

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/00998
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Buttercups Nursery, Sprays Farm, Calstone
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Erection of replacement children's nursery building together with garden area and car parking. Demolition of existing single storey nursery buildings and reinstatement to a dwellinghouse with associated works
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve

PROPOSAL

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a replacement children's nursery building at Buttercups Kindergarten, Sprays Farm, Calne, together with associated garden/play areas, car parking and access arrangements. The development also includes the demolition of the existing single-storey nursery extension and the reinstatement of the original farmhouse to full residential use.

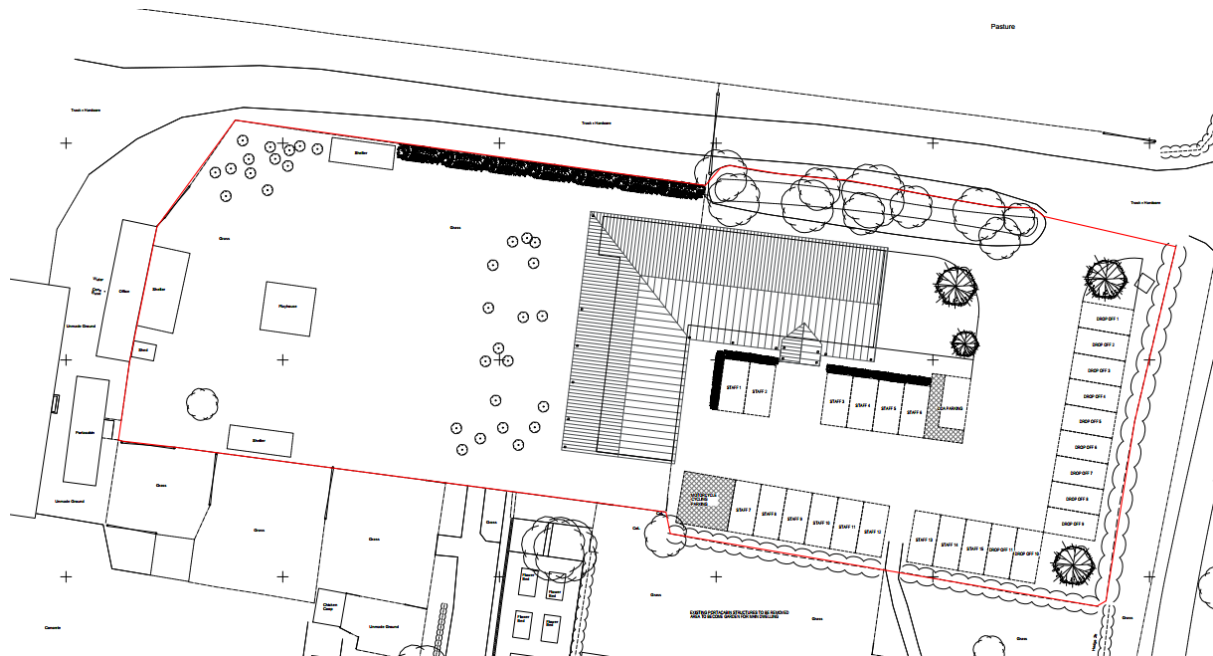
The proposed nursery building would be sited on an area of land within the wider Sprays Farm complex that has the benefit of planning permission granted in 2008 for its use as a car parking area associated with the existing nursery. The land is therefore lawfully established for non-agricultural use and does not form part of land in agricultural cultivation. The development would utilise this existing developed area within the farmyard for the siting of the replacement nursery building. The building would provide purpose-built accommodation for the nursery, including dedicated rooms for different age groups, staff facilities and ancillary spaces. The development would allow the nursery to extend its provision to include childcare for children aged 0–2 years, in addition to the existing age ranges.

Externally, the building would adopt an L-shaped form and would be constructed using natural stone walls with brick quoins, brick arched heads and rowlock cills, concrete double Roman roof tiles, white uPVC flush casement windows, and charcoal grey uPVC rainwater goods, with black timber soffits and fascias. Extract of submitted proposed elevations below:



A dedicated outdoor play area would be provided to the rear of the building, arranged to allow separate play spaces for different age groups. Vehicular access would be taken from an

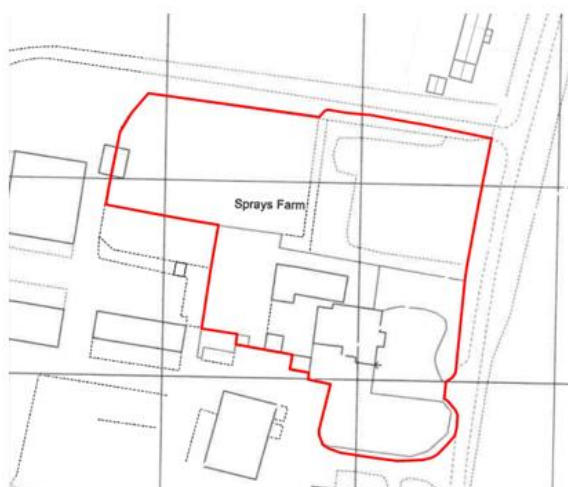
existing farm access to the north, with a new car parking area proposed to provide parking for staff and parent drop-off, as well as cycle and motorcycle parking and a disabled parking space. Extract of proposed site plan below, showing new nursery building, parking area and play spaces:



The proposal would result in an increase in the nursery's overall capacity and associated staffing levels. The existing nursery use would cease within the farmhouse and single-storey extension, enabling the farmhouse to revert to use as a single dwelling.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The site is an existing nursery and land to the north of it, all set within "Sprays Farm". An extract of the submitted location plan is shown below, alongside an aerial photograph showing the main part of the nursery, in the house, shown with a red flag and the extension with the yellow flag:



The site is not within a Conservation Area and there are no Listed Buildings in the vicinity. No public rights of way cross the site or are immediately adjacent to it. The site is in Flood Zone 1, and has not been identified as being at particularly risk of ground water or surface water flooding. The North Wessex Downs National Landscape terminates on the other side of the highway to Sprays Farm – indicated by the light green wash on the plan below.

On the plan below, the building currently used as a nursery but proposed to revert to a dwelling house is marked with the red flag. The nursery extension proposed to be removed is marked with the yellow flag. The green flag indicates the area where the new nursery and associated parking etc are proposed to be sited. The submitted existing site plan states that this land is currently used as a car park, to which application N/08/00137/FUL refers.



Photographs below show the existing car parking area:



Immediately to the north of the site, and currently under construction is a rural workers dwelling approved under permission PL/2022/04704:



PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
N/08/00137/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 7/3/2008 – Erection of Single Storey Extension to Existing Nursery and Change of Use of Land to Car Parking Area for the Nursery
N/94/01169/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approved Date: 8/8/1994 – ERECTION OF TERRAPIN BUILDINGSFOR USE AS JUNIOR DAY NURSERY USE OF BLDGS FOR DAY NURSERY
N/91/01107/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approved Date: 2/7/1991 – CHANGE OF USE OF PART OF GROUND FLOOR OF HOUSE TO DAY NURSERY AND PROVISION OF ASSOCIATED PARKING AND PLAY AREA FACILITIES

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

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 8 Spatial Strategy Calne Community Area
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management

The examination of the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan has been paused and the weight to be afforded to any part of the emerging plan can be no more than very limited. A decision on how to proceed will be made by the Council in May 2026.

Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan (made March 2025):

- Policy C1: High Quality, Sustainable Development in the Calne Community Plan Area
- Policy BE1: Design Principles for Local Distinctiveness

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)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Highways: No objection:

"I refer to the above planning application for the erection of a replacement children's nursery building together with garden area and car parking. For the demolition of the existing single storey nursery buildings and reinstatement to a dwellinghouse with associated works.

The site is accessed via unclassified rural roads which although narrow in places, have formal and informal passing places along their length.

The proposal will expand the nursery from a capacity of 42 to 68 children. It is unlikely that all sessions will be full to maximum and some children will travel together in vehicles reducing the number of vehicle movements associated with the business. The nursery is existing and therefore has an established use of the highway network to the site. It is considered that the additional movements associated with the additional children will not have a significant impact on the highway network to justify a highway objection.

Adequate off street parking is proposed within the site for both staff and parents and the existing vehicle access is not proposed to be altered.

I raise no highway objection."

Cherhill Parish Council: Support subject to conditions:

Setting – *The proposed development IS within the Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan(CCNP2) area (Rural Settlements character area) but is NOT within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.*

Recommendation – *SUPPORT the application subject to the following conditions:*

- a. A traffic assessment / road safety audit is carried out detailing the impact of a targeted 50% increase in the number of children on road safety.*
- b. Innovative solutions, such as an informal one way system for Buttercups users, are explored and implemented. Note - Mr Hislop has now implemented a one way system now to gauge its effect, as well as asking Buttercups users to reduce their speed through the village to 20mph, respect the verges by using passing places and use the one way system.*
- c. It is important to note that the applicant stated during a parish council planning meeting that an increase in children's numbers is not a key driver for the construction of the new building, it is more about safeguarding and the separation of domestic, farm and nursery environments.*
- d. It is disappointing that the opportunity to install EV charging points and solar panels have not been incorporated into the plans, as requested in CCNP2 – Design Guide 4h. The applicant states that he plans to install solar panels and heat the building via a heat pump and will investigate installing EV charging points. A condition should be applied stating these intentions should be enacted.*

Detailed Response – *The parish council supports the application on the following grounds:*

- *The Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan 2 (CCNP2) in policy WS2 supports*

farm diversification, as does the NPPF (2024) para 88.

- The proposed development is within the "Rural Settlements" character area within the CCNP2. The design of the proposed building is compliant with CCNP2 policy BE2 which states "Development proposals should preserve and where appropriate enhance the character, appearance, special interest and setting of...". The applicant has chosen building materials that match the other buildings in the area.*
- CCNP2 policy CF1 states "Proposals for the provision of new community facilities to meet evidenced local needs... will be supported where the development would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the local environment or residential amenity.". The proposed development will bring new community facilities but there is a risk of an adverse effect due to increased traffic (see below).*
- The applicant verbally stated, but the planning statement does not confirm, that solar panels and a heat pump will be used, and the installation of EV charging points will be investigated (possibly for use by villagers overnight).*
- Calstone lacks a village hall. The applicant has stated that he is happy for the new building to be used for occasional village events (these would be very ad-hoc as the building would naturally be set-up with chairs and tables suitable for young children and considerable set-up would be required to enable adults to use it). The council has concerns regarding the increase in traffic generated by the enlarged nursery.*

Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan 2 (CCNP2) Policy GA1 requires that "development proposals that will generate an increase in traffic...should demonstrate through their Transport Statement and, where necessary, a Road Safety Audit that the increased traffic can be safely accommodated." No assessment has been submitted.

The Planning Statement acknowledges a potential increase of 26 parent vehicles and 8 staff vehicles per day (approx. 50% increase) but characterises this as "relatively minor" without evidence. The speculative assumption that 0-2 provision encourages "linked trips" is unsupported and should not form the basis of traffic assessment. Residents have raised concerns about existing peak-time congestion (8-9am and 3-4pm) on the single-track access road through the village. CCNP Policy WS2(f) requires farm diversification to "lead to no unacceptable impacts on the local transport network." The Parish Council considers that additional traffic on an already congested single-track road at peak times constitutes an unacceptable impact without remedial measures. Calstone residents have long sought the introduction of measures to reduce the accident risk on the single track road through the village. Up to around 60 cars going to and from Buttercups at peak times, when villagers are also traveling to work, school etc, can be dangerous. There have been many minor incidents on the road, judged by the number of plastic bumper parts found during litter picks. The introduction of an unofficial one way system for Buttercups users, along with a reminder to use passing places and keep their speed to 20mph or lower, is welcomed and its impact should be measured via a formal traffic speed assessment. The impact of increased traffic on the dangerous A4 / Calstone turning should also be assessed."

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 neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties

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

Two representations have been received from nearby residents. Neither objects in principle to the development; however, both raise concerns relating to highway safety and traffic levels on the narrow rural roads serving the site. Concerns focus on the potential increase in vehicle movements, existing congestion at peak times and the need for speed management measures.

"Whilst I certainly don't wish to object to the proposed planning application, it is obvious that the increase in children's places is going to increase the amount of traffic accessing the nursery on a narrow country lane. Surely it is time to implement a speed limit on this road, for the safety of the nursery users and the village residents."

and

"The roads are way too narrow to allow an increase in traffic. At present the roads do not adequately take the current traffic into account. The increase would represent a danger and increase of incidents. Stating parents will share is not correct as it doesn't happen at present."

These matters are addressed in the Highways section of this report.

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

Policy Context

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.

Assessment and Conclusion

The application site lies outside the defined settlement boundary for Calne and is therefore within the countryside for planning policy purposes, where new development is generally restrained. However, the proposal falls to be considered in the context of the existing lawful use of the site and the nature of the development proposed.

Buttercups Kindergarten is a long-established children's nursery that has operated from Sprays Farm since the early 1990s and forms part of the wider farm complex and farm diversification activities. The proposal seeks to replace and rationalise existing nursery accommodation with a purpose-built facility sited on land within the established farmyard, rather than extend built development into open countryside.

The proposed building would serve an existing community and employment use, supporting the continued operation and modest expansion of a rural business. National planning policy supports the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas and the provision of community facilities, including early years childcare, where proposals are appropriately located and designed.

Cherhill Parish Council recognises the proposal as farm diversification and a community facility, referring to support for such development within the Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework

The proposed development would rationalise existing uses at Sprays Farm by providing a purpose-built nursery building and enabling the existing farmhouse, which is currently part-occupied by the nursery, to revert to full residential use. The scheme also includes the demolition of a later, non-standard construction nursery extension, which is no longer fit for purpose. Overall, the proposals would result in a more appropriate and functional layout, with improved separation between the dwelling, agricultural operations and nursery use.

Having regard to the established nursery use, the siting of the development within the developed footprint of the farm complex, and the nature of the proposal as a replacement facility associated with an existing use, the development is considered acceptable in principle, subject to detailed assessment of its impacts.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy Context

Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to deliver a high standard of design that responds positively to the character of the area, respects the natural, historic and built environment, and is compatible with surrounding uses. The policy also seeks to ensure that development contributes to safe, accessible and functional environments and incorporates appropriate materials and finishes.

Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places emphasis on good design as a key aspect of sustainable development, requiring development to be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, functionally effective and to contribute positively to the quality of the built environment.

The Wiltshire Design Guide promotes development that responds sensitively to its context, makes appropriate use of local materials and architectural forms, and achieves high standards of layout, appearance and functionality. The Building for a Healthy Life Framework also promotes environments that support wellbeing, including access to outdoor space and inclusive, safe layouts.

Assessment

The proposed nursery building would be single storey in form and would be sited within the established farm complex at Sprays Farm, on land that is already developed and associated with existing uses. In terms of scale, massing and footprint, the building is considered appropriate to the size of the plot and its rural context, and would be clearly subservient to the wider collection of agricultural buildings within the farmyard.

The building would be viewed in the context of existing farm structures, and would not extend development into open countryside beyond the established developed envelope of the site.

There is a good degree of screening afforded from the existing hedgerow at the front of the site, which the site plans show is to be retained:



As such, the proposal would not introduce incongruous built form into the landscape. The design adopts a simple, functional form that reflects the rural setting, with an L-shaped layout that supports the operational needs of the nursery while remaining visually contained. The use of natural stone coursing, brick detailing and traditional roof tiles reflects materials found elsewhere within the farm complex and surrounding rural area, contributing to a cohesive and sympathetic appearance.

Cherhill Parish Council has confirmed that the design and choice of materials are considered appropriate to the rural setting, which lends further weight to the conclusion that the proposal responds positively to local character.

The provision of dedicated external play space to the rear of the building allows for appropriate access to outdoor areas for nursery users, while remaining contained within the site and screened from wider views by existing built form and landscape features. The layout of the site provides a clearer and more legible arrangement of uses, with improved separation between nursery activities, residential use and agricultural operations.

Overall, the development would result in a visual and functional improvement to the site through the removal of a later non-standard nursery extension and the consolidation of the nursery use within a purpose-built structure.

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered to be of an appropriate scale, design and form for its rural location and would sit comfortably within the established farm complex. The materials and appearance of the building would respect local character and would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the area. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the design objectives of the NPPF, and the guidance set out within the Wiltshire Design Guide and Building for a Healthy Life principles.

Amenity

Policy Context

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.

Assessment & Conclusion

The application site is located within the Sprays Farm complex in a rural location, where residential receptors are limited. Beyond Sprays Farm, there are no nearby dwellings within approximately 130 metres of the proposed nursery building. As such, the site is relatively isolated from unrelated residential properties.

The nursery is an existing established use, and the proposal seeks to replace and rationalise existing accommodation rather than introduce a new source of activity in an otherwise quiet location. The proposed nursery would operate during daytime hours only, and no significant change in the nature of activities undertaken on the site is proposed.

Importantly, the development would enable the cessation of nursery activity within the original farmhouse, allowing it to revert to full residential use. This would result in an improved arrangement of uses within the site, providing clearer separation between residential accommodation, nursery operations and agricultural activities, thereby benefiting residential amenity at the site.

Given the separation distances involved, the scale of the proposed development, and the existing lawful nursery use, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to unacceptable impacts in terms of noise, disturbance, overlooking or loss of privacy.

Highways Impacts and Parking

Policy Context

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.

Assessment & Conclusion

The proposal would result in an increase in the capacity of the existing nursery; however, the site already benefits from an established lawful nursery use and associated vehicle movements. The development would formalise and improve parking provision within the site, with dedicated staff and parent parking spaces, representing an improvement over the existing arrangement.

Wiltshire Council Highways has assessed the proposal and raises no objection, concluding that the additional vehicle movements associated with the development would not have a significant impact on the local highway network. The Highway Authority has not requested a Transport Assessment or Road Safety Audit, and it is considered that the proposal complies with the relevant tests of national planning policy in this regard.

Concerns raised by the Parish Council and local residents relating to traffic levels and road safety are noted. The applicant has indicated that their intention is to introduce a “one way” system on site (this would be written into the parents’ contract with the nursery, to improve safety. It is noted that this intention does not form part of this planning application. However, in the absence of technical evidence demonstrating a severe impact and having regard to the professional advice of the Highway Authority, it is concluded that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to highway safety.

Ecology and BNG

Policy Context

The ecological impact of development is a key planning consideration, especially for larger schemes. Proposals must assess and address potential effects on:

- Protected species
- Priority habitats
- Ecological networks

- Green and blue infrastructure

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to:

- Avoid harm to ecological assets.
- Deliver measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), in line with the Environment Act 2021.
- Support habitat restoration and connectivity.
- Integrate biodiversity into site design.

The Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) promotes nature recovery, ecosystem services, and habitat connectivity through development.

Assessment & Conclusion

The application site comprises a small parcel of land associated with the existing nursery and farm complex at Sprays Farm. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been submitted in support of the application and confirms that the site is of limited ecological value, comprising largely modified grassland, hardstanding, introduced shrub planting, individual trees and boundary hedgerows.

There are no statutory or non-statutory ecological designations within the site, and no Priority Habitats are present within the application boundary. The nearest Site of Special Scientific Interest lies approximately 1.5km from the site, and given the nature and scale of the proposed development, no impacts on designated sites are anticipated.

The PEA found no evidence of protected species likely to be affected by the development and concluded that, subject to standard good practice and reasonable avoidance measures where appropriate, the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable ecological impacts.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The proposals are supported by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, undertaken using the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric (2024). The assessment is informed by detailed habitat surveys and confirms that the baseline biodiversity value of the site comprises 1.02 area habitat units and 0.24 hedgerow units.

The development has been designed to retain existing higher-value ecological features, including boundary hedgerows and individual trees, with works largely confined to areas of low-value modified grassland and artificial surfaces. Proposed landscaping includes additional native tree planting and the creation of new native hedgerow.

Following implementation of the proposals, the post-development biodiversity value is calculated to be 1.39 area habitat units and 0.35 hedgerow units, representing a net gain of approximately 36% in area habitat units and 46% in hedgerow units. The statutory 10% biodiversity net gain requirement is therefore exceeded, and all BNG trading rules are satisfied, with no requirement for off-site biodiversity compensation.

Landscape and Visual Impact

Policy Context

Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance landscape character and quality, having regard to local distinctiveness, visual amenity, and important views. Particular weight is given to the protection of National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and their setting.

The Wiltshire Design Guide SPD (2024) promotes a context-led approach to development, encouraging schemes that integrate with existing settlement patterns, landform and landscape features while avoiding visual intrusion.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the importance of protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Paragraph 189 confirms that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty *within* National Landscapes.

Under Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, local planning authorities are required to seek to further the statutory purposes of National Landscapes when exercising any function affecting them. This includes taking reasonable and proportionate steps to conserve and enhance natural beauty, where relevant.

Assessment

The application site is not within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape; however, the designation boundary lies in close proximity to the site, on the opposite side of the lane. The site therefore forms part of the wider setting of the National Landscape, and its potential landscape and visual effects have been considered accordingly.

The proposed development comprises a single-storey building, sited within the established Sprays Farm complex alongside existing agricultural buildings and other built elements. The location, scale and form of the building reflect the existing pattern of development and would not introduce built form into undeveloped or open countryside.

In landscape terms, the proposal represents a modest and contained form of development, closely associated with existing farm structures. Views of the site are largely limited to the immediate locality, with the development seen in the context of existing buildings rather than as an isolated or visually prominent feature in the wider landscape. Longer-distance views from within the National Landscape are limited by intervening built form, landform and vegetation.

The simplicity of the building form, its single-storey height, and the use of materials typical of rural and farm-related development assist in ensuring that the proposal integrates appropriately into its surroundings and does not give rise to visual intrusion. The proposal does not result in skyline development, nor does it encroach into visually sensitive landscape features associated with the National Landscape.

Having regard to its siting, modest scale and relationship with existing development at Sprays Farm, it is not considered that the proposal would result in harm to the character or appearance of the surrounding countryside or to the special qualities or landscape and scenic beauty of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

In this context, the scheme is considered to represent a proportionate and appropriate form of development, and the Local Planning Authority has discharged its duty under Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 by assessing potential effects on the National Landscape and concluding that no adverse impacts would arise.

Conclusion

The proposed development would be read as part of the existing Sprays Farm complex and would not adversely affect landscape character, visual amenity, or the setting of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Given its modest scale, single-storey form and close association with existing buildings, the proposal is considered acceptable in landscape and visual terms and complies with Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the NPPF, and relevant design and landscape guidance.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a purpose-built, single-storey nursery building at Sprays Farm, together with associated works, landscaping and the demolition of an existing non-standard nursery extension. The development would also enable the reversion of the farmhouse to full residential use, resulting in a clearer and more appropriate arrangement of uses within the farm complex.

In principle, the proposal represents the continued operation and rationalisation of an established nursery use, rather than the introduction of a new or isolated form of development in the countryside. The scheme has been designed to sit comfortably within the existing built form of Sprays Farm and would not result in encroachment into open countryside beyond the established developed area.

In design and landscape terms, the proposed building is modest in scale, single storey in form, and would be viewed in the context of existing agricultural and ancillary buildings, and the recently approved rural workers dwelling currently under construction. Although the site lies outside but close to the boundary of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, the proposal would not adversely affect the landscape character, visual amenity, or the special qualities of the designation. The Local Planning Authority has therefore had regard to, and properly discharged, its duty under Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, and is satisfied that the proposal would not cause harm to the National Landscape or its setting.

No unacceptable impacts have been identified in respect of residential amenity, given the isolated rural location, separation from nearby dwellings, and the beneficial cessation of nursery activity within the farmhouse. Highway safety, drainage, heritage assets and

environmental considerations have all been assessed and found to be acceptable, subject where necessary to appropriate planning conditions.

In ecological terms, the proposals are supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, which confirm that the site is of limited baseline ecological value and that the proposals would deliver in excess of the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain requirement on-site. The development therefore complies with national and local policy objectives for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

The proposal is also considered to accord with relevant policies of the Calne Neighbourhood Plan. Policy C1: High Quality, Sustainable Development seeks development that is sustainable in its design, construction and long-term use. In this case, the replacement of a later, non-standard construction nursery extension with a purpose-built facility constructed to modern standards represents a more sustainable form of development, providing a building better suited to its operational needs with improved longevity and efficiency.

Policy BE1: Design Principles for Local Distinctiveness requires a high standard of design in all locations, with particular care taken in sensitive locations, including development affecting the setting of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. As set out elsewhere in this report, the proposed building has been designed to respond appropriately to its rural context, would be read as part of the existing farm complex, and would not result in harm to local distinctiveness or the wider landscape setting. The scheme is therefore considered to comply with this policy.

Taking all matters into account, it is concluded that the proposal represents a well-considered and proportionate form of development, which would bring operational, visual and functional benefits to the site without giving rise to unacceptable planning harm. The development is considered to comply with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Calne Neighbourhood Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework, and there are no material considerations that would otherwise justify a refusal of planning permission.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions:

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings and documents:

Site Location Plan, Existing Site Plan AA/25/11/11 received 25 February 2026

Proposed Elevations AA/25/11/13 received 25 February 2026

Proposed Ground Floor Plan AA/25/11/12 received 25 February 2026

Remaining Dwelling Proposed Ground Floor and First Floor Plan AA/25/11/14 received 25 February 2026

Planning Statement received 13 February 2026

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Informative BNG

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition “(the biodiversity gain condition)” that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Wiltshire Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. For further information on exempt developments please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.

Irreplaceable habitat

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must include, in addition to information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on the habitat, information on arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat.

The planning authority can only approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if satisfied that the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for the purpose of compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.