

## APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

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| <b>APPLICATION REFERENCE:</b>   | PL/2026/01105                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>APPLICATION TYPE:</b>        | Full planning permission                                                                                                                           |
| <b>SITE ADDRESS:</b>            | The Churchill, Swindon Road, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, SN4 8ET                                                                               |
| <b>DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:</b> | Installation of 4no. electric vehicle charging stations, including the installation of 1no. substation, 1no. feeder pillar and underground cabling |
| <b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>          | Approve with Conditions                                                                                                                            |

### SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

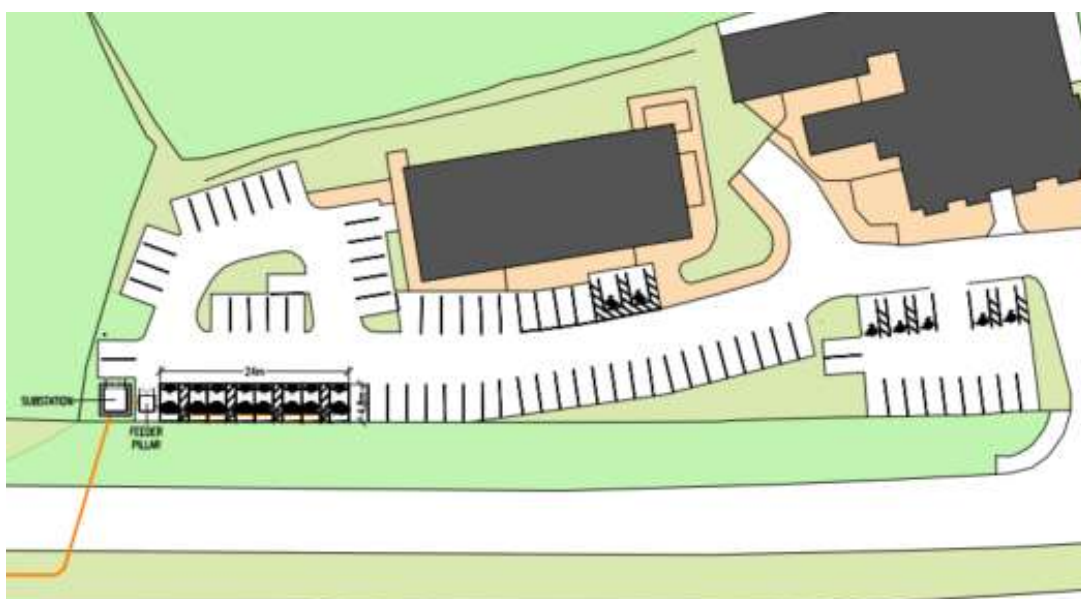
The application site comprises part of the existing surface-level car park associated with The Churchill, a hotel, public house and restaurant located off Swindon Road, within Royal Wootton Bassett. The car park currently serves visitors to the premises and contains established hardstanding with marked parking bays. The site lies within an already developed commercial curtilage and is not subject to any landscape, heritage, or ecological designations. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 with no indication of surface water drainage issues.

The surrounding area is commercial in character, associated with The Churchill, with vehicular access taken directly from Swindon Road. The immediate environment consists of hardstanding, existing parked vehicles and small areas of grassed verge on the edges of the car park. The site is relatively flat, fully accessible from the existing access arrangements, and visually contained by the wider car park layout. Opposite the site is a residential estate with agricultural fields to the rear of the hotel and pub. The Character area is Upper Thames Clay Vales



### PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks full planning permission for the installation of 4 no. electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, supported by 1 no. substation, 1 no. feeder pillar, and associated underground cabling within the existing car park serving The Churchill, Swindon Road, Royal Wootton Bassett. The development will reconfigure part of the established parking area by utilising 11 existing spaces to provide 8 dedicated EV charging bays, resulting in a net loss of 3 spaces. The charging units comprise a mix of HYC300 and HYC150 fast-charging models, A small section of grassed verge—measuring less than 25 sqm—will accommodate the substation. Access would be retained as existing, and there are no trees or hedgerows on or adjacent to the application area that would be affected by the proposed development.



## PLANNING HISTORY

| Proposal / Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 19/05392/VAR, Variation of Condition for application 18/01884/FUL - Erection of two storey hotel, reconfiguration of car parking, new sub-station, landscaping and associated works and creation of temporary access for construction. Approve with Conditions, 22/07/2019 |
| 18/10884/FUL, Erection of two storey hotel, reconfiguration of car parking, new sub-station, landscaping and associated works, Approve with Conditions, 24/01/2019                                                                                                         |

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

### Statutory Legislation:

### 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 3 Infrastructure Requirements;
- Core Policy 19 Spatial Strategy Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Community Area
- Core Policy 35 Existing Employment Sites
- Core Policy 42 Standalone renewable energy installations
- Core Policy 48 Supporting Rural Life
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management

### Emerging Plan

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 shall be made by the Council in May (2026).

### Neighbourhood Plan:

None

### Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire: Wiltshire's Natural Environment Plan 2022-2030

## **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 the site can be adequately drained without increasing flood risk elsewhere (CP 67)
- Whether there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats (CP 50)
- Are there any other planning issues raised by the development?

## CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Ecology: Comment

*The Council's Ecologist has raised concerns, requesting additional information in relation to potential impacts on Great Crested Newts and the need for further assessment under the Habitat Regulations. The agent has queried this requirement, noting that the proposal relates to a small-scale development within an existing car park and questioning whether the extent of ecological survey work requested is proportionate.*

WC Highways: No objection, subject to conditions

Parish/Town Council: No objection

## 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;

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

Below is a summary of the representations received during the consultation period. Only material planning considerations have been taken into account in the assessment of this application. Non-material issues, such as property values or private legal disputes, cannot be considered in the determination process.

No public representation was received in response to this application

**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 42 supports the delivery of standalone low-carbon and renewable energy infrastructure, including EV charging, where proposals are appropriately sited and mitigate any environmental impacts.

### *Assessment*

Royal Wootton Bassett is identified as a Market Town, where sustainable growth, services and infrastructure improvements are supported. The proposal is located within the curtilage of an existing commercial site and involves the installation of EV charging infrastructure within an established car park. Although the site lies outside the formal settlement boundary, the development does not introduce new built form unrelated to the host use; instead, it provides small-scale, functional infrastructure that supports an existing business and enhances sustainable transport provision.

The scheme aligns with the objectives of CP1 and CP2 by delivering low-carbon infrastructure in a sustainable location, reducing reliance on fossil-fuel vehicle trips and supporting the operational role of Royal Wootton Bassett as a service centre. The proposal utilises previously developed land, requires no new access, and does not conflict with the spatial strategy. On this basis, the principle of development is considered acceptable, subject to assessment of technical matters.

### *Conclusion*

The proposal complies with Core Policies 1 and 2 and is supported by the NPPF; the principle of development is therefore acceptable subject to technical assessment.

## **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.

The Wiltshire Design Guide encourages sensitivity to local character, materials, and architectural styles and supports modern living standards while maintaining aesthetic and functional quality.

Building for a Healthy Life Framework promotes healthy, inclusive, and sustainable places. The document encourages:

- Walkability.
- Access to green space.
- Active design principles for well-being.

### *Assessment*

The proposal is modest in scale and located within an existing, visually contained car park, ensuring that it integrates appropriately with the established commercial character of The Churchill site. The EV chargers, feeder pillar and substation are functional installations of limited height and massing, and their placement within the existing hardstanding prevents any intrusion into open or undeveloped land. The design and materials are appropriate to their purpose and do not detract from local character.

The proposal does not affect any natural, historic, or landscape features, and no trees or hedgerows are impacted. The layout remains legible and accessible, and the works do not compromise pedestrian movement or site safety. The scheme therefore accords with Section

12 of the NPPF, which seeks visually attractive and functionally effective development that contributes positively to the built environment. The scale and discreet siting of the units ensure the development sits comfortably within the site and has no adverse wider visual impacts.

The Wiltshire Design Guide's emphasis on respecting local character and supporting modern, sustainable infrastructure is met through the reuse of previously developed land and delivery of low-carbon facilities without altering the established form of the site. The proposal also aligns with the Building for a Healthy Life principles by supporting sustainable travel and promoting low-emission transport options, contributing positively to the environmental quality and functionality of the area.

### *Conclusion*

Taken together, the design is functional, proportionate, and sympathetic to its context, ensuring no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the area and complying with the objectives of Core Policy 57 and Section 12 of the NPPF.

## **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*

The proposed EV charging infrastructure is located within an existing commercial car park and is modest in scale, ensuring no unacceptable impact on the amenity of nearby occupants. The chargers, feeder pillar and substation are low-profile installations and do not introduce any new sources of noise, light, or activity beyond the established use of the site as a hotel and public house car park. There are no residential properties in immediate proximity including that of the Hotel that would experience loss of privacy, or overbearing effects or overshadowing as a result of the development

### *Conclusion*

Overall, the proposal would not result in any harmful amenity impacts and is therefore acceptable in this regard and in accordance with the principles set out in WCS CP57 and the objectives of the NPPF

## **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*

The proposal does not involve any changes to the existing vehicular access arrangements serving The Churchill, which is taken directly from the A3102 Swindon Road, a classified highway subject to a 60mph speed limit. The existing access arrangement is well-established and operates satisfactorily in connection with the current hotel, pub and restaurant use, and the introduction of electric vehicle charging infrastructure would not alter traffic generation or vehicle movements in a manner that would give rise to highway safety concerns.

The development comprises the installation of four electric vehicle charging units serving eight parking bays within the existing car park. This reconfiguration results in a net loss of three parking spaces; however, the Highway Authority is satisfied that this would not result in displaced parking on the public highway and that sufficient on-site parking would remain to meet the operational needs of the premises. The proposal does not involve any increase in floor area or intensification of the lawful use of the site and would not result in any severe residual impacts on the wider highway network.

Associated infrastructure includes a substation, feeder pillar and underground cabling, part of which would cross the A3102 within the highway verge to connect to an existing supply to the north of the site. No permanent alteration to the public highway is proposed, and any works within the highway would be subject to the appropriate Section 50 licence from Wiltshire Council, secured by informative. Pedestrian and vehicular circulation within the car park would remain safe and unobstructed, and no public rights of way would be affected.

The development supports sustainable transport objectives by increasing provision for low-emission vehicles and aligns with the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan, the Council's Car Parking Strategy and national planning guidance encouraging a transition to cleaner transport modes.

### *Conclusion*

On this basis, and subject to the standard highway informative relating to works within the public highway, the proposal is considered to comply with Core Policies 60–64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan, and is acceptable in highway safety and parking terms.

## ***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.

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

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***

#### **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

The submitted Biodiversity Net Gain Survey Report confirms that the site is largely urban in character, comprising sealed surfaces with small areas of modified grassland and scrub, and that the adjacent line of trees would remain unaffected. This has been confirmed following a recent site visit.

The impact of the proposal is minimal, involving the permanent loss of approximately 16sqm of grassland and temporary disturbance for cabling, which would be reinstated following completion. The BNG assessment demonstrates that there would be no measurable change in biodiversity units (0.00 net change) and confirms that the development falls below the de minimis threshold of 25sqm of habitat loss.

The Planning Statement, submitted plans, and application form support this position, confirming that less than 25sqm of non-priority habitat would be affected within previously developed land. Accordingly, the proposal is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and achieves no significant net loss of biodiversity.

## **Ecology**

The Council's Ecologist has raised concerns regarding potential impacts on Great Crested Newts and the need for further assessment under the Habitat Regulations. The agent has queried this, noting the small scale of the development within an existing car park and questioning whether the level of survey work requested is proportionate.

The site is an enclosed hotel and public house car park, predominantly hardstanding with only limited areas of managed grass verge of low ecological value. Whilst records confirm Great Crested Newts within the wider area and ponds within 100m, the application site itself is heavily urbanised and offers very limited suitability for terrestrial habitat or dispersal. The small area of grass verge affected is isolated and of low ecological value, and the proposal does not involve works to ponds or aquatic habitats or result in fragmentation of ecological corridors.

Having regard to the scale, nature, and location of the proposal, the Local Planning Authority considers that the level of additional survey work requested is disproportionate to the likely ecological risk. The Authority is satisfied that there would be no likely significant effects on protected species.

Appropriate safeguards can be secured through conditions, including a Construction Environmental Management Plan, restrictions on access to the work area via the existing hardstanding, the storage of materials, no access onto adjacent land, and reinstatement of any disturbed grassed areas.

### *Conclusion*

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal accords with the objectives of biodiversity conservation. The submitted Biodiversity Net Gain Survey Report demonstrates that the development would result in no significant net loss of biodiversity and falls below the statutory de minimis threshold, thereby complying with Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

Subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal complies with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, and is therefore acceptable in ecology and biodiversity terms.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed development is considered acceptable in planning terms. The benefits of the scheme, including the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, support for the transition to low carbon transport, and the efficient use of previously developed land, are judged to outweigh any identified harms, which can be appropriately mitigated through planning conditions and informatives. The proposal supports wider environmental objectives by encouraging sustainable travel and reducing reliance on fossil fuel vehicles, whilst maintaining the function of the existing site. The development is therefore 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:

- Site Location Plan DQG A200267-2 101A 01 received 17th February 2026
- Proposed Substation Elevations and Floor Plans DQG A200267-2 101A 05 received 17th February 2026
- Existing & Proposed Block Plans DQG A200267-2 101A 02 A received 17th February 2026
- Existing & Proposed Details Plan DQG A200267-2 101A 03 A received 17th February 2026
- Proposed Chargers Elevations DQG A200267-2 101A 04 received 17th February 2026

*Supporting Documents*

- Application Form
- HY Dimensions of the HYC DC units received on 10th March 2026
- HY Charger Harmonics. received 10th March 2026
- HY Charger Cable Management. received 10th March 2026
- Hy Unit Compliance Document received 10th March 2026
- HY Units Charger Product Brief. Received 10th March 2026
- Installation Guidance Received 10th March 2026

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

3. No development shall commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved CEMP shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The CEMP shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Measures for the protection of biodiversity and ecological features on and adjacent to the site;
- Details of working methods to avoid harm to protected species, including a precautionary approach during site clearance and groundworks;
- Details of site working areas, confirming that all materials, plant, machinery, and construction activities shall be confined to the existing hardstanding within the red line boundary;

- Measures to prevent encroachment onto adjacent land, including the neighbouring field;
- Details of storage of materials and machinery;
- Measures to control pollution, including dust, noise, and surface water run-off;
- Details of reinstatement of any disturbed grassed areas to their existing condition following completion of the works.

Reason: To protect biodiversity and ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that safeguards ecological interests, in accordance with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. No construction or demolition works shall take place outside the following hours:

- 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday
- 09:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays
- No work shall take place on Sundays or Bank Holidays

For the purposes of this condition, “construction works” includes site clearance, demolition, groundworks, deliveries, and the operation of plant and machinery.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of nearby occupiers and to minimise noise and disturbance, in accordance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan.

## INFORMATIVE NOTES

1. 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.
2. The applicant is advised that this consent does not authorise any work within the public highway. Any works within the highway, including the laying of underground cabling, will require a licence from Wiltshire Council under Section 50 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991. The applicant should contact the Highway Authority to obtain the necessary approvals prior to commencing any works.
3. 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.

4. The applicant is requested to note that this permission does not affect any private property rights and therefore does not authorise the carrying out of any work on land outside their control. If such works are required, it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain the landowner's consent before such works commence.
5. If you intend carrying out works in the vicinity of the site boundary, you are also advised that it may be expedient to seek your own advice with regard to the requirements of the Party Wall Act 1996.
6. The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species including for example, breeding birds and reptiles. The protection offered to some species such as bats, extends beyond the individual animals to the places they use for shelter or resting. Please note that this consent does not override the statutory protection afforded to any such species. In the event that your proposals could potentially affect a protected species you should seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and consider the need for a licence from Natural England prior to commencing works. Please see Natural England's website for further information on protected species.