**Key Issues**

The site was allocated in the adopted South Wiltshire Core Strategy (2012) for 1,300 dwellings, a primary school and public open space over the period to 2026. Given the scale of the development, Wiltshire Council’s emerging Community Infrastructure Levy and the timescales involved, the decision was taken to apply for the development in phases.

Each phased application was supported by an ES, but the potential for cumulative effects to arise with past and future phases of development was a key element in the EIA process. Consideration also needed to be given to the potential for cumulative effects to arise from the overlap of construction and post-construction activities between phases.

The site is approximately 1 km to the south east of the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site and the River Avon Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest lies less than 100 m to the west. Extensive, important prehistoric and Romano-British archaeological remains were identified in the north of the site.

**Purpose of the project**

A series of planning applications by Bloor Homes Ltd for the development of land to the south of Amesbury in Wiltshire for housing and associated community infrastructure. The proposals will extend the neighbouring Archers Gate residential development, which has recently been completed.

The development will increase the supply of market and affordable homes in the town and provide appropriate supporting infrastructure.

**Description of the project**

The proposals include residential development, a primary school, an extra care facility, a country park and other formal and informal public open space, a network of footpaths and cycleways, and sustainable drainage systems.

The 49.7 ha site is predominantly set-aside arable fields, with a tree belt in the south and Amesbury byway 20 running through the east. There is a scheduled monument to the north of the site and the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site lies around 1 km to the north west.
Lessons learnt

Need to avoid ‘salami slicing’
The need for EIA and the subsequent scope of the EIA had to be determined based on the full scheme to ensure that the requirements of the EIA Regulations were met and potentially significant cumulative effects were not missed. A single scoping report was therefore prepared for the whole development and a 143-dwelling phase was the subject of an ES.

The ESs included a ‘future development’ chapter that assessed the potential for effects with the remaining future phase(s) of development to ensure that information on the potential effects of the whole development was available to Wiltshire Council when each application was determined. This avoided the potential for incremental changes arising from each phase to lead to an unidentified, more significant combined effect with the full development in place.

Planning baseline studies
The baseline studies were carefully planned to ensure sufficient information was available for the cumulative assessment. For example, the visual assessment viewpoints needed to cover views of the whole site, rather than just the phase currently under application. Ecological surveys were also undertaken for the whole site.

Lessons learnt cont.

Availability of project information
It was possible to undertake detailed qualitative and quantitative assessments of the cumulative effects of the various phases because similar levels of information were available for all phases (parameter plans, information on proposed areas / numbers, building heights, proposed access and movement and drainage arrangements). This was important in providing sufficient detail on the potential for cumulative effects and identifying the need for any associated mitigation.

Evolution of the master plan based on the assessment findings
The findings of the assessments were used to inform the development of the master plan through primary mitigation – for example, the need to retain an area of undisturbed open space in the north of the site in the area of highly important archaeological remains and reducing building heights along the western edge of the site where development could otherwise be visible from the World Heritage Site.

Contact details
Lauren Tinker
Terence O’Rourke Ltd
maildesk@torltd.co.uk
01202 421142

For access to more EIA case studies and hundreds of non-technical summaries of Environmental Statements visit:
www.iema.net/qmark