

Mr Steven Sims
Wiltshire Council
Development Services Central
County Hall, Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Our ref: WX/2025/139460/01-L01
Your ref: PL/2025/08778
Date: 20 November 2025

Dear Mr Sims

**EIA SCOPING OPINION - CONSTRUCT UP TO 300 RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS,
WITH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESS**

LAND EAST OF BLACKMORE FARM, MELKSHAM

Flood Risk

The site falls within flood zones 2 and 3. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will need to accompany any future planning application. This should consider all sources of flooding.

Sequential test - advice to LPA

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), development in flood risk areas should not be permitted if there are reasonably available alternative sites, appropriate for the proposed development, in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The sequential test establishes if this is the case.

Avoiding flood risk through the sequential test is the most effective way of addressing flood risk because it places the least reliance on measures such as flood defences, flood warnings and property level resilience.

Who undertakes the sequential test?

It is for you, as the local planning authority (LPA), to determine an appropriate area of search and to decide whether the sequential test has been passed, with reference to the information you hold on land availability. You may also ask the applicant to identify any other 'reasonably available' sites which are on the open market and to check on the current status of identified sites to determine if they can be considered 'reasonably available'. Further guidance on the area of search can be found in the planning practice guidance [here](#).

Water Supply and Wastewater

Adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is needed to support sustainable development. National Planning Policy Guidance identifies that a healthy water environment will also deliver multiple benefits, such as helping to enhance the natural

environment generally and adapting to climate change. This issue should be included and assessed in any EIA.

The [EU Water Framework Directive](#) applies to surface waters (and groundwater). It requires member states, among other things, to prevent deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and protect, enhance and restore water bodies to 'good' status.

The NPPF Planning Practice Guidance states that when drawing up wastewater treatment proposals for any development, the first presumption is to provide a system of foul drainage discharging into a public sewer to be treated at a public sewage treatment works (those provided and operated by the water and sewerage companies). This should be done in consultation with the sewerage company of the area.

Where a connection to a public foul sewer is not feasible (in terms of cost and/or practicality) a package sewage treatment plant can be considered. The package sewage treatment plant should offer treatment so that the final discharge from it meets the standards set by the required Environment Agency Environmental Permit

A proposal for a package sewage treatment plant and infrastructure should set out clearly the responsibility and means of operation and management to ensure that the permit is not likely to be infringed during the life of the plant.

Sustainable Construction

Sustainable design and construction should be implemented across the proposed development. This is important in limiting the effects of and adapting to climate change. Running costs for occupants can also be significantly reduced.

Biodiversity

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that pursuing sustainable development includes moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature, and that a core principle for planning is that it should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution.

Information on biodiversity impacts and opportunities should inform all stages of development including, for instance, site selection and design including any pre-application consultation as well as the application itself.

Groundwater Protection / Contaminated Land

If historic use of the site may have caused contamination, then NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing both new and existing development from contributing to, or being put at risk from unacceptable levels of water pollution. Government policy also states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is presented.

Further guidance on what should be contained in the assessment and issues associated with groundwater protection can be found in our Groundwater Protection Policy document (GP3) which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-principles-and-practice-gp3>

GP3 is intended to be used by anyone interested in groundwater and in particular those wanting to undertake activities which have the potential to impact on groundwater.

Pollution Prevention during Construction

Safeguards should be implemented during the construction phase to minimise the risks of pollution from the development. Such safeguards should cover:

- the use of plant and machinery
- oils/chemicals and materials
- wheel washing and dirty water disposal
- the use and routing of plant and vehicles
- the location and form of work and storage areas and compounds
- the control and removal of spoil and wastes.

The applicant should refer to the Environment Agency's Pollution Prevention Guidelines at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/pollution-prevention-guidance-ppg>

Waste

Should this proposal be granted planning permission, then in accordance with the waste hierarchy, we wish the applicant to consider reduction, reuse and recovery of waste in preference to offsite incineration and disposal to landfill during site construction. If you require more specific guidance it is available on our website www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waste/.

NOTE TO APPLICANT

Planning Advice – Charging

Please note, we may charge for further technical input into areas of the planning process, beyond the environmental issues identified above. Our charged advice is provided through a formal agreement made up of an offer letter, a programme of advice and [standard terms and conditions](#). We will discuss the advice you need with you and agree a programme to specify the tasks that will be carried out.

The programme will also give the approximate timetable and cost for the advice. The programme can be varied by written agreement for any changes that need to be made. Charges are based on cost recovery and have been set at £115 per hour.

Please note that the view expressed in this letter is in response to a scoping opinion only and does not represent our final view in relation to any future planning application made in relation to this site. We reserve the right to change our position should new information, or updates to guidance occur, in relation to any such application.

The applicant should seek their own expert advice in relation to technical matters relevant to any planning application before submission.

Yours sincerely

Ms Ellie Challans

Sustainable Places - Planning Specialist

02030 259311

wx.sp@environment-agency.gov.uk