

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background to the Proposed Development

- 1.1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared by Temple Group Ltd (“Temple”) on behalf of Fairfax (Reading) Limited (“Fairfax”). Fairfax, (“the Applicant”), intends to submit an outline planning application (“the Application”) for a residential led mixed-use development (“the Proposed Development”) at Emmer Green, Reading, on an area of land known as Reading Golf Course, (“the Site”). The determining authority for the application is Reading Borough Council (“RBC”), the Site is outlined in **Figure 1.1** and the Proposed Development layout in **Figure 1.2**.
- 1.1.2 The Proposed Development will comprise of a residential led mixed-use development including residential (C3 use class) and medical centre (D1 use class), associated open space and landscaping, vehicle parking; pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access, associated highway works; and associated infrastructure. The Proposed Development will comprise of up to 260 residential homes (of a range of unit sizes and tenures). In addition, sufficient space has been allocated for a health centre of approximately 850 m².
- 1.1.3 The Site, (displayed in Figure 1.1) is 12.15 hectares (ha) in area. It is located at Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR) SU715767. The Site forms part of the southern section of Reading Golf Course and occupies the area wholly within Reading Borough Council administrative area. The blue line boundary in Figure 1.1 shows the wider Reading Golf Course site. The area contained within the blue line boundary is approximately 30 hectares and is wholly located within the South Oxfordshire District Council administrative area. It will not be developed as part of this application, however it is anticipated that it will house the construction welfare compound and be the location for a number of ecological enhancements associated with the scheme.
- Figure 1.1: Site Boundary***
- 1.1.4 The predominantly residential area of Emmer Green is the northern most suburb of Reading, situated approximately 3 km to the north of the city. Beyond Emmer Green to the north is the Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and to the south is the suburb of Caversham

Figure 1.1 Site Location

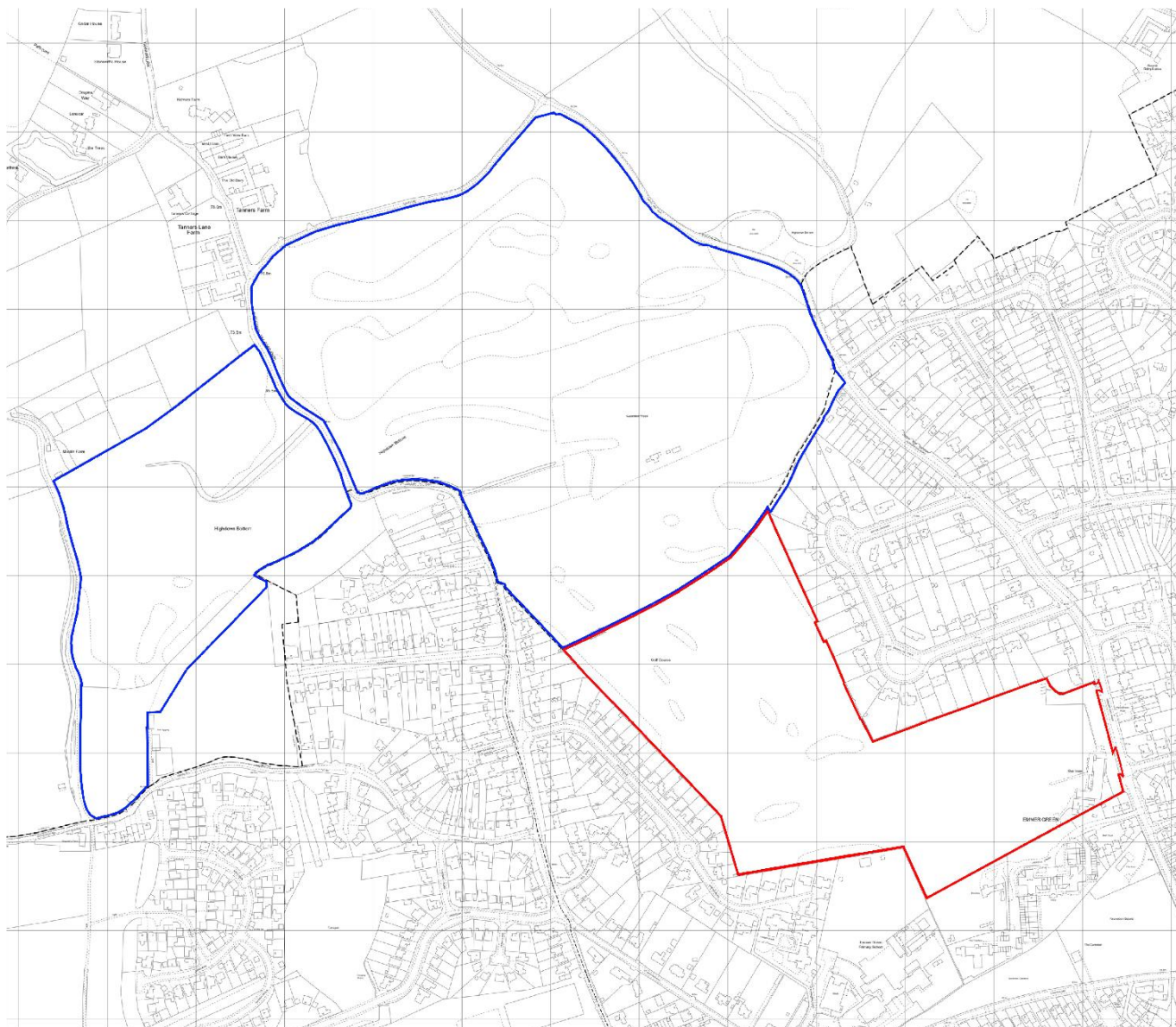


Figure 1.2: Proposed Development Layout



1.2 Requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment

- 1.2.1 The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is the mechanism by which the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment will be assessed.
- 1.2.2 The purpose of the EIA is to establish the nature of the Proposed Development and the environment in which it is likely to take place, during construction and operational phases, so as to identify its likely significant environmental effects both on its own and in combination with other committed developments. The assessment compares the existing situation prior to the start of work (baseline) with the situation during the development phases (construction and operation). It identifies likely effects and the residual effects once mitigated, as well as the cumulative effects.
- 1.2.3 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, SI 2017/571 (the “EIA Regulations”), require that any proposed development falling within the description of a ‘Schedule 2 development’ (as defined within the EIA Regulations), will be subject to an EIA when such development exceeds thresholds and is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of such factors as its nature, size or location (Regulation 2 (1)).
- 1.2.4 The Proposed Development falls within a description of development listed within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations: 10b Urban Development Projects. The thresholds for developments under 10b are:
- the development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development; or
 - the development includes more than 150 dwellings; or
 - the overall area of the development exceeds 5 ha.
- 1.2.5 The Proposed Development will exceed 150 dwellings and the development area exceeds 5 hectares.
- 1.2.6 In accordance with Regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations, the Applicant produced a Scoping Report (**Volume 4: Appendix A.1**), which was submitted to Reading Borough Council (RBC) on the 11th February 2020 (Ref: 200229) with a formal request for an EIA Scoping Opinion. The Council subsequently issued their Scoping Opinion on the 6th April, stating that they considered the Proposed Development to be EIA development and an Environmental Statement (ES) would be required. The Scoping Opinion outlined that the following topics would need to be included within the ES:
- Socio-economics;
 - Traffic and Transport;
 - Air Quality;
 - Noise and Vibration;
 - Water Resources and Flood Risk;
 - Ecology;
 - Archaeology and Built Heritage;
 - Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions; and

- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

- 1.2.7 A copy of the Scoping Opinion is provided in **Volume 4: Appendix A.2**. As such, this ES has been prepared to report the findings of the EIA.
- 1.2.8 Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations specifies the minimum information required for inclusion in an ES. **Table 1.1** shows the location of information within the ES.

Table 1.1: Location of Information within the ES

Specified Information		Location Within ES
1	Description of the development, including in particular –	See below
(a)	a description of the location of the development	Volume 2, Chapter 2: The Site
(b)	a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases.	Volume 2, Chapter 2: The Site; Volume 2, Chapter 5: The Proposed Development and Construction Overview
(c)	a description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the development (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used.	Volume 2, Chapter 5: The Proposed Development and Construction Overview
(d)	an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases.	All Volume 2 technical chapters; Volume 3: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
2	A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.	Volume 2, Chapter 4: Alternatives Considered and Design Evolution.
3	A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.	Volume 2, Chapter 4: Alternatives Considered and Design Evolution; Volume 2 technical chapters where relevant.
4	A description of the factors specified in regulation 4(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes,	All Volume 2 technical chapters; Volume 3: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

Specified Information		Location Within ES
	quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.	
5	A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from, inter alia:	See below
(a)	the construction and existence of the development, including, where relevant, demolition works;	All Volume 2 technical chapters; Volume 3: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
(b)	the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources;	Volume 2, Chapter 3: EIA Methodology; Volume 2, Chapter 5: The Proposed Development and Construction Overview
(c)	the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste;	Volume 2 technical chapters where relevant.
(d)	the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters);	Volume 2 technical chapters where relevant; Volume 3: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
(e)	the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources;	All Volume 2 technical chapters; Volume 2, Chapter 14: Effect Interactions; Volume 3: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
(f)	the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change;	Volume 2: Chapter 4: The Proposed Development and Construction Overview; Volume 2: Chapter 13: Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
(g)	the technologies and the substances used.	Volume 2, Chapter 5: The Proposed Development and Construction Overview; All Volume 2 technical chapters; Volume 3: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
5 cont.	The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in regulation 4(2) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development. This description should take into account the environmental protection objectives established at Union or Member State level which are relevant to the project, including in particular those established under Council Directive 92/43/EEC(a) and Directive 2009/147/EC(b).	As above
6	A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge)	Volume 2, Chapter 3: EIA Methodology; All Volume 2 technical chapters; Volume 3: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

Specified Information		Location Within ES
	encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.	
7	A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.	All Volume 2 technical chapters. Volume 2, Chapter 15: Residual Effects and Conclusions; Volume 3: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
8	A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments pursuant to EU legislation such as Directive 2012/18/EU(c) of the European Parliament and of the Council or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom(d) or UK environmental assessments may be used for this purpose provided that the requirements of this Directive are met. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.	Volume 2, Chapter 3: EIA Methodology; Volume 2 technical chapters where relevant.
9	A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 8.	Volume 1, Non-Technical Summary (NTS).
10	A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the environmental statement	Volume 2, Chapter 1 Introduction; Volume 2 technical chapters where relevant.

1.3 Project Team

1.3.1 Details of the project team are set out in **Table 1.2** below.

Table 1.2: The Project Team

Project Role	Organisation
The Applicant	Fairfax (Reading) Ltd and Reading Golf Course Limited
Architect	Paul Hewett
Planning Consultant	Pegasus Group
Landscape Architect, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Fabrik UK
EIA Consultant, Noise and Vibration, Socio-Economics	Temple
Water Resources, Drainage and Flood Risk	Temple (Stantec)
Archaeology and Built Heritage Consultant	Archaeology South East

Project Role	Organisation
Ecology	The Ecology Co-op
Arboriculture	Arbortrack
Transport and Air Quality Consultant	Stantec

1.4 Statement of Professional Competence

1.4.1 The EIA Regulations state in Regulation 18 (5) (a & b):

“In order to ensure the completeness and quality of the environmental statement – a) The developer must ensure that the environmental statement is prepared by competent experts; and

b) The environmental statement must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts.”.

1.4.2 In accordance with Regulation 18 (5) (a & b) it is confirmed that the EIA has been undertaken by, and the ES has been prepared by, competent experts from the organisations listed in **Table 1.2**. A statement of competence for the EIA Coordinators and contributors is provided below.

Temple

1.4.3 Temple is one of the UK’s leading independent infrastructure and property consultancies, specialising in environment, planning and sustainability. An Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) EIA Quality Mark member and recognised provider of EIA services on some of the UK’s most high-profile development schemes, Temple was responsible for the coordination and management of the EIA and the preparation of the ES. The Temple team was led by James Sanders as the Project Director, Charlie Irwin as the Project Manager and Neil Slattery as the Project Co-ordinator. More information is contained in **Table 1.3** below.

1.4.4 Each of the technical assessments (**Chapters 6 to 13** and **Volume 3: LVIA**) were provided by experts in their fields and reviewed by Temple. Statements of competence for the technical assessors are provided below.

Table 1.3: Competence of Technical Leads by ES Topic

ES Topic	Technical Lead, Company	Statement of Competence
Coordination, Volume 1 NTS, Volume 2 Introductory and Summary Chapters (Chapters 1 to 5, 11 and 12)	James Sanders (Project Director), Temple	James has a BA (Hons) in Environmental Management MSc in Environmental Design and Engineering, is a practitioner member of IEMA, and a Chartered Town Planner. James has over 14 years industry experience.
Socio-Economics	Kevin Nimoh, Temple	Kevin has a BSc in Economics and a MSc in Spatial Planning. He is a Member of the Institute of Economic Development (MIED) and has 7 years industry experience.
Traffic and Transport	Phil Brady Stantec	Phil has 30 years’ experience in transportation planning and highway engineering. He holds a BEng in Civil Engineering and is a member of the - Institution of Highways & Transportation Member,

ES Topic	Technical Lead, Company	Statement of Competence
		the Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport, and the Transport Planning Society.
Noise and Vibration	Chris McCollin, Temple	Chris has a Diploma in Acoustics and Noise Control, he is a member of the Institute of Acoustics and has over 6 years consultancy experience.
Air Quality	Philip Branchflower, Stantec	Philip Branchflower is a highly skilled air quality practitioner with 18-years consultancy; he is a member of the Committee of the IAQM and sat on the DEFRA working group on the Transposition of the Medium Combustion Plant Directive (MCPD).
Water Resources, Drainage and Flood Risk	James Mortimer, Stantec	James has over 14 years of experience working within the geotechnical, environmental, transportation, and civil engineering industries within the UK, Europe, New Zealand and Australia.
Archaeology and Built Heritage	Richard James, Ron Humphrey, Archaeology South East	Ron Humphrey (BSc, MCIfA) is an Assistant Director with experience in project management, heritage consultancy, historic buildings archaeology and urban excavation. Richard James is a Senior Archaeologist with expertise in historic landscape surveys desk-based assessment and archaeological impact assessment.
Ecology	Paul Whitby, Owen Crawshaw, The Ecology Co-op	Paul is a Managing Director/Principal Ecologist with 13 years' experience working as an ecologist and environmental consultant. Owen is an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management with a Level 2 bat survey licence and a Level 1 great crested newt survey licence.
Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Howard Waples	Howard's qualifications include a BSc (Hons) in Biological Science and an MSc in Environmental Assessment and Management. He is a full member of the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment and a Chartered Environmentalist with the Society for the Environment. He has almost 20 years of relevant experience.
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Liz Simes, Nicole Yip, Fabrik UK	Liz Simes (BA (hons), Dip LA CMLI Dip UD) expertise lie primarily in landscape planning, LVIA and TVIA. Nicole Yip is an Associate Landscape Architect (PG Dip CMLI).

1.5 Structure of the Environmental Statement

1.5.1 The ES comprises of four key volumes:

- ES Volume 1 Non-Technical Summary: comprises the standalone non-technical summary (NTS) of the information contained in Volumes 2 to 4 to make it readily understandable to non-specialists;

- ES Volume 2 Main Text: comprises the consideration of related legislation and policy, explanation of assessment methodology and significance criteria, baseline assessments, the proposed mitigation measures and assessment of likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development;
- ES Volume 3 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA): contains the methodology and findings of the LVIA accompanied by a full set of views and verified images; and
- ES Volume 4 Technical Appendices: contain supplementary details of the environmental studies conducted during the EIA including relevant data tables, figures and photographs.

1.5.2 **Table 1.3** sets out the structure of the ES.

Table 1.3: Structure of the ES

Chapter No.	Chapter Title	Description
Volume 1	Non-Technical Summary (NTS)	Summary of the ES in non-technical language.
Volume 2	Main Text	
1	Introduction	Introduction to the ES, EIA Requirements, details of the project team, ES organisation and availability.
2	The Site	Description of the Site and its surrounding environs.
3	EIA Methodology	Methods used to prepare each chapter (including limitations), description of ES structure and content, generic significance criteria, scoping and consultation.
4	Alternatives Considered and Design Iterations	Description of the main alternatives considered.
5	The Proposed Development and Construction Overview	Description of the Proposed Development and details of the construction.
6	Socio-Economics	Assessment of effects on social factors, housing and recreational facilities.
7	Traffic and Transport	Assessment of traffic and transport effects.
8	Noise and Vibration	Assessment of noise and vibration effects.
9	Air Quality	Assessment of air quality effects.
10	Water Resources, Drainage and Flood Risk	Assessment of effects on water quality, including effects relating to drainage and flood risk.
11	Ecology	Assessment of ecological effects.
12	Archaeology and Built Heritage	Assessment of effects on local archaeology and built heritage.
13	Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Assessment on the effect on global climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.
14	Effect Interactions	Assessment of potential for both intra (Type 1) and inter (Type 2) cumulative effects.
15	Residual Effects and Conclusions	Summary of the conclusions of the technical chapters of the ES (including Residual and Cumulative Effects).
Volume 3	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Assessment of effects on landscape and views.
Volume 4	ES Technical Appendices	Supporting Assessments, Data, figures and photographs to support of Volume 2. Technical Appendices: A: Consultation

Chapter No.	Chapter Title	Description
		A1: Scoping Report A2: Scoping Opinion B: Traffic Assessment C: Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment D: Water and Flood Risk D1: Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) D2: Outline Drainage Strategy (SuDS) D3: Utilities Strategy E: Air Quality F: Phase 1 Ground Contamination Survey G: Ecology G1: Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) G2: Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) H: Archaeology and Built Heritage H1: Archaeology Desk Based Assessment (Heritage Statement) I: Climate Change

1.6 Other Documents

1.6.1 A number of other documents have been submitted to RBC in support of the Application as set out below:

- Application Form;
- Planning Statement;
- Lighting Assessment;
- CIL Questions Form;
- Drawings and Plans;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Statement of Community Involvement;
- Arboriculture Report;
- Minerals Resource Assessment;
- Pre-Determination Geo-Physical Survey; and
- Energy and Sustainability Strategy.

1.7 Environmental Statement Availability

1.7.1 Due to the coronavirus pandemic, temporary amendments have been to the Development Management Procedure Order 2015 and the 2017 EIA Regulations to enable planning and other applications to be advertised electronically.

1.7.2 Therefore the ES is available for viewing online at [Reading Borough Councils website](https://www.reading.gov.uk/development-management/development-management-procedure-order-2015).

- 1.7.3 Copies of the NTS, the full ES and other associated documents are available (subject to availability) to purchase as either hard or digital copies from Temple Group Ltd, The Woolyard, 52-56 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3UD. Further details, including pricing, available on request.

1.8 Alternative Formats

- 1.8.1 The text size used in this document has been chosen to cut down on the quantity of paper required in its production. It can however be printed at A3 should a larger version be required.