

Objection — PL/2026/01867

Land adjacent to A345, High Post, Salisbury, SP4 6AT

Stance: Object

From: John Stringer, [REDACTED]

This is the fifth time I've objected to development on the fields at High Post, and I'm trying very hard — again — not to let exhaustion do my writing for me. I live a mile down the hill in the Woodford Valley. The applicant calls the route through it "*lightly trafficked*." Those of us who live here know it isn't. The application reference changes. The fields don't. Neither do the reasons they shouldn't be built on.

My neighbours have written more than 80 objections already, several of them forensically detailed. I'm not going to repeat what Chris Down, Suzanne Keene of CPRE, the Joint Parish Councils, Robert Phayre, Jane Phayre, Richard Soar, David Forrester-Addie, Helen Bullifent, Michael Edwards and many others have laid out so carefully. Please read theirs. I support all of them. I'd ask you instead to sit with three things I think are still under-said, and which I think matter most.

1. This is the second visible piece of an industrial estate. The developer knows it. So does Historic England.

The applicant has presented this as a single 6,968 sqm building for one drone company. It is not. As several commenters have pointed out, the pre-application disclosures name Nationwide, Concretene and Apsley as further intended occupiers. The South Field application (PL/2024/09682) is at appeal as I write. The applicant's own marketing materials use the words "*Defence Cluster*" and "*Innovation Park*."

If you stack what is already there with what is being proposed and what is queued up — the existing High Post Business Park, Chemring (which neighbours estimate at around 400 employees), Naish's 120, an Apsley appeal that may yet succeed, this Callen-Lenz proposal of 250 rising to 500, plus three further pre-app companies behind it — you are looking at well over a thousand employees on a remote ridge between Salisbury and Amesbury, on land that, as multiple commenters have noted, the Local Plan Review specifically rejected and the emerging Local Plan does not allocate.

Historic England — the statutory consultee for the World Heritage Site — has explicitly asked you to assess cumulative impacts on this very application. Their consultation response states it plainly: they recommend that "*the cumulative impacts of those developments are also assessed to better understand the overall impacts of proposed developments at the High Post site*." When the heritage consultee tells the planning authority to look at the whole picture, please look at the whole picture. The salami-sliced version the applicant has presented does not deserve to be assessed on its own terms, because it is not on its own.

We really need a way to stop developers slicing big plans into small ones and presenting them one at a time, hoping each piece looks reasonable in isolation. Until there is, I'd ask you to refuse the proposal in front of you on the grounds of what we can already see is coming behind it.

2. Their own paperwork demolishes their own case. CP34 hasn't been satisfied — and Boscombe Down has not even been assessed.

The applicant relies on CP34 criterion iv: *"essential to the wider strategic interest of the economic development of Wiltshire."* A drone company. In a county where, as Peter Curtis and others have pointed out, six drone-related businesses are already clustered in and around Swindon — promoted by the government, with established skills and infrastructure and higher unemployment.

The Planning Statement runs to 49 pages and assesses Solstice Park, Fugglestone Red, Churchfields, Old Sarum, Southampton Road, and Manor Farm Sumerlug. Boscombe Down is mentioned exactly once, in passing, as somewhere they want to be *near*.

I have a genuine question I'd like put to the applicant. Boscombe Down is a Principal Employment Area in your own Core Strategy. As Chris Down has set out in his comment, it is operated by QinetiQ; Callen-Lenz is owned by BAE Systems; and BAE and QinetiQ have a published, signed agreement to collaborate *"in the area of autonomous uncrewed air systems."* It is less than five miles down the road. Why is it not in the alternative sites assessment at all?

I think the honest answer is that Spitfire Enterprises owns the High Post fields and doesn't own anything at Boscombe Down. Which is fine for them, and not a planning consideration.

The other site rejections don't survive arithmetic either. Fugglestone Red is rejected as *"3ha too small"* — but 3ha of the 11ha they want is the solar field, which their own BREEAM document admits is grid-connected with surplus exported (more on that below) and which Chris Down has shown could perfectly well sit on the building's roof as the same contractor has already done at Birchall Tea in Solstice Park. Strip out the bogus solar field and 8ha at Fugglestone Red is exactly enough.

Churchfields is rejected because Hiflex House (11,400 sqm) is *"too big"* and they *"couldn't subdivide it"* for security reasons — yet they're proposing to put themselves next door to Chemring Countermeasures, share a roundabout, and brand the whole thing a Defence Cluster. The *"secure site needs all of it"* argument does not survive five seconds of looking at their own masterplan.

CP34 says essential. Six drone companies in Swindon. A QinetiQ partnership at Boscombe Down. The word essential will not stretch this far.

3. The Travel Plan and the BREEAM document, taken together, are a quiet admission that this is a car-dependent development on inappropriate land.

I won't repeat the points Suzanne Keene and David Forrester-Addie have already made about cycling and walking. I want to flag four things in the developer's own paperwork that haven't had enough air.

First — their own Table 2.3, the modal targets. Their **target** for car driver alone is **80%** initially, falling only to **75%** after five years. That is not a fear. That is a commitment. They are asking you to grant permission on the explicit basis that, even by Year 5, three out of every four employees will drive alone to work. On a remote site. Up the A345. Down through the Woodford Valley.

Second — the basis for those targets. They use **2011 census data** for *"Output Area Wiltshire 049."* That isn't workers — it's residents. They are benchmarking employee commuting against where local residents happened to work fifteen years ago. They explicitly reject 2021 census data because it shows post-Covid home-working. That is a heads-I-win-tails-you-lose use of evidence.

Third — the BREEAM Travel Plan checklist (Section 4.6.1 of the Travel Plan). Bullet 1 reads: *"Negotiation with local bus, train or tram companies for an increase in the local service provision for the development — Not considered appropriate for the scale of the development."* Their words. They will not negotiate with bus operators because the development is too small to merit it. Yet they claim a 5% bus modal share. That is the developer admitting, in writing, that the bus modal share they're claiming is fictional.

Fourth — the C292 commitment. Paragraph 4.5.5 of the Travel Plan states that the developer will *"take active measures to prevent development traffic travelling west via the C292."* The active measures, in full, are: signage at the access junction, and a notice in the Travel Information Pack. That is the entire mitigation for the rat-run through the Woodford Valley, past Woodford Valley Primary School. Signage and a leaflet against the shortest route home. Anyone who has ever driven home will tell you which one wins.

One more thing — the BREEAM document is its own indictment.

The applicant has excluded ground-source heat pumps because, in their words, they *"require greater land-take."* This is on an application for **eleven hectares of Best and Most Versatile farmland**. They will not put a heat pump under their car park because it would take too much land — but they will pave four hectares of Grade 2 land with solar panels.

Those solar fields generate 5,019 MWh/year and the document confirms only ~50% (2,815 MWh) is used on site. The other half is *"directed to the national grid."* Chris Down has identified that SSEN's own data shows the local primary substations and Bulk Supply Points are at red RAG status — the local grid cannot accept additional renewable export. So 2,200 MWh/year is being generated on Best and Most Versatile farmland, and it has nowhere to go.

This is not a sustainability strategy. It is greenwash sized to fit a planning application.

The rest, briefly, because my neighbours have done the work:

- **Grade 2 BMV land.** The Government's March 2026 Land Use Framework, as multiple commenters have quoted, calls for *"the strategic safeguarding of the best farmland from permanent land use changes."* Several neighbours have noted that the Local Plan Review specifically excluded this site. Natural England's own consultation response on this application has asked for further mitigation on protected species and confirms the development will impact bats and breeding birds; their published standing advice on Best and Most Versatile land discourages its development.
- **Stone Curlew mitigation: vague. Bats: not addressed.** (Both flagged in the Ecological Assessment by absence rather than presence — see Jane Phayre's, Mike Edwards' and Jan Stringer's submissions.)
- **Light pollution on a ridge in the setting of the Stonehenge WHS.** Historic England has formally raised concerns and recommended that a decision should not be taken until the applicant provides further information, including an updated Zone of Theoretical Visibility and a proper assessment of how the lighting strategy will affect the World Heritage Site's Outstanding Universal Value. Take their concerns seriously; they are not a campaigning group, they are the statutory consultee for the World Heritage Site.
- **Public Protection consultation.** Their response confirms the application is missing a noise impact assessment, an air quality assessment, and a contaminated land report. The Construction Management Plan is incomplete. Half the technical case isn't even before you yet.
- **BREEAM "Excellent."** This is being asserted by an applicant who has excluded the only renewable technology that wouldn't require destroying farmland. The score should not survive scrutiny.

A closing thought.

I think the system you are working within is broken, and I think you probably agree. There is something deeply wrong with a process that allows the same developer to come back year after year with the same fields and slightly different tenants, knowing that each round of objections costs the community hundreds of unpaid hours and each round of refusals costs the applicant very little. We have done 2021. We have done 2022. We have done 2023. We have done 2024. We are now doing 2026. The Apsley appeal sits on top of all of it.

If a planning application is refused, and the same applicant returns to the same site with substantially the same proposal, there should be a meaningful break-open fee — paid to the local community — that doubles each time. £25,000 the first time. £50,000 the second. By the fifth round it would either fund the parish councils for a generation or, more likely, persuade the developer to take the hint.

That isn't a planning consideration on this application. I know. But the next time someone asks you why public confidence in the planning system is at the level it is, please remember that we are on application five, on land that was specifically rejected by the Local Plan Review, against the unanimous advice of every parish council in earshot, after over 300 objections per round.

Please refuse PL/2026/01867. Please refuse it on its own demerits — the failure to satisfy CP34, the failure to assess Boscombe Down, the contradictions in their own BREEAM and Travel Plan documents, the loss of BMV land, the harm to the Stonehenge WHS setting, the inevitable rat-run through the Woodford Valley, and the missing technical assessments flagged by your own Public Protection officer. And please refuse it knowing that what's queued up behind it is bigger than what's in front of you.

Yours,

John Stringer

A solid black rectangular bar used to redact the signature of John Stringer.

7 May 2026