

Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Your Ref PL/2026/01963
Our Ref CRTR-PLAN-2026-46489
Thursday 30 April 2026

Dear Lucy Rutter-Dowd,

Proposal: Outline planning permission: All matters reserved for the residential development for up to 175 dwellings, associated works (including demolition), infrastructure, ancillary facilities, open space and landscaping. Construction of a new vehicular access off Coate Road and Windsor Drive

Location: Land South of, Coate Road, Devizes

Waterway: Kennet & Avon Canal

Thank you for your consultation.

We are the charity who look after and bring to life 2000 miles of canals & rivers. Our waterways contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time. These historic, natural and cultural assets form part of the strategic and local green-blue infrastructure network, linking urban and rural communities as well as habitats. By caring for our waterways and promoting their use we believe we can improve the wellbeing of our nation. The Trust is a statutory consultee in the Development Management process.

The main issue relevant to the Trust as statutory consultee on this application is accessibility in relation to the towpath of the Kennet & Avon Canal

This is not our substantive response. However, based on the information available we request that a **legal agreement is necessary** to address the matter below.

Accessibility

Core Policy 61 of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 and paragraph 109 of the NPPF require development to promote sustainable transport options.

Furthermore, Core Policy 52 of the Core Strategy requires developers to retain and enhance Wiltshire's Green infrastructure network, provide suitable links to it, and make contributions (financial or other) to support such projects. The canal and towpath are recognised as important, multi-functional Green Infrastructure which provides off-road active travel routes from the site to the town centre and to open countryside for recreational purposes.

The canal towpath is part of the long-distance path network, footpath DEV16 and parts of it are also part of Sustrans NCR 4. AS recognised within the Travel Plan the Trust and Wiltshire Council have worked in partnership to improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists along the canal towpath and improvements have already been made to the west of Windsor Drive, with further funding agreed from the adjacent Bellway site.

Canal & River Trust Spatial Planning Team

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The Travel Plan correctly identifies that £500,000 (plus RPI) has been awarded from the adjacent Bellway site and the document assumes that the full towpath improvements will be delivered.

Unfortunately, as the project design has progressed it has become clear that the contribution is insufficient to provide the level of improvement required. This is as a result of a greater amount of towpath widening being required than originally anticipated as well as rising costs. The shortfall is currently calculated at £350,000, however this is may well rise substantially as costs increase in the future.

It is hoped that the money currently available (£500,000 plus rpi) will allow the creation of the access at the eastern end of the Bellway site, widening of the towpath (by building into the canal) and a temporary surface across the site frontage. The funding is not currently sufficient to provide improvements to towpath access towards the Windsor Drive end of the site. As a result of this the Trust wish to discuss the possibility of a further contribution to improve access to the towpath in this area.

As identified in the Travel Plan, the towpath provides a convenient route for the future residents of this site to reach local facilities in the town centre in a sustainable manner, as well as allowing access to open countryside for recreational use.

The closest existing access point from this site onto the towpath uses a set of steep steps leading from the eastern side of the bridge, and a steep ramp on the western side. Potential improvements in this area are being considered but cannot be provided within the funding currently available.

The Trust wish to meet with all relevant parties on site to discuss potential improvements which could provide a better access to the towpath at or near the road bridge for all types of users.

Therefore, in order to comply with local and national planning policy, we request that consideration is given to the need for a further **S106 contribution to allow suitable access improvements to and along the towpath to be delivered.**

The Trust considers that the principle of this request meets the requirements of the tests for a S106 obligation as set out in paragraph 58 of the NPPF and Policy 52 of the adopted Core Strategy. If the applicants are not willing to agree to the principle of a suitable contribution to improve access to the towpath, please advise the Trust to allow further discussions to take place and a substantive response to be provided.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Hennell MRTPI
Area Planner

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<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams/planning-and-design>

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