

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/00286
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Galteemore Farm, Beckhampton, Marlborough, SN8 1FE
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Erection of one polytunnel on a field at Galteemore Farm for the purpose of cut flower production.
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission is GRANTED subject to conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site relates to Galteemore Farm, a diversified agricultural holding situated to the south of Beckhampton and the A4. The site is within the World Heritage Site of Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites and the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (AONB). The whole agricultural holding extends to 935 hectares and has been in the same ownership since 1922.

There are a cluster of agricultural buildings situated to the south of an unclassified road to the south of the A4. The application site lies to the southeast of these buildings, and it is accessed off via the private vehicular access within the agricultural holding, which is accessed off the public highway to the north. There is also another vehicular access from the A4 to the east.

There is a Grade II Listed Building, Galteemore Farmhouse, approximately 173 metres to the northwest, and the application sit lies within an identified Ridge and Furrow. There is a Schedule Monument, 'Silbury Hill: a monumental Neolithic mound west of the River Kennet and south of Avebury village', which is approximately 617 metres to the east.

Based on the latest national flood mapping data updated by Environmental Agency in 2025, the site lies within Flood Zone 1, and is identified to be at negligible risk of surface water flooding. According to the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in 2024, the site is identified to be at risk of groundwater flooding to surface and subsurface assets.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of one polytunnel on the application site.

The proposed polytunnel would comprise one steel hoop, measuring 3.05m in width and 7.62m in depth, with a height of 2.13m.

The submitted details states that the intention is to use the polytunnel for propagation in connection with the applicant's new horticulture business. The applicant has signed a Certificate B, and it has been indicated that the land owner has been notified via a requisite notice.

Following concerns raised by the World Heritage Site Coordination Unit, additional information has been submitted for consideration. It is confirmed that there would be no internal or external artificial lighting as part of the proposal.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
ENQ/2024/01568 - PD Enquiries Decision - PP Required Date: 21/11/2024 – Erection of polytunnel in a field for cut flower production (renting land)

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 34 Additional Employment Land
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan Policies

While adopted policies remain the primary basis for decision-making, emerging policies may provide useful context and should be considered where relevant. In this case, there are no emerging policies contradicting the material weight, therefore, the assessment will rely solely on the adopted development plan and any other relevant national guidance.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Setting of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site (October 2025)

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 preserve or enhance the historic environment (CP 58)
- 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 Archaeology: No objection subject to conditions

- Comments advise the site's location within an area of high archaeological potential and recommends condition requiring excavation works.

Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site Coordination Unit: No objection

Avebury Parish Council: No comments received.

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;
- A site notice displayed near the site;
- An advertisement placed in the local press.

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

No comments have been received at the time of writing.

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.

Core Policy 34: Additional Employment Land of the WCS seeks to promote modern agricultural practices and appropriate diversification of the rural economy and the NPPF looks to encourage business in rural areas, including outside settlement limits.

Assessment

The site is located outside any limits of development and therefore in the open countryside for the purposes of planning policy. In this case the polytunnel is required to support the applicant's horticulture business to be operated on the application site. Use of land in rural areas for agricultural purposes including horticulture is entirely appropriate. In line with CP34 of the WCS, the principle of new structures which are proportionate to the scale of operation for a rural based business may be considered acceptable.

Conclusion

The principle of development is acceptable subject to the proposal's compliance with other policies within the development plan.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy Context

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.

Assessment

The application site is located within the open countryside. The submitted plans demonstrate the proposed polytunnel to be of a typical metal framed design comprising a singular hooped bay. The new structure would be erected in close proximity to the agricultural buildings in the existing agricultural holding, adjacent to a patch of hedgerows.

The proposed polytunnel may be partially visible in public vantage points from the A4. However, given the existing hedging and trees along the south of the A4 and the siting, the site is not considered to be situated in a prominent location. The proposed polytunnel would be seen in context with the backdrop of other agricultural buildings, and it is important to consider that polytunnels are not an uncommon feature within the countryside, fundamentally their purpose is to grow products for agriculture or forestry which are less likely to occur on any significant scale within urban areas.

It is acknowledged that the proposed development would have some visual impact on the countryside, however this would be mitigated by the chosen position of the polytunnel being at lower level and partially screened by existing vegetation. As such, the visual impact is considered limited.

Conclusion

The proposal is in accordance with Core Policy 57 of the WCS and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Impact on Heritage Assets

Policy Context

The NPPF outlines government policy for planning. Chapter 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. In particular:

Paragraph 208 requires LPAs should “avoid or minimise any conflict” between the heritage asset’s conservation (which includes achieving its optimum viable use) and any aspect of a proposal.

Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable new uses and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraphs 212 requires “great weight” to be given to an asset’s conservation “irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

Paragraph 213 advises that harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require “clear and convincing justification”.

Paragraphs 213-215(214-216) require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved.

Paragraph 220 advises that not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm or less than substantial harm as appropriate.

The Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

The Council’s Core Strategy Policy CP58 ‘Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment’ requires that designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance and encourages proposals which improve the condition of heritage assets at risk.

The Council’s Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. The policy requires applicants to “demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) responding to the value of the natural and historic environment and being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and landscapes. Development is required to respond positively to the existing in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

Assessment

The application site lies within the Avebury part of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site (WHS), which necessitates consultation with the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Coordination Unit.

The application has been supported by an Archaeological assessment and Heritage Statement and a survey of intervisibility, demonstrating the location of the site from key viewpoints in the setting of the WHS as identified in the SPD. These provide sufficient

information to demonstrate that there would be no intervisibility and that the overall scale and material of the proposed polytunnel would be in harmony with the existing built form within the agricultural holding. Whilst the submitted details indicate the implementation of planting to screen the development from key views, the consultee has advised that screening planting would not be required due to the low visibility demonstrated. The consultee has therefore raised no objections against the scheme. It can be concluded that no harm to the setting of the WHS would result from the proposed development.

The site also lies within an area of high archaeological potential, which necessitates consultation with the Council's Archaeology Officer. The proposal would include small-scaled groundworks, which has a potential to result in harm to archaeology. As such, archaeological investigations are required and it is reasonable to secure this via a pre-commencement condition.

Conclusion

The proposal is in accordance with Core Policies 57 and 58 of the WCS and the relevant provisions of the NPPF, subject to conditions.

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.

These policies guide the assessment of amenity impacts, which include the considerations of overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing, and noise.

Assessment

The closest residential dwelling lies approximately 187 metres to the northwest, with intervening agricultural buildings in between. It is therefore considered that there would not be any unacceptable overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing, and noise impacts on the private amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Conclusion

The proposal is in accordance with point vii of Core Policy 57 of the WCS.

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.

Assessment

The site has existing access onto the public highway and there are no proposals to alter the existing access to the public highway or car parking arrangements as a result of the application.

The proposed polytunnel is stated as a flower-growing space to support the applicant's new business, and the proposal is for the erection of the polytunnel and does not propose for any other change of use, including to allow for visiting customers or sales to take place from the application site. A condition would be required to restrict sales to the public from site in the interests of highways safety.

Conclusion

Subject to appropriately worded conditions preventing retail sales from the site, the proposal would not result in any significant intensification in use of the access. It is not considered that the proposals would result in detriment to the surrounding highway network and therefore it is recommended that no highway objection be raised.

Ecology and Biodiversity

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.

Unless exempt, National policy requires a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for major developments, demonstrated via:

- Biodiversity Metric calculations
- Ecological assessments (e.g. PEAs, Phase 1 surveys, protected species surveys)

Assessment

The proposed polytunnel is to be erected on a parcel of land within the existing agricultural fields in relation to Galteemore Farm. The existing area is of managed grassland, and heavily eroded by repeated agricultural vehicular use.

It is recognised that the countryside is a working environment which needs to remain productive and competitive and this is reflected by the aims of WCS Core Policy 34. As such, it is necessary that any ecological harm should be weighed against the operational needs and productivity of the land. The proposal would result in the loss of a limited area of grassland, which comprises a relatively small area of managed and predominantly eroded grassland. This would be considered to be a small area of managed mostly eroded grassland. However, the proposed development would facilitate the applicant's horticultural business. On balance, it is considered that the identified ecological impact of the development would be offset by the long-term economic and environmental benefits of supporting a rural-based business.

In respect of statutory BNG, the development does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25sqm of on-site habitat (or 5 metres of linear habitat). As such the development falls below the threshold for mandatory BNG and there would be no need to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021.

Conclusion

The proposal is exempt from BNG requirements, and it is in accordance with Core Policy 50 of the WCS.

Landscape and Visual Impact

Policy Context

Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to:

- Protect, conserve, and enhance landscape character and quality.
- Respect local distinctiveness, key views, and visual receptors.
- Give particular weight to impacts on National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) and locally valued landscapes.

The Wiltshire Design Guide SPD (2024) promotes a context-led approach, encouraging integration with natural features and settlement patterns while avoiding visual intrusion.

The NPPF emphasises the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes, particularly those with scenic, historic, or ecological significance. Planning decisions should:

- Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
- Safeguard key views, local distinctiveness, and landscape settings.
- Ensure development is well-integrated into its surroundings and avoids visual intrusion, especially in sensitive or designated areas.

Landscape impact must be considered alongside biodiversity, heritage, and green infrastructure objectives, with mitigation measures encouraged where harm cannot be avoided.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

Under Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, LPAs and other relevant authorities must now “seek to further” the statutory purposes of National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), replacing the previous duty to merely “have regard to” them.

This is an active duty, requiring authorities to take reasonable and proportionate steps to support the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, special qualities, and key characteristics of these designated areas when exercising any function that affects them.

Assessment

The application site is washed over by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

The submitted plans demonstrate that the proposed polytunnel would be of a typical metal framed design comprising one hooped bay. The new structure would be erected in close proximity to the agricultural buildings in the existing agricultural holding, adjacent to a patch of hedgerows. The applicant has also confirmed in writing that there are no internal or external artificial lighting proposed. It is both necessary and reasonable to secure this via condition.

Given this proposed siting, the proposed structure would be seen in context with the backdrop of existing agricultural buildings. Furthermore, polytunnels are not an uncommon feature within the rural countryside.

For these reasons, the proposal is not considered to result in significant harm to the National Landscape.

Conclusion

The proposal is in accordance with Core Policy 51 of the WCS.

Pre-commencement Condition Agreement

This recommendation includes pre-commencement planning condition(s) relating to archaeology. In accordance with Section 100ZA of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Pre-commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018, the Local Planning Authority formally notified the applicant/agent of the proposed condition(s) and sought their agreement. Written confirmation of agreement was received from the applicant's agent on 28 April 2026.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The principle of development is considered acceptable when assessed against the settlement strategy of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan.

The proposal is broadly compliant with relevant local and national planning policies in respect of design, scale, residential amenity, heritage, landscape, highway safety, ecology and biodiversity, subject to the recommended conditions.

The development would deliver clear benefits of supporting a rural based business, which weigh positively in the overall planning balance.

No material considerations have been identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh these benefits or indicate that permission should be refused, having regard to the assessment above.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms and in accordance with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework, and all other relevant material considerations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions.

CONDITIONS:

1. 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 by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

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

Application form & Certificate; received 9 January 2026

Location Plan; received 9 January 2026

Proposed Site Plan, Floor Plan and Elevations; received 9 January 2026

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

3. No development hereby permitted shall take place until a written programme of archaeological investigation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme shall include provision for on-site archaeological work, and for off-site analysis, publication, and archiving of the results. All archaeological monitoring and investigation shall be carried out in accordance with the approved programme and shall adhere to the standards and guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and the document Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Assessment and Fieldwork in Wiltshire and Swindon Borough issued by the Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service (WCAS).

REASON: To enable the recording and preservation by record of any matters of archaeological interest.

4. There shall be no visiting members of the public to the site and no retail sales of any kind from the site.

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity, highways safety and in encouraging sustainable forms of development.

5. If within a period of 10 years from the date of this permission, the agricultural use of the structure hereby permitted permanently ceases, the structure and resulting demolition materials shall be removed and the site shall, within a period of three months from the date of the substantial demolition of the said structure, be restored to its condition before the development took place or to such other condition as may be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that the agricultural structures are removed on cessation of their agricultural purposes, in the interests of protecting the rural character of the area.

6. No external lighting shall be installed at the site.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of the area and to minimise unnecessary light spillage above and outside the development site.

INFORMATIVE NOTES:

Cost of building recording/archaeological work

The applicant should note that the costs of carrying out a programme of building recording and/or watching brief and/or archaeological investigation will fall to the applicant or their successors in title. The Local Planning Authority cannot be held responsible for any costs incurred.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (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 not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements is considered to apply.

Building Regulations

Any alterations to the approved plans, brought about by compliance with Building Regulations or any other reason must first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of work.