

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

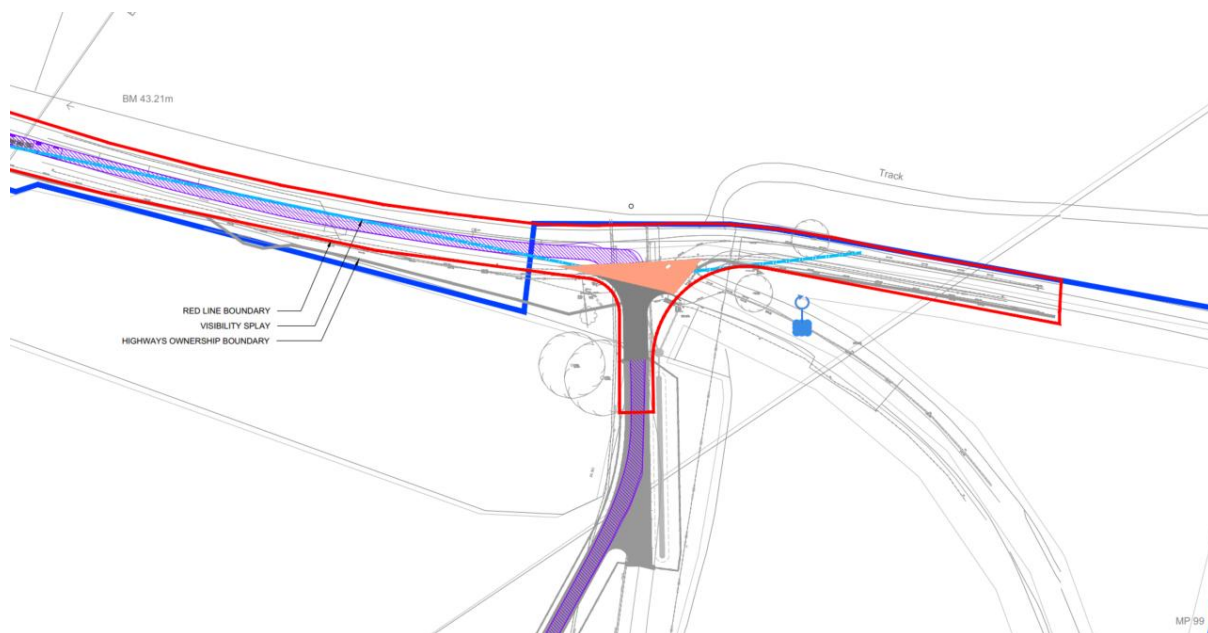
APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/01249
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Land at Westlands Lane, to the North of Melksham Substation, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 7QF
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Construction of Bellmouth Access to Melksham Substation from Westlands Lane.
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve

PROPOSAL

The application seeks full planning permission for the formation of a bellmouth vehicular access from Westlands Lane to serve Melksham Substation. The proposal involves the alteration and formalisation of an existing access point, including localised widening and the laying of a tarmac surface, to create a bellmouth access suitable for vehicular movements.

The proposed access would connect to a new internal access road within the operational land of the substation, which is being progressed separately under permitted development rights and does not form part of this application.

The application site measures approximately 0.35 hectares and comprises mainly existing hardstanding with a limited area of grass verge. The proposed works involve the alteration of the existing highway verge to create a formalised access point designed in accordance with relevant highway standards, including appropriate visibility splays informed by speed survey data.

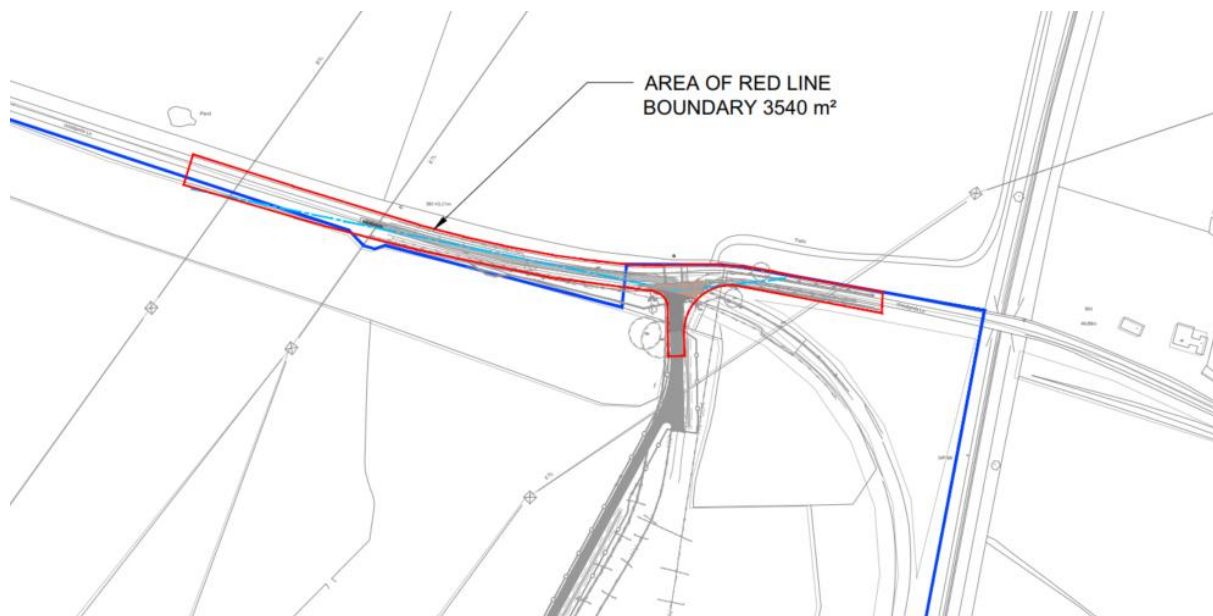


The bellmouth access would facilitate vehicular access associated with ongoing operation and maintenance activities at the substation. The applicant indicates that, once operational, vehicle movements would be limited in frequency and largely associated with maintenance or fault response.

No structures are proposed as part of the development. The works would not require the removal of trees or hedgerows. During construction, the applicant proposes to implement standard mitigation and management measures, with construction anticipated to be temporary in nature.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The site is an area on Westlands Lane, north of Melksham substation and comprises hardstanding and a small area of semi-improved grassland. An extract of the site location plan is shown below:



The aerial photograph below shows the section of Westlands Lane which is the subject of this application, but pre-dates the sub station works:



The following photographs show the site as existing (05.03.2026):



The closest listed building to the site is Westlands Farmhouse (Grade 2) some 500m to the north-west.

The wider Melksham site also contains record of archaeological events. There is notably no record of any such events within the proposed application site – the council’s mapping layer notes only that the modern fields adjacent to the site have been formed by combining earlier piecemeal enclosures, with some of the original field boundaries legible.

There are no historical, ecological or landscape designations covering the site. It is in Flood Zone 1, at the lowest risk of flooding from tidal or fluvial sources, but there is a risk of surface water flooding.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
20/06840/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 17/12/2021 – Construction of a solar farm and battery storage facility together with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure.
PL/2021/08690 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 9/6/2022 – Installation of a solar farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure.
PL/2023/10437 - Non-Material Amendment Decision - Approve Date: 4/1/2024 – Non Material Amendment relating to application 20/06840/FUL (Construction of a solar farm and battery storage facility together with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure.)
PL/2023/10438 - Approval of details reserved by a condition Decision - Approve Date: 21/2/2024 – Discharge of Condition 17 of planning application 20/06840/FUL - Geotechnical Stability.(Construction of a solar farm and battery storage facility together with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure).
PL/2023/10889 - Approval of details reserved by a condition Decision - Approve Date: 6/2/2024 – Discharge of Conditions 18 and 20 of planning application 20/06840/FUL (Construction of a solar farm and battery storage facility together with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure).
PL/2025/02594 - Non-Material Amendment Decision - Approve Date: 7/4/2025 – Non-material amendment to planning application PL/2021/08690 for the addition of an approved scope of Preliminary Works that can be implemented prior to discharge of outstanding pre-commencement conditions in order to preserve the planning permission.
PL/2025/04408 - Lawful development: Existing use Decision - Approve Date: 15/8/2025 – Certificate of Lawfulness for the implementation of planning permission PL/2021/08690 through the completion of a Preliminary Works package granted under PL/2025/02594.
PL/2025/05856 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve Date: 13/2/2026 – Planning Application for the laying of underground electricity cables in association with Wick Solar Farm (LPA Reference: 20/06840/FUL) and Studley Solar Farm (LPA Reference: PL/2021/08690).
PL/2025/07349 - Removal/variation of conditions – Variation of condition 3 (Layout changes), condition 14 (Changes to noise condition) and conditions 4, 5 and 7 (Minor wording changes) relating to application PL/2021/08690.

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 15 Spatial Strategy Melksham Community Area
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network
- Core Policy 63 Transport Strategies
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk

Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2:

Policy 18: Landscape Character

Policy 20: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan

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)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Highways: No objection subject to conditions

“No objection.

The scale of works required is not to the level where a S278 agreement is necessary. The works to upgrade the access involves some resurfacing to dedicated highway that is within the bellmouth. The works can occur offline without the need for traffic management which means all works can be carried out under a Section 184 licence.

In order to avoid surface water ponding within the area of works to be permitted a drainage run through the applicant's curtilage to ensure that ponding on the public highway shall not cause material damage to the highway. As the plans show pipes for drainage this must be functioning prior to completion such that surface water from the highway drains away.

Suggested condition.

Notwithstanding the submitted details, the proposed development shall not be completed until means/works have been implemented to provide a drainage run to avoid water ponding within the area of the works here permitted.

Reason: To ensure that the highway is not inundated with private water.

Informative

The application involves an extension to the existing/creation of a new vehicle access/dropped kerb. The consent hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out works on the highway. The applicant is advised that a licence will be required from Wiltshire's Highway Authority before any works are carried out on any footway, footpath, carriageway, verge or other land forming part of the highway. Please contact our Vehicle Crossing Team on vehicleaccess@wiltshire.gov.uk and/or 01225 713352 or visit their website at <http://wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-streets> to make an application."

WC Drainage: No objection

The Lead Local Flood Authority initially raised a holding objection due to insufficient information regarding the surface water drainage strategy. Further information was submitted by the applicant, including drainage drawings and calculations associated with the wider grid park development. Following clarification of the red line boundary and scope of the application, it has been confirmed that the proposed development relates solely to the construction of the bellmouth access, with the wider substation development and associated drainage infrastructure to be delivered separately under permitted development rights. On this basis, the LLFA have confirmed that they have no comments to make on the application.

Network Rail: No objection

"Network Rail has no objections in principle to the proposed works."

Arboricultural Officer: No comment

"No arboricultural comment"

Melksham Without Parish Council: No objection subject to conditions/further commitment/information

Melksham Without Parish Council has NO OBJECTION subject to:

- Provision of up-to-date information, including recent speed survey data (more recent than 2024) and a finalised version of the planning statement (not including*

review comments)

- *A commitment to co-ordinate works with other contractors to minimise the impact on local residents*
 - *Reduction of the construction timescale (6 months is excessive for the scope of the work)*
 - *Agreement to contribute to wider remedial work on Westlands Lane road surface*
 - *Agreement to mitigate flooding mitigation at the access point as per Policy 3: Flood Risk and Natural Flood Management of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2*
- “Development proposals in locations with known flooding issues should include appropriate mitigation and construction methods, and, where appropriate, contributions towards wider catchment projects.”*

WC Rights of Way: No comments received.

WC Archaeology: No comments received.

WC Public Protection: No comments received.

WC Ecology: 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 representations 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.

Assessment

The application site lies outside any defined settlement boundary, where development is generally more strictly controlled in accordance with Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. These policies seek to direct new development towards sustainable locations within established settlements, whilst restricting development in the open countryside unless supported by relevant policy exceptions or material considerations.

In this case, the proposal does not relate to new housing or commercial development, but instead comprises the formation of a bellmouth access to serve an existing and operational electricity substation. The substation forms part of the national electricity transmission network and constitutes essential infrastructure.

The proposed access is required to facilitate safe vehicular access to the site for maintenance and operational purposes, including access for fault response and routine servicing. It does

not introduce a new standalone use of the land, nor does it result in the expansion of the substation beyond its established operational function.

The scale of the works is limited, comprising the alteration and formalisation of an existing access, including localised widening and resurfacing. The proposal is therefore closely related to the ongoing use of the site and is considered ancillary to the established and lawful infrastructure.

Having regard to the nature and purpose of the development, it is considered that the proposal represents a form of operational development necessary to support the continued functioning of an existing use. As such, it is not considered to conflict with the overarching objectives of Core Policies 1 and 2, which seek to ensure that development is appropriately located and sustainable in nature.

Conclusion

The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable, having regard to the limited scale of the works and their functional relationship to existing essential infrastructure.

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 application site is located in a rural area outside of defined settlement boundaries. The surrounding context comprises a mixture of agricultural land and infrastructure associated with the existing Melksham Substation and nearby solar farm development, together with road and rail infrastructure in the wider landscape.

The proposal relates to the formation of a bellmouth access through the alteration and formalisation of an existing access point on Westlands Lane. By its nature, the development is limited in scale and extent, comprising localised widening and the introduction of tarmac surfacing to facilitate safe vehicular access.

In visual terms, the proposed works would be largely read in the context of the existing highway and associated infrastructure. The introduction of a formalised access would not appear incongruous in this location, where engineered infrastructure is already a defining characteristic of the immediate setting.

The development would not result in the introduction of built form or prominent structures, nor would it lead to the loss of trees or hedgerows that contribute to the rural character of the area. The limited area of grass verge to be affected is not considered to make a significant contribution to the wider landscape character.

Overall, the proposal is considered to represent a minor and functional intervention which responds appropriately to its context and would not result in unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

Conclusion

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and the principles set out within the Wiltshire Design Guide.

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.

Assessment

The application site is located within a rural area and is separated from the nearest residential properties by a considerable distance, with the closest dwellings located over 200 metres away on the opposite side of the railway line.

The proposed development relates to the formation of a bellmouth access and does not involve the erection of buildings or the introduction of new uses likely to give rise to ongoing amenity impacts. Once operational, vehicle movements associated with the access would be limited in frequency and relate primarily to maintenance and operational activities at the substation.

During the construction phase, there may be some temporary disturbance arising from vehicle movements and general site activity. However, given the limited scale and duration of the works, together with the separation distance to nearby receptors, any such impacts are considered to be minor and transient in nature.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of nearby occupiers.

Conclusion

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of residential amenity.

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 application seeks the formation of a bellmouth access onto Westlands Lane to serve the existing substation. The proposal has been designed to provide a safe and suitable means of access in accordance with relevant highway standards, including appropriate visibility splays informed by submitted speed survey data.

The Local Highway Authority has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection to the development. It is noted that the scale of works is limited and would not require a Section 278 agreement, with the works capable of being delivered under a Section 184 licence.

In terms of impact, the proposal is not expected to give rise to any increased traffic generation beyond that associated with the existing use of the site. Vehicle movements would be limited and associated with ongoing maintenance and operational activities at the substation. As such, the development would not result in any material increase in traffic or adverse impact on the surrounding highway network.

The Local Highway Authority has advised that measures should be implemented to ensure that surface water does not pond within the area of the access and does not discharge onto the public highway. Subject to a condition securing appropriate surface water drainage within the applicant's control, it is considered that the proposal would not result in harm to highway safety.

No parking provision is required as part of the proposal, and the development does not give rise to any conflict with adopted parking standards.

Conclusion

The proposal is therefore considered to provide a safe and suitable access and would not result in any severe residual cumulative impacts on the highway network, in accordance with Core Policies 60–64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

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

An Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Report (Arcadis Consulting (UK) Ltd, January 2026) has been submitted in support of the application. The assessment is informed by a desk study, habitat survey and protected species walkover.

The application site comprises predominantly existing hardstanding with a limited area of modified grassland located within the highway verge. The proposed development would result in the loss of approximately 11m² of low value grassland, with no loss of trees, hedgerows or other features of ecological significance.

No statutory or non-statutory designated sites lie within 2km of the site. The nearest internationally designated site, the Bath and Bradford upon Avon Bats SAC, lies approximately 6.5km away. The EclA identifies no functional linkage or impact pathway and concludes that the proposal would not affect the conservation objectives of the designation.

The site is of limited ecological value and was assessed as unsuitable for protected or notable species. Whilst records exist in the wider area, the small scale, disturbed nature and lack of supporting habitat mean the site does not provide suitable conditions. No waterbodies are present within the application site.

The EclA concludes that, subject to standard precautionary measures during construction, the development would not give rise to significant adverse ecological effects. Given the limited nature of the proposal, these measures are considered proportionate.

In relation to Biodiversity Net Gain, the proposal meets the criteria for the de minimis exemption, as the development affects less than 25 square metres of non-priority habitat, does not impact priority or irreplaceable habitats, and would not affect any other onsite habitats. On this basis, the development is exempt from the requirement to deliver mandatory biodiversity net gain and no biodiversity gain condition is required.

Conclusion

The proposal would result in the loss of a very small area of low value grassland and would not give rise to any significant ecological effects. The development is therefore considered acceptable in ecological terms and compliant with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and relevant national policy.

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 Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) supports landscape protection through green infrastructure, habitat connectivity, and nature-based solutions.

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.

Assessment

The application site is located within the open countryside outside of any designated landscape, and is not subject to any national or local landscape designations. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of agricultural land and infrastructure, including the existing Melksham Substation, solar farm development, highway network, and railway infrastructure in the wider setting.

The proposal relates to the formation of a bellmouth access through the alteration and formalisation of an existing access point. The works are limited in scale and confined to the highway verge, comprising localised widening and surfacing to facilitate safe vehicular access. In visual terms, the development would be viewed in the context of the existing highway and associated infrastructure, which already form a defining part of the character of the immediate area. The introduction of a formalised access would not appear incongruous or visually intrusive in this location.

The proposal would not introduce prominent built form into the landscape, nor would it result in the removal of trees, hedgerows, or features which contribute positively to local landscape character. Any visual effects arising during construction would be temporary and limited. Overall, it is considered that the development would have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the countryside and would not result in harm to the wider landscape setting.

Conclusion

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of landscape and visual impact.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy Context

Core Policy 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and NPPF paragraphs 170–182 require:

- Avoidance of increased flood risk.
- Use of appropriate mitigation measures.
- Application of the sequential and exception tests for developments in Flood Zones 2 or 3.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are required for all major developments and must:

- Manage runoff near its source.
- Improve water quality.
- Support biodiversity and amenity.
- Be integrated into the site layout and green infrastructure.

Assessment

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1, where the risk of fluvial flooding is considered to be low.

The proposal relates solely to the formation of a bellmouth access within the defined red line boundary and does not form part of the wider substation development. Surface water drainage associated with the wider substation and grid park is to be managed separately under permitted development works.

The Lead Local Flood Authority initially raised a holding objection due to the submission of drainage information relating to the wider site. However, following clarification of the scope of the application, the LLFA has confirmed that they have no comments to make on the proposal. The Local Highway Authority has advised that appropriate measures should be implemented to ensure that surface water from the access does not result in ponding within the highway. Subject to a condition securing suitable local drainage arrangements, it is considered that the proposal would not increase flood risk on or off site.

Having regard to the limited scale and nature of the development, the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of flood risk and surface water drainage.

Conclusion

The proposed development is therefore considered to comply with Core Policy 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and relevant national policy in respect of flood risk and drainage.

Response to Melksham Without Parish Council comments

The Parish Council raised no objection to the proposal subject to a number of requests, including the provision of updated supporting information, co-ordination of construction works, reduction in construction timescales, contributions toward highway improvements and flood mitigation measures.

These matters have been carefully considered. The Local Highway Authority has raised no objection to the proposal, and sufficient information has been provided to assess the development in terms of highway safety. The construction period and contractor co-ordination are not matters which warrant control in this instance, having regard to the limited scale and nature of the development.

In relation to drainage and flood risk, the Lead Local Flood Authority has confirmed that they have no comments to make on the application. As such, it is not considered necessary or reasonable to require additional mitigation or financial contributions in this regard.

The request for contributions towards wider highway improvements is not supported by policy and would not meet the statutory tests for planning obligations set out in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended).

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The application seeks planning permission for the formation of a bellmouth access to serve the existing Melksham Substation. The proposal comprises the alteration and formalisation of an existing access, including localised widening and surfacing, to facilitate safe vehicular access associated with the ongoing operation and maintenance of this established piece of infrastructure.

In principle, the development is considered acceptable, having regard to its functional relationship with an existing operational use and its limited scale and nature. The proposal would not result in the creation of a new standalone use of the land and is considered to represent ancillary infrastructure necessary to support the continued operation of the substation. As such, it is not considered to conflict with the settlement strategy set out within Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

In terms of design and landscape impact, the proposal comprises a minor intervention within the highway verge and would be viewed in the context of existing infrastructure in the immediate area, including the substation, solar farm and transport networks. The development would not introduce prominent built form or result in the loss of key landscape features, and is therefore considered to have no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the area. The proposal would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on residential amenity, having regard to the separation distance to nearby dwellings and the limited nature of the development. Any impacts arising during construction would be temporary and minor in nature.

No objection has been raised by the Local Highway Authority, who are satisfied that the proposal would provide a safe and suitable means of access. Subject to a condition to ensure

appropriate surface water drainage within the access, the development would not give rise to highway safety concerns.

In respect of flood risk and drainage, the Lead Local Flood Authority has confirmed that they have no comments to make on the application, noting that the drainage strategy for the wider substation works is to be addressed separately. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in this regard.

The development has also been assessed in ecological terms and would result in the loss of only a very small area of low value grassland, with no significant ecological effects identified. The proposal is exempt from the requirement to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain.

Having regard to all of the above, the proposed development is considered to represent a proportionate and functional intervention which would not result in unacceptable impacts. The proposal accords with the relevant policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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

1. Standard time limit

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).

2. Approved plans

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

Location Plan 102261-MES-CIV-ZZ-LAY-ZZ-DR-0001-01 12/MES/0108 Issue 02

received 24 Apr 2026

33kV GRID PARK DRAINAGE LAYOUT AND SECTIONS 102261-STN-18-XX-LAY-SC-001 - 18/MES/0106 Issue C06 received 24 Apr 2026

Surface Water Calcs 18 MES 0107 102261-STN-18-XX-CAL-SC-001_Surface Water Calcs received 24 Apr 2026

33kV GRID PARK EARTHWORKS 102261-STN-18-XX-LAY-SC-001 - 12/MES/0106 Issue C04 received 24 Apr 2026

Speed Survey Results Melksham Grid Substation ATC received 23 Feb 2026

Planning Statement received 23 Feb 2026

Speed Survey Classifications RDS ATC Classification Sheet received 23 Feb 2026

Proposed Site Plan 102261-MES-CIV-ZZ-LAY-ZZ-DR-0003-01 received 23 Feb

2026 Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Report 30231235-EcIA-PA-2 received 23 Feb 2026

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

3. Highway drainage condition

Notwithstanding the submitted details, the development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until measures have been implemented to provide a surface water drainage run to

prevent water ponding within the access and to ensure that surface water does not discharge onto the public highway.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

Informative

1. Vehicle access licence

The development hereby permitted involves works within the public highway. The applicant is advised that a licence will be required from Wiltshire Council's Highway Authority prior to the commencement of any works within the highway. The applicant should contact the Vehicle Crossing Team at vehicleaccess@wiltshire.gov.uk to obtain the necessary approvals.