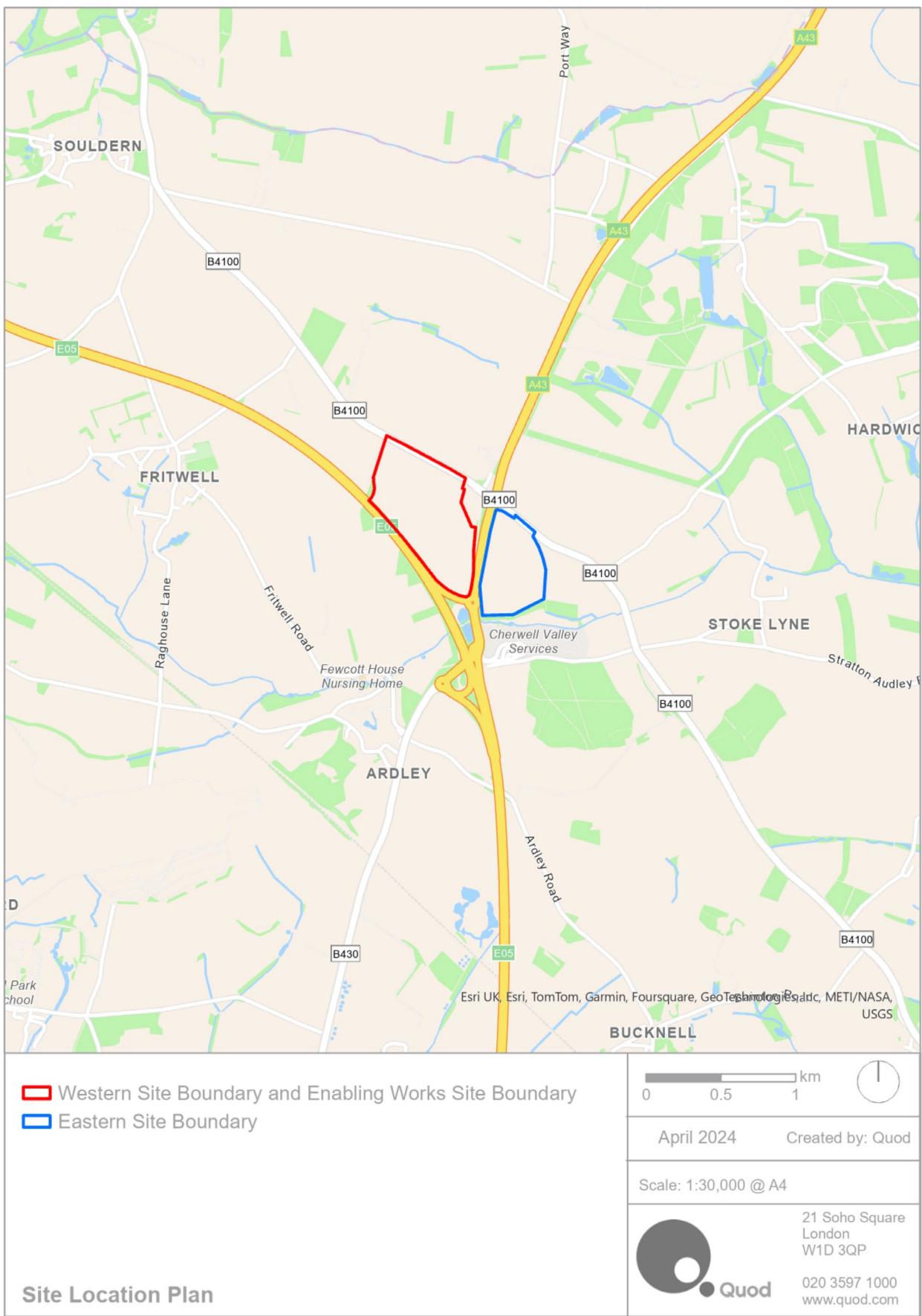
This Environmental Statement (ES) was prepared by Quod and a team of technical specialists on behalf of Albion Land (the 'Applicant'). The ES accompanies three planning applications submitted to Cherwell District Council (CDC) for employment development of land immediately north of Junction 10 of the M40 motorway ('Submitted Scheme').

Following the submission of an ES in September 2021 supporting the planning applications ('2021 ES'), it has been updated to principally provide a refreshed cumulative assessment. This ES supersedes the 2021 ES.

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 The purpose of the ES is to provide information to decision-makers, stakeholders and the public about the likely significant effects of the Development. The ES identifies measures required to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse environmental effects, together with any monitoring that may be necessary, to help inform the planning application decision-making process.
- 1.1.2 The Development is located approximately 6.5km north west of Bicester town centre and comprises of two parcels of agricultural land east and west of the A43 referred to as the 'Eastern Site' and 'Western Site' respectively. Collectively, the Eastern Site and Western Sites are referred to as the 'Site'. The M40 motorway forms the southern boundary of the Western Site and is less than 200m to the south west of the Eastern Site boundary. The Site location is shown in Figure 1.1. The Eastern Site extends to 23.18ha and the Western Site extends to 43.45ha.
- 1.1.3 A description of the Site and its surrounds, together with figures showing the planning application boundaries, is provided in Chapter 2: Site and Setting.

Figure 1.1: Site Location



1.2 Overview of the Development

1.2.1 The planning applications, one submitted in detail and two which are submitted in outline with all matters reserved apart from access (where details are submitted), comprise:

- **Eastern Development** (Eastern Site) (CDC planning ref: 21/03267/OUT) – *“Application for outline planning permission (all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of buildings comprising Storage and Distribution (Use Class B8) and ancillary Office (Use Class Eg(i) floorspace; associated infrastructure including electricity substation(s); construction of new site access from the B4100; creation of internal roads and access routes; and hard and soft landscaping”.*
- **Western Development** (Western Site) (CDC planning ref: 21/03268/OUT) – *“Application for outline planning permission (all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of buildings comprising Storage or Distribution (Use Class B8) and ancillary Office (Use Class Eg(i) floorspace; construction of new site access from the B4100; creation of internal roads and access routes; hard and soft landscaping including noise attenuation measures; and other associated infrastructure”.*
- **Enabling Works** (Western Site) (CDC planning ref: 21/03266/F) – *“Site clearance, construction of new site access from the B4100, permanent and temporary internal roads, an internal roundabout and a foul drainage station, diversion of an existing overhead power cable and public right of way, and soft landscaping”.*

1.2.2 The descriptions of development remain unchanged from the Submitted Scheme.

1.2.3 Collectively, the Enabling Works, Eastern Development and Western Development proposals are referred to as the ‘Development’. A full description of the Development is provided in Chapter 5: Description of the Development.

1.3 Planning Context

1.3.1 The Site comprises agricultural land and is not subject to any extant or historic planning permissions. It is not allocated in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031¹ (the ‘Local Plan’) or the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040 (Regulation 18) Consultation Draft that underwent public consultation between Friday, 22 September 2023 and Friday, 3 November 2023 (‘Local Plan Review’)².

1.3.2 The Development proposals are therefore considered against the Local Plan policies including ‘SLE1: Employment Development’. Saved policies of the 1996 Cherwell Local Plan also carry some weight including EMP4: Employment Development in Rural Areas. Consideration has also been given to the Local Plan Review.

1.3.3 An assessment of the Development in the context of relevant national, regional and local planning policy is provided within the Planning Statements that accompany the planning applications. Relevant planning policy is summarised in the technical chapters of this ES as appropriate for context in consideration of the environmental effects of the Development.

1.4 Environmental Impact Assessment Process

- 1.4.1 The ES reports on an Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') process, which is a systematic assessment of the likely significant effects of the Development. The EIA process is required by UK law for certain types of development projects.
- 1.4.2 The Enabling Works application was subject to a request for an EIA Screening Opinion from CDC, received on 16th August 2021, that stated that EIA was required for this application (see Appendix 3.5). As such, the Enabling Works are inherently assessed in the respective technical topic chapters. In view of the nature and scale of the Development proposals and recognition that it has the potential to give rise to significant environmental effects, the Applicant voluntarily committed to undertake one EIA for the two outline applications.
- 1.4.3 The Applicant has submitted planning applications for the Development under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990³, therefore the ES has been prepared in line with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017⁴ (as amended^{5,6}) (the 'EIA Regulations').
- 1.4.4 An initial scoping study was undertaken as the first stage of the EIA process to determine the scope of the ES and the general approach to the assessments. A Scoping Opinion was provided by CDC on 29th July 2021 which set out their preliminary views on the scope of the ES. This ES has been prepared in accordance with this Scoping Opinion, consultation comments received on the submitted planning applications, and third-party technical reviews carried out on certain technical aspects of the ES on behalf of CDC. Assessments were then undertaken, and this ES prepared to report the methodology and results of the assessments. Further information on the scope of the ES and general EIA methodology is provided in Chapter 3: EIA Methodology.

1.5 Environmental Statement Preparation

- 1.5.1 The ES contains such information referred to in Regulation 18(3) and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations as is reasonably required to assess the likely significant environmental effects of the Development. Chapter 3: EIA Methodology sets out how the ES is compliant with the EIA Regulations and the information specified in the EIA Regulations.
- 1.5.2 The ES reports on the existing and future baseline conditions and provides an assessment of the likely environmental effects of the Development and their significance. In accordance with the EIA Regulations, the ES considers the effects of all stages of the Development including construction and operation.
- 1.5.3 Assessments are reported in topic-based chapters which also consider the potential for cumulative effects which may arise from the Development when considered alongside other development proposals. The ES also includes an assessment of the combined effects of individual effects resultant from the Development upon a single receptor ('effect interactions'). Where significant adverse effects on the environment are identified, the ES proposes ways to prevent, reduce and, where possible, offset these effects ('mitigation measures').

1.6 ES Structure and Project Team

1.6.1 The project team, authors of ES Chapters and structure of the ES are set out in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Consultant Project Team

Consultant Role/Input	Organisation
Applicant	Albion Land
Planning Consultants Environmental Planning and EIA Co-ordinator	Quod
Architect	Cornish Architects
Landscape Architects and Arboriculture	Tyler Grange
Accurate Visual Representations	Troopers Hill
Foul Sewage/Utilities; Flood Risk and Drainage; Land Contamination; Civil Engineering	Bailey Johnson Hayes
Agricultural Land and Soils Assessment	Askew Land and Soils
ES Volume I (ES Chapters)	
Chapters 1 – 6: Introduction; Site and Setting; EIA Methodology; Alternatives; Description of the Development; Construction.	Quod
Chapter 7: Socio-Economics	Quod
Chapter 8: Transport and Access	David Tucker Associates (DTA)
Chapter 9: Air Quality	Air Quality Consultants
Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration	Noise Consultants
Chapter 11: Cultural Heritage	RPS Group
Chapter 12: Ecology and Biodiversity	Tyler Grange
Chapter 13: Landscape and Visual Impacts	Tyler Grange
Chapter 14: Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases	Ecolyse
Chapter 15: Hydrology, Flood Risk and Drainage	Bailey Johnson Hayes
Chapter 16: Effect Interactions	Quod
Chapter 17: Summary of Mitigation, Monitoring and Residual Effects	Quod
ES Volume II – Appendices	Various
ES Non-Technical Summary	Quod

1.6.2 In addition to the ES, the planning applications are accompanied by a series of technical reports, including:

- Design and Access Statement;

- Landscape Strategy;
- Arboricultural Report;
- Agricultural Land/ Soils Assessment;
- Land Contamination Assessment.

1.6.3 As defined by paragraph 18(5)(a) of the EIA Regulations, the ES must be prepared by 'competent experts'.

1.6.4 Quod is the lead editor of this ES and author of certain chapters as identified in Table 1.1. Quod is a member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment EIA Quality Mark Scheme, an accreditation scheme which sets high standards for EIA practice and demonstrates a commitment to excellence in EIA activities.

1.6.5 Each member of the project team is a suitably qualified professional and details of the professional competency of the technical author is provided in each technical chapter. The Applicant provided the following statement confirming that it considers the experts to be competent.

"In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended), Albion Land (the Applicant) can hereby confirm that the technical consultants appointed to contribute and author this Environmental Statement are competent experts and have demonstrated evidence of sufficient expertise to carry out robust assessment and reporting. This is evidenced in the technical chapters of the Environmental Statement."

1.7 Environmental Statement Availability

1.7.1 The ES and all planning application documents are available for review online via CDC's online planning portal via <https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/> Alternatively, comments can be addressed in writing to:

Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
OX15 4AA

1.7.2 Hard copies can be requested for a reasonable fee. Alternatively, a memory stick of the ES is available for a fee of £15 from Quod. The Non-Technical Summary can be obtained free of charge upon request in hard copy or as an electronic file. All ES documents are available by emailing reception@quod.com and quoting Reference No. Q210325.

References

- ¹ Cherwell District Council, 2016. Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031. December 2016.
- ² Cherwell District Council, 2023. Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040 Consultation Draft. September 2023.
- ³ The Stationary Office, 1990. Town and Country Planning Act 1990. United Kingdom.
- ⁴ HMSO, 2017. The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The Stationary Office. April 2017.
- ⁵ HMSO, 2018. The Town and Country Planning and Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2018. The Stationary Office. October 2018.
- ⁶ HMSO, 2020. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning, Development Management Procedure, Listed Buildings etc.) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. The Stationary Office. December 2020.