

Our ref: LH/IN/BAK016016
24th February 2026

Sent via email

Dear Audrey

Re: Response to Highways comment

I am aware that the highways officer has commented on the PiP application (PL/2026/00225) listed above and I wish to address the points raised by the officer within this comment. Please see our responses in turn to each point raised:

1. Is this a suitable site for new residential development, having due regard to transport policies set out within the Local Plan?

Under this point the highways officer has outlined the site is situated in a remote location and therefore inaccessible to facilities and services. It is mentioned that current policies seek to direct development to appropriate locations, to promote sustainable transport options, and reduce the need to travel by private car.

Although we note the highways officer has stated that the proposed site is not in a sustainable location, we do not agree with this position. Although the site is not located within an existing settlement boundary, we must reiterate the site is located 1.9 miles from the large village of Minety and 3.7 miles from the town of Cricklade. Therefore, the proposed site is in reasonable proximity to both a town and a village and therefore close to local amenities and services. Although there are no pavements allowing occupiers of the site to walk to either settlement, there are sustainable transport links. This is contrary to the highway officer's opinion that due to the rural location there are no sustainable transport links and all residents would require a private vehicle. This simply is not the case. The planning statement accompanying the application clearly outlined the various bus routes available close to the site. This includes the 93A run by CoachStyle, C54 service run by Pulhams Coaches and the Wiltshire Connect service is available to the area. Furthermore, a bus stop (where such services can stop) is located 94 metres from the application site.

Clearly a rural location is always going to be more challenged in what sustainable transport links it can offer; however it is clear that this site is able to utilise existing sustainable transport links via the existing bus routes. Perhaps weight should be given to the Sawbridgeworth case which considers that agricultural buildings will be located in a rural setting and therefore the test relating to sustainability of location is not a sufficient reason to refuse

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In this instance, the highways officer is giving more weight to sustainable transport than core policies 34 (appropriate diversification of the rural economy) and core policy 48 (improving accessibility between towns and villages helping to reduce social exclusion, isolation, and rural deprivation).

Within this comment the highway officer states: *'the adverse impacts are considered to outweigh the limited benefits arising significantly and demonstrably from the erection of a single dwelling, when assessed against the guidance in the NPPF and the development plan.'* Please note, the application is to consider the principle of between one and nine dwellings. Therefore we do not believe there is limited benefits proposed when considering a site which could facilitate multiple dwellings and alleviate Wiltshire Council's lack of five-year housing supply.

2. Can a safe means of access, by all modes of transport, be secured

The highways officer has again commented within this point on the lack of sustainable transport options. I refer to our response provided above.

The highways officer goes on to comment that the accesses proposed do not provide suitable visibility splays and will therefore be detrimental to highways safety. However, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that we have noted there is the possibility of utilising three different access points all of which could be improved and/or relocated to provide suitable visibility splays. Particularly the access which is located to the west of the site and is some considerable distance from the crossroads. Although we have not provided detail, such as visibility splays, due to this application being a Permission in Principle, by having three accesses this does demonstrate that a one-way system to access the site could be adopted. The land surrounding the farmyard is all owned and controlled by my client and therefore suitable splays could be implemented.

3. Will redevelopment as proposed lead to changes in the pattern of vehicle movement that might prejudice the safe and effective operation of the highway network?

The highways officer has outlined that there have been five collisions recorded over the last ten years. Whilst I am unaware of the scenario and the cause behind each of the collisions, I'm assuming the highways officer is referring to collisions which occurred at the crossroads and not on the roads approaching the crossroads. The three access options that have been offered are all set back from the crossroads. The access onto the Braydon Road (to the east of the site) is situated 36 metres from the crossroads, the access on the Malmesbury Road (to the north of the site) is situated 64 metres from the crossroads and the third alternative access further west on the Baydon Road is situated 310 metres from the crossroads. While there have been five collisions at the crossroads, we have offered three access points into the site, none of which

lead directly onto the crossroads. As well as this we have offered an access point over 300 metres away from the crossroads.

As outlined in the planning statement, the farmyard was originally utilised as a dairy farm with cattle crossing the Braydon Road four times a day for milking, including within rush hours. When the farm was in full operation as a beef, dairy and sheep farm there were multiple slow vehicle movements in and out of the site daily and during peak seasonal periods these would be in excess of 40 to 50 heavy movements daily. Such movements would consist of large, slow moving, farm vehicle movements in and out of the site every day. The farmyard is still operational, however, on a much more reduced scale. Although the scale of agricultural operations is now slightly reduced, heavy slow moving, agricultural vehicles continue to utilise all three access points identified. Furthermore, it should be noted that the access to the existing farmhouse is situated directly in front of the traffic lights at the crossroads and is utilised multiple times a day. At no time has any movements in and out of Leighfield Farm of Leighfield farmhouse caused any accidents.

Surely it would be beneficial for the Council to look to regularise these existing accesses and the agricultural activity utilising these accesses, by supporting the redevelopment of the site to a residential scheme. The applicant is more than happy to work with the Council to ensure suitable accesses can be created and maintained, reducing the risk the current use of the site poses.

Furthermore, there have been multiple planning applications in the local vicinity to the site that have been granted without concern raised from the highways officer. The cases are outlined below:

- Sambourne Park (16/05720/FUL) - A traveller site was granted planning permission 0.63 miles from Leighfield Farm directly on the Malmesbury Road (B4040) and not within an existing settlement boundary. This site was granted permission with no issues relating to transport sustainability preventing the application being successful.
- Bridge Paddock (20/01449/FUL) - The creation of a four-pitch traveller site was granted permission in 2022. The site is situated 0.7 miles south of Leighfield Farm on the Braydon Road. The access into this site is arguably worse than the accesses which could be utilised at Leighfield Farm. This is due to the access being situated after a narrow railway bridge on a blind bend with traffic moving faster (up to 60mph) at this point on the Braydon Road. Equally this site was granted permission with no issues relating to transport sustainability preventing the application being successful.
- Land adjacent to Bridge Paddock (PL/2022/07371) - This site links onto the previous application discussed (20/01449/FUL) with the application seeking to extend the site. The highways officer did not object to the application due to the access already being granted as part of 20/01449/FUL, despite the application seeking to extend the site and therefore an increase in traffic movements.

- Foresters Arms (16/06310/FUL) - Refurbishment of a public guest house to include four guest rooms, managers accommodation, the installation of the package treatment plant and the erection of five dwelling houses directly on to the Malmesbury Road. The application was subsequently granted with conditions. The application is situated 1.2 miles to the east of Leighfield Farm on the Malmesbury Road (B4040). Under the case officer's report the highways officer had no objections and no further comments.
- Wheatleys Farm (APP/Y3940/W/15/3133451) - A residential development consisting of 18 dwellings, two vehicular accesses and all associated infrastructure off the High Road, just outside of Ashton Keynes. Importantly all traffic entering and exiting the site is directly on to a public highway where there is a national speed limit in place.

To conclude, I believe none of the comments made by the Highways Officer cannot be overcome by detail provided in a Technical Details Consent, or through the use of planning conditions on a decision notice provided.

This application provides a viable redevelopment of this farmyard. If in principle the proposed development is not supported, agricultural vehicles and equipment will continue to use the accesses in and out of the site with no regularised use. This will continue to pose a bigger risk and danger to the highway compared to the opportunity to now regularise the use and create safer accesses in and out of Leighfield Farmyard.

If you require any more information in relation to this matter please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

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