

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/09044
APPLICATION TYPE:	Permission in Principle
SITE ADDRESS:	Woodside End Stables, Greenhill, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, SN4 8EH
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Erection of 1No new dwelling in lieu of existing stables and welfare facilities
RECOMMENDATION:	Refuse

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site relates to a plot of land which lies beyond the end of an undesignated highway known as Greenhill and which is mainly single track for much of its length. There are sporadic dwellings along the track with the final termination at a farm to the north of the site and with which this site shares its access.

The site comprises modest stable facilities and an outbuilding with hard surfacing directly adjacent to the stables. There is gated access into the farmland and a further gate on the eastern side of the farm access track which leads into the application site.

Lying outside and distant from any defined settlement, the site lies within the open countryside for the purposes of planning legislation. There are no heritage assets within the vicinity of the site, but it does fall within the outer zone of influence for the North Meadows Special Area of Conservation.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks approval for Stage 1 “permission in principle” for the erection 1 (one) dwelling on the site. It is noted that one dwelling is the minimum and maximum number of dwellings proposed.

The submitted details are limited to a site plan indicating that access would be from the private access track adjacent to the west of the site, which in turn leads onto the unclassified highway to the south.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
N/06/00971/CLE - Use of Caravan as Residence. Refused. Dismissed at Appeal, 20 June 2007

It is noted that there is significant planning history on an adjacent site to the south of this application site, which will be discussed in a later section of this report

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- National Design Guide

Development Plan:

The development plan for Wiltshire comprises the *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)* (adopted January 2015) and any made neighbourhood plans, which remains the principal statutory planning document guiding development across the county. In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this application are listed below:

The adopted *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)*, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy;
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy;
- Core Policy 19 Spatial Strategy: Royal Wootton Bassett & Cricklade Community Area
- Core Policy 45 Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs;
- Core Policy 48 Supporting Rural Life
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan Policies

The emerging local plan is at Draft Stage and in this instance, holds limited weight at the time of writing

Neighbourhood Plan:

Lydiard Millicent Neighbourhood Plan. Made May 2021

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, adopted 2015 - including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy, adopted 2015

ISSUES

The main issues that need to be addressed in this case include:

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle (CP 1 and 2)
- Whether the scheme constitutes high quality design (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable impact upon the reasonable living conditions of the adjoining occupants (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable landscape impact (CP 51)
- Whether the proposal would have a negative effect upon highway safety, including if there is sufficient parking for the proposed development (CP 61 and 64)
- Whether there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats (CP 50)
- Whether there will be any land contamination / air quality issues (CP 55)
- What planning obligations are required to make the development acceptable in planning terms?

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

It was noted that the eastern side boundary of the site is where the common Parish Boundary of Lydiard Millicent and Purton lie. Whilst the majority of the site lies within the Parish of Lydiard Millicent, the adjoining Parish of Purton were also consulted as the boundary is shown crossing the rear of the outbuilding.

Lydiard Millicent Parish Council: Object. Outside settlement boundary and contravenes the LM Neighbourhood Plan

Purton Parish Council: No Objection, but raised concern of increase volume of traffic

WC Highways: No Objection

WC Rights of Way: No Objection, subject to Informatives regarding rights and responsibilities of using the PROW.

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the application was publicised by way of:

- A site notice displayed near the site

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

Below is a summary of the representations received during the consultation period. Only material planning considerations have been taken into account in the assessment of this

application. Non-material issues, such as property values or private legal disputes, cannot be considered in the determination process.

- Site is beyond farm gate and on a private, unmade road
- Incorrect comparisons to adjacent site to south
- This is not infill development
- Encroachment into open countryside
- Planning policies and decision should avoid isolated homes in the countryside

ASSESSMENT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

In accordance with this statutory requirement, this application has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a material consideration in the assessment.

Principle of Development

Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy of the WCS establishes a hierarchy of settlements to guide where development should be focused. The policy prioritises growth in:

- Principal Settlements (e.g., Salisbury, Chippenham, Trowbridge) – main focus for strategic growth.
- Market Towns – support local services and employment; suitable for sustainable development.
- Local Service Centres – smaller towns and villages with a range of services; limited development supported.
- Large and Small Villages – development should be limited and respond to local needs.
- Outside the defined settlements – development is strictly controlled and generally not supported unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy of the WCS sets out how development will be distributed and delivered across Wiltshire. The policy emphasises:

- Sustainable patterns of growth, reducing the need to travel and supporting local services.
- Development should be plan-led, aligning with the settlement strategy and supported by infrastructure.
- Windfall development (not allocated in plans) must still comply with the principles of sustainable development.

- Development outside settlement boundaries is generally not permitted, unless it meets specific policy exceptions (as set out in paragraph 4.25 of the WCS).

Together, CP1 and CP2 ensure that new development is strategically located, sustainable, and supports the character and function of Wiltshire's communities.

The Wiltshire Housing Land Supply Statement (June 2025) provides the latest position on the Council's ability to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land, which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in December 2024. This has reintroduced the requirement to meet five years' worth of deliverable sites and a buffer to be applied to the five-year housing requirement in all circumstances, and has revised the Local Housing Need calculation to establish the five-year housing requirement. These factors have resulted in a substantial increase in the five-year housing requirement to be met from the previous calculation. When this is assessed against the housing land supply which can be delivered within five years, the recalculation shows a significant reduction in the number of years supply. The resulting position shows that the Council can currently demonstrate a 2.42 years housing land supply of housing at a unitary authority level. This is considered to be a substantial shortfall.

The absence of a five-year housing land supply is a material consideration in the determination of this application. In accordance with Paragraphs 78 and 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), for applications involving the provision of housing, where there is a shortfall in the supply of deliverable housing sites, the most important policies for determining the application should be considered out of date. The current housing land supply shortfall is a factor that must be considered in the planning balance and in this case, as a five-year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, the weight that can be applied to the most important policies for determining this application should be assessed and altered in the light of the shortage in housing land supply. The proposal must be assessed against the national policy context of the need to boost housing supply and the benefits of delivering new homes whilst having particular regard to the key policies set out in paragraph 11(d)(ii) and Footnote 9 of the NPPF.

Paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF sets out that plans and decisions should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.*

The application site lies outside and distance from any designed settlement as defined within the WCS. The strategic policies CP1 and CP2 identify the settlements where sustainable development should take place and given the location of the application site and the nature of the proposal, no exception policies set out under paragraph 4.25 of the WCS would be met in this instance.

Whilst CP48 does broadly support the conversion and re-use of rural buildings, this particular application proposes a replacement and is therefore not considered to meet the criterion of that policy.

The applicant acknowledges that the proposal does not satisfy any of the “exception policies” in listed in paragraph 4.25 of the WCS but places reliance on CP48, which it is stated, can be evidenced on the adjacent site to the south at Brockhurst Stables and which is considered to have similar circumstances. It is also opined by the applicant that this “forces the conclusion that there is a very reasonable prospect of delivering residential accommodation on this site as relevant fallback”.

However, the extensive planning history of that adjacent site demonstrates that despite having a similar starting point comprising of stables and outbuildings, had the benefit of a Lawful Development Certificate for the use of the one the buildings as a dwelling (18/02724/CLE) with subsequent applications for replacements meeting the criterion of CP48.

In this instance, on the site known as Woodside, there is evidence of a similar application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the use of a caravan as a residence (N/06/00971), which was refused by the Local Planning Authority. Furthermore, the applicant for this current submission clearly states that the outbuilding is for “welfare” facilities.

As such, there is a very clear difference between the two sites, with Woodside not benefitting from any form of residential dwelling or unit on the site and subsequently no fallback position in terms of assessment through CP48.

Saved Policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan states that new dwellings in the countryside, outside of settlement boundaries will be permitted provided that they are either in connection with the essential needs of agriculture or forestry or it is a replacement for an existing dwelling. As there is no fallback position of a dwelling on the site and the proposal is for an open market dwelling, the proposal fails to accord with the criterion of this policy.

Therefore, owing to the location of the site, the breach in the aims of the development plan is not considered slight and would be so severe as to render that harm in respect of this conflict of great weight as a material consideration. The site is in a highly unsustainable location lacking reasonable access to many service facilities. The occupants of any dwelling in such a location would likely be entirely reliant on private transportation for daily living.

Paragraph 83 of the Framework states that housing “*should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of local communities*”. This site would not do so, being distant from any settlements, and approving housing away from the settlements, as a matter of principle, is harmful to the viability of local services and facilities, which are reliant on a critical mass of

local residents to survive and indeed thrive. In this way, the lack of sustainability of sites such as this one is not only unsustainable environmentally but also socially and economically.

The Applicant makes no claim, either, that the application is supported by any of the exceptions set out at Paragraph 84 of the Framework. In the absence of any support for this type of location in national policy, material considerations weighing in favour of development are limited to the provision of additional housing, the economic benefits of construction and CIL payments. In reality, the additional single unit would do little to tackle the acknowledged undersupply of housing, and while the benefits in terms of increasing supply might justify a pragmatic approach in a marginal case where the location is significantly more sustainable, the total unsuitability of the location for housing continues to weigh heavily against approval taking into account the modest benefits identified.

It is therefore considered that the harm of permitting this form of development in principle would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits and this application for permission in principle should be refused due to the unsuitability and unsustainability of the proposed land use in this location.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Core Policy 57 of the WCS requires high-quality design that:

- Enhances local character.
- Responds to the natural, historic, and built environment.
- Retains important features (e.g., trees, hedges).
- Supports sustainable construction and compatibility with surrounding uses.
- Creates safe, legible, and accessible spaces.

Section 12 of the NPPF emphasises design that is:

- Visually attractive.
- Functionally effective.
- Contributes to the quality of the built environment.

The Wiltshire Design Guide encourages sensitivity to local character, materials, and architectural styles and supports modern living standards while maintaining aesthetic and functional quality.

Building for a Healthy Life Framework promotes healthy, inclusive, and sustainable places. The document encourages:

- Walkability.
- Access to green space.
- Active design principles for well-being.

Details pertaining to the form and scale of the proposed building would be confined and considered by the LPA at any subsequent Technical Details States.

Notwithstanding that position, it is considered that structures such as agricultural buildings and equine facilities are considered reasonably typical and not especially out of place in the rural countryside. The facility known as Woodside is firmly viewed within this context of farm

buildings, farmland and surrounding agricultural land. This is further reinforced by the location of the site, set beyond the gates of the track leading to the farm to the north, beyond any adopted highway and with the access also comprising part of a public right of way. Albeit there is a loose ribbon of development along Greenhill and within the vicinity of the site, there is a clear change of character upon reaching the farm gates. The addition of a further, residential dwelling together with the inevitable domestic paraphernalia that accompanies such sites, is considered to unnecessarily extend the built form into the rural countryside adding to the coalescence of the built environment and encroachment into the countryside.

The overarching policy CP2 states that at Small Villages, development will be limited to infill within the existing built area and where it meets housing needs of settlements and it is not considered that any further WCS Policies permit infill development in countryside locations. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a ribbon of development along Greenhill, this is neither a small village nor could be considered a cluster of associated dwellings. Albeit there is a two storey dwelling to the south of the site, the development of this site would not constitute infill and would result in the encroachment of new residential development further into the open countryside.

CP51 of the WCS states that development should protect, conserve, and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character. As such, albeit there are no given details of the proposed property, there is significant doubt as to the proposals capabilities of providing a positive contribution to or be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area.

Amenity

Core Policy 57 (Point vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future residents.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135, reinforces the need for development to provide a high standard of amenity for both existing and future users.

These policies guide the assessment of amenity impacts, which will be considered in detail under the below headings.

By virtue of the proposed plot sizes and the distance from the neighbouring properties, it is considered that the site is reasonably capable of accommodating the proposed development in a manner that can safeguard the residential amenities of other properties in the area, provided details submitted at technical details stage are considered acceptable.

Highways Impacts and Parking

Transport implications are a key factor in assessing planning applications, especially for larger developments. Proposals must demonstrate:

- Safe and suitable access for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those with mobility impairments.
- No severe residual impacts on the surrounding highway network.
- Promotion of sustainable travel, reducing reliance on private vehicles.

- Adequate parking and cycle provision, in line with adopted standards.
- Protection and enhancement of public rights of way and active travel routes.

Relevant policies include Core Policies 60–64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, supported by the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan, Car Parking Strategy, and Cycling Strategy. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and LTN 1/20 (DfT) provide further design guidance for active travel infrastructure.

Proposals must also ensure safe access for refuse collection vehicles and comply with the Wiltshire Council Waste Storage and Collection SPD (2017).

Where necessary, Transport Assessments or Statements should be submitted to evaluate impacts and identify mitigation. Planning conditions or legal agreements may be used to secure off-site improvements, travel plans, or contributions to sustainable transport infrastructure.

The Council's Highway Engineer has raised concerns in relation to the sustainability of the site for residential development due to the likely reliance upon the private car for potential future occupants or visitors. It is acknowledged that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural locations, but in the absence of any alternative travel options other than private transport in this location future occupiers would be highly reliant on private car transport for access to many services and facilities.

Therefore, any potential future development is considered to result in a level of harm to the settlement strategy in the development and considered contrary to CP1, 2, 19, 60 and 61 and Section 9 of the Framework, which aims to reduce the need to travel by private car and encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives.

Whilst the site would utilise part of the public right of way, it is considered possible that, subject to the applicant ensuring that they have a private right of vehicular access both over the footpath and common land leading into the site. The Council's Public Right of Way Officer has not raised any objection subject to relevant informatives to this effect being appended to any Decision Notice.

Further advice has been given in relation to vehicle parking, garaging, cycles storage and EV charging points. However, such points are considered to be a matter for the Technical Details Stage and would not be a reason for refusal on this matter of the principle in this instance.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Impact on North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC

North Meadow is an exceptional example of a lowland meadow with world class populations of snakeshead fritillary flowers and is open to the public throughout the year. Visitor pressure is impacting the meadow, and it is likely additional residential dwellings/overnight accommodation will lead to the site losing its special interest. Wiltshire Council and neighbouring authorities have therefore prepared a joint Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy.

The site is within the inner zone of influence of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation, and the applicant has confirmed that their agreement under S111 of the Local Government Act 1972. As such it is considered to be concluded that the protected site could be adequately safeguarded if the Local Planning Authority were minded to approve the proposal.

However, given earlier conclusions of the unsuitability of the site for additional residential development and the conflict with the overarching policies of the WCS, it was not considered necessary to progress this matter in further detail.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The proposal has been assessed in accordance with Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, which sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sub paragraph 11(d)(ii) is engaged in this case. The application site is subject to policies within the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance, and clear reasons for refusal have been identified based on these considerations. While the overarching aim of the NPPF is to significantly boost the supply of homes, this must be balanced against the need to ensure development occurs in sustainable locations and respects the character and constraints of the area.

The proposal would deliver only a very modest level of public benefit through the provision of one new dwelling, contributing to the acknowledged shortfall in housing supply. In addition, some economic benefits would arise during the construction phase and through the subsequent occupation of the dwelling, including potential support for local services and businesses. However, these benefits are considered very limited in scale and do not outweigh the significant harm identified. The development does not provide wider social or environmental enhancements that would contribute meaningfully to the NPPF's sustainability objectives.

The development of this site with residential use in the open countryside would be in direct conflict with Core Policies 48, 51 and 57 (of the WCS) and Saved Policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan and would result in further encroachment into the rural countryside. The site is not allocated for development at a neighbourhood level, nor in a settlement boundary, as such is also contrary to Core Policies CP1 and CP2 of the WCS and the principles and objectives of the Framework.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be **REFUSED**.

1. The site is located outside recognised Limits of Development where the development of new housing is strictly controlled and would be contrary to the Spatial Vision for the sustainable development of Wiltshire as set out in Core Policy 1, Core Policy 2 and Core Policy 19 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Paragraphs 2, 7, 8, 9, 15, 48 and 83 of the NPPF (2024). The significant adverse impacts associated with the breach in planning policy would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the limited benefits that would arise.

- 2 Due to the distance to local services, facilities and amenities, occupants of a dwelling on the plot would likely be heavily reliant on the use of private motor transport for the majority of day to day activities, contrary to the principles of sustainable development and the aims of reducing the need to travel, contrary to Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 60 and Core Policy 61 and paragraphs 109 and 110 of the NPPF (2024)