

APPLICATION FOR CONSENT TO DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENT OFFICER DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/00831
APPLICATION TYPE:	Consent to display advertisement
SITE ADDRESS:	Flag Pole, High Street, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, SN4 7AF
DESCRIPTION:	Application to put up Progress Pride Flag on existing flagpole from 1st June 2026 to 30th June 2026
RECOMMENDATION:	APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

PROPOSAL

The application seeks consent to display advertisement(s) for the flying of a Progress Pride Flag on an existing flagpole from 1st to 30th June 2026 (during Pride month). The flag measures approx. 2.3m by 1.15m, and the flagpole is understood to have a maximum height of 8m - the application form suggests the flag would be flown around full mast. It is made from polyester and has six horizontal stripes of red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet, chevrons in black, brown, pink, pale blue and white stripes, and a yellow triangle and purple circle.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a flagpole painted white with brass topper. Its setting is provided by the surrounding high street townscape, including the historic street frontages, trees, and public spaces and civic monuments. It is in the settlement boundary of Royal Wootton Bassett. Relevant designations and constraints include the Royal Wootton Bassett Conservation Area, Grade II and II* listed buildings within 50m¹, and A-classified highway (High Street).

PLANNING HISTORY

There are no past planning or other applications that have been identified at or nearby to the site likely to affect consideration of this application.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

¹ Grade II: Town Hall [1363658], Stocks below Town Hall [1022697], 29 High Street [1363659], Little Lilacs, 30 High Street [1022698], 32 and 32A High Street, [1022699], Post Office, 33 High Street [1300267], 34 High Street [1363660], 35 High Street [1300270], 36 High Street [1022700], Cross Keys Inn, 136 High Street [1022705], 137 High Street [1184238], 138 High Street [1022706], 139 and 139A High Street [1363661]. Grade II*: Mr Bevirs's Office, 141 High Street [1300222].

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS):

- Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping (CP57)
- Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment (CP58)
- Core Policy 62: Development Impacts on the Transport Network (CP62)

Saved policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 (NWLP)

Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Development Plan (Made 2018):

- Policy 7: Design
- Policy 12: Road safety, traffic and transport

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- Advertisements

National Design Guide (NDG)

Flying flags: a plain English guide – June 2021

Outdoor advertisements and signs: a guide for advertisers – June 2007

Institute of Lighting Professionals: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (2014) PLG 05.

Wiltshire Design Guide SPD

Royal Wootton Bassett: Design Guidance and Codes – April 2023

Historic England Guidance:

- Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (GPA2)
- The Setting of Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edition) (GPA3)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The following consultees and interested parties were invited to comment on the application:

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council – No responses received at close of consultation period.

Wiltshire Council's Highways Team – No objection (24/02/2026).

Wiltshire Council's Conservation Officer – Comment, the proposed flag on existing pole will have a neutral impact on heritage assets (19/03/2026).

REPRESENTATIONS

There is no statutory requirement for a Local Planning Authority to publicise applications for consent to display advertisements. Nonetheless, this application was publicised to immediate neighbours, by press advert on 19/02/2026 in Wiltshire Gazette & Herald and by a site notice displayed on 24 February 2026.

Five letters of representation were made by members of the public (1 x Comment, 4 x Object). The following provides a summary of the comments therein:

- That the flag would be disrespectful to this country;
- That the flag would be disrespectful to those paying respect at, and commemorated by, the adjacent war memorial;
- That the intention to display the flag had not been publicised prior to the application being made;
- That the council should uphold political neutrality;
- That the courts have ruled on gender definitions.

ASSESSMENT

Regulation 3 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the “Regulations”) requires that Local Planning Authorities exercise their powers in relation to the display of advertisements in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors.

Preliminary matters

The application relates to the flying of a flag on an existing flagpole. The government's guidance² is that more flags should be flown, as they are a very British way of expressing joy and pride and emotive symbols which can boost local and national identities, strengthen community cohesion and mark civic pride. However, the flying of flags is controlled as advertisement to ensure that they do not adversely impact amenity or public safety.

Some flags require express consent from the Local Planning Authority (LPA), whereas others benefit from “deemed consent”, and in either case they are subject to

² Flying flags: a plain English guide – June 2021 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flying-flags-a-plain-english-guide/flying-flags-a-plain-english-guide>).

conditions. Examples of flags benefitting from deemed consent are the Union Flag, the flag of the United Kingdom, and the Rainbow flag, otherwise known as the “Pride” flag, designed by Gilbert Baker.

This application is made for the display of the “Progress Pride” flag, designed by Daniel Quasar. This flag is an updated version of the Rainbow flag that includes additional colours and shapes to represent wider communities³. Having regard to Schedule 3 of the Regulations, express consent is required for the flying of the Progress Pride flag.

Regulation 3(4) states that, unless it appears to the local planning authority to be required in the interests of amenity or public safety, an express consent for the display of advertisements shall not contain any limitation or restriction relating to the subject matter, content or design of what is to be displayed.

Furthermore, the Planning Practice Guidance⁴ advises that, unless the nature of the advertisement is in itself harmful to amenity or public safety, consent cannot be refused because the LPA considers the advertisement to be misleading (in so far as it makes misleading claims for products), unnecessary or offensive to public morals.

Notwithstanding the above, and while it is its effect on amenity and public safety that are determinative, regard is to be had to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This sets out that, in the exercise of its functions, the LPA must have due regard to the need to, among other things, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Amenity

Regulation 3(2)(a) does not define amenity exhaustively, but it includes aural and visual amenity, and factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest.

The flag would be flown from an existing flagpole, centrally located on High Street and adjacent to the Royal Wootton Bassett war memorial. It is located in the Royal Wootton Bassett Conservation Area (RWBCA) where, in so far as it relates to amenity, the Local Planning Authority has a duty under S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the RWBCA.

³ The Progress Pride Flag – October 2025 (https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/the-progress-pride-flag?srsId=AfmBOoq0UEXgY_JkqiPJEWUBkOsWfGhbbW6dWF57JoE3A9fDxNO64czS).

⁴ PPG, Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 18b-026-20140306 (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advertisements>).

No published statement, appraisal or management plan for the RWBCA has been found, but its character and appearance can be discerned from the combination of its settlement pattern focused along a market place (now High Street), its protected and historic buildings and monuments, its traditional architecture and materials, and its significant trees, foliage and open spaces.

The townscape frontage on High Street features many listed buildings of varying age, size, height, materials and architectural styles, some bearing shopfronts and signage in various colours and designs. The listed buildings' significance and special interest, and the more than special interest of 141 High Street, primarily derives from their architectural and historic interests, and the their group value and townscape setting contributes to their significance.

The war memorial is understood to have been erected in c.2004⁵ and is not formally identified or designated for heritage interest. However, it contributes positively to the amenity of the area, including the character and appearance of the RWBCA, because of its pleasing sculptural form and as an eloquent witness to the tragic impact of world events on the local community, and the sacrifice it made in those conflicts.

The representations that were made during the consultation period indicate that some consider the flag to be a source of discomfort because of its visual proximity to the war memorial, while for the applicant it is intended to mark Pride month 2026.

As previously mentioned, the design of the Progress Pride Flag builds on the familiar Rainbow Flag by overlaying chevrons, a triangle and a hollow circle. Its multi-colour design gives the whole a bright appearance that draws the eye, but this is not unusual because advertisements, including flags, are intended to attract attention.

The flag is of a size commensurate to the flagpole, which does not appear out of place on the public open space of High Street. The mix of colours and patterning of the flag design would be seen against the backdrop of the commercial townscape, characterised by a diverse ensemble of buildings of differing ages, materials and architectural styles. In this context, the display would not appear unduly dominant or incongruous and nor would it be of detriment to the ability to appreciate the artistic quality of the war memorial or its function in commemorating all who died in service of their country.

Wiltshire Council's Conservation Officer advises the flag would have a neutral effect on heritage assets and, also for the reasons above, it is concluded that the flag would have acceptable effects in respect of the amenity of the area including by causing no harm to the character or appearance of the RWBCA, the war memorial, or the

⁵ Royal Wootton Bassett - Sculpture (<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/61684>).

significance of surrounding listed buildings through change within their setting. There are standard conditions under the Regulations to ensure the advertisement and flagpole are maintained in a condition which does not impair the visual amenity of the area, and these are recommended accordingly.

While not determinative, the display would accord with the aims of adopted guidance and Policy 7 of the Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan, CP57 (iv and x) and CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which together seek to ensure advertisements meet a high standard of design that are sympathetic to local character and conserve heritage assets.

Public safety

Regulation 3(2)(b) defines that factors relevant to public safety include the safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military). Factors also include whether the advertisement is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air, and whether the advertisement is likely to hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

Various flags have been flown from the existing flagpole for considerable time, and no evidence has been presented that displaying flags here has interfered with factors relevant to public safety.

During the site inspection, it was observed that there is a pedestrian crossing controlled by a traffic light signal, approximately 2.1m adjacent to the flagpole and which is under half the height of the flagpole. It was also observed that there is a CCTV camera mounted to a lamppost on the opposite side of the crossing and onto the front elevation of 33 High Street ('Banking Hub').

The flag is of a proportionate scale to the flagpole and, while the design of the flag is brightly coloured, it is distinguishable from traffic signage. Furthermore, it would not be flown at a height that would interfere with the safe operation of the pedestrian crossing or surveillance equipment in the area. Nonetheless, the relevant standard condition should be used to control its height in the interest of public safety.

The expressed discomfort in some representations is acknowledged; however, no reason can be found that the nature of the flag or its display poses an immediate or severe risk to public safety. Furthermore, Wiltshire Council's Highways Team reviewed the application and raised no objection.

For the reasons above, the advertisement would be of no detriment to public safety, subject to relevant conditions. Furthermore, although not determinative, this would accord with Policy 12 of the Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan, CP62 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which together seek to ensure advertisements are designed to safeguard the safety of the public.

Other matters

Representations that were made during the consultation period comment in respect of disrespect to the country at large, upholding political neutrality and refer to court judgements on gender definitions, although the precise judgement is not identified. It is also appreciated that some may have preferred that the Town Council publicised their intention to display the flag prior to making this application, although there is no requirement for them to do so.

Having had regard to the concerns raised, the Regulations require Local Planning Authorities to exercise their powers under the Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, and, for the above reasons, the flag is found to be acceptable in respect of those matters.

CONCLUSION

The display of the flag would have acceptable effects in respect of factors relevant to amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, and other relevant factors. In exercise of Regulation 14, any express consent is subject to a deemed condition that it expires following a period of 5 years, and it is not necessary to specify a different period despite the applicant's intention to display only during the month of June; accordingly, the deemed condition will apply. Where appropriate the relevant standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulations are recommended and should be added to the decision notice. Subject to conditions, the regulatory requirements have been met, and the application should be supported.

RECOMMENDATION

That consent to display advertisement(s) be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

1. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

REASON: In exercise of Regulation 14(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 to ensure adherence to the standard conditions set out under Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

2. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to:

(a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
(b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or
(c) hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

REASON: In exercise of Regulation 14(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 to ensure adherence to the standard conditions set out under Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

3. Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

REASON: In exercise of Regulation 14(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 to ensure adherence to the standard conditions set out under Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

4. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.

REASON: In exercise of Regulation 14(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 to ensure adherence to the standard conditions set out under Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

5. Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenities.

REASON: In exercise of Regulation 14(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 to ensure adherence to the standard conditions set out under Schedule 2 of the Regulations.