



National Highways Planning Response (NHPR 25-01) Formal Recommendation to an Application for Planning Permission

From: Head of Planning & Development, Operations Directorate, SW Region,
National Highways
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To: Wiltshire Council (FAO Sarah Hill)
Via developmentmanagement@wiltshire.gov.uk

CC: transportplanning@dft.gov.uk
spatialplanning@nationalhighways.co.uk

Council's Reference: PL/2026/00795

Location: Land north of A303, and northwest of approved EV hub, Chicklade, SP3 5ST

Proposal: Installation of a solar farm with ancillary structures supporting the energy demand of the adjacent approved Chicklade (EV) service station

National Highways Ref: NH/26/15099

Referring to the consultation on a planning application referenced above, in the vicinity of the A303 that form part of the Strategic Road Network, notice is hereby given that National Highways' formal recommendation is that we:

- ~~a) offer no objection (see reasons at Annex A);~~
- b) recommend that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted (see Annex A – National Highways recommended Planning Conditions & reasons);**
- ~~c) recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period (see reasons at Annex A);~~
- ~~d) recommend that the application be refused (see reasons at Annex A)~~

Highways Act 1980 Section 175B is not relevant to this application.¹

¹ Where relevant, further information will be provided within Annex A.

This represents National Highways' formal recommendation and is copied to the Department for Transport as per the terms of our Licence.

Should the Local Planning Authority propose not to determine the application in accordance with this recommendation they are required to consult the Secretary of State for Transport, as set out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Affecting Trunk Roads\) Direction 2018](#), via transportplanning@dft.gov.uk and may not determine the application until the consultation process is complete.

The Local Planning Authority must also copy any consultation under the 2018 Direction to Planningsw@nationalhighways.co.uk.

This response and all comments outlined herein are made in respect of planning matters only in National Highways' position as a statutory planning consultee, and does not confer any proprietary rights nor amount to the giving or refusal of consent, assent, approval, or awareness of or by National Highways in or of any other aspects or matters (including, but not limited to, the use of property belonging to National Highways). If anyone wishes for National Highways to consider any aspects which do not relate to planning submissions, they should call our contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Signature: *G Gallacher*

Date: 21 July 2026

Name: Gaynor Gallacher

Position: Assistant Spatial Planner

National Highways: Ash House, Falcon Road, Sowton Ind. Estate, Exeter EX2 7LB

Annex A **National Highways' assessment of the proposed development**

National Highways has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such we work to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

We have undertaken a review of the relevant documents supporting the planning application to ensure compliance with the current policies of the Secretary of State as set out in DfT Circular 01/2022 "The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development" and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This response represents our formal recommendations with regards to planning application reference PL/2026/00795.

Reasons

Background

The application is seeking permission for a solar farm located to the north-west of the EV Charging Hub initially consented under application PL/2022/06298 and recently subject to a s73 application reference PL/2025/10020 to vary the approved plans (still to be determined).

National Highways primary interest is in the ongoing safe and efficient operation of the strategic road network, which in this case comprises the A303, and it is in this context that our comments are made.

National Highways provided initial comments to the planning authority on 10 March 2026 raising a number of concerns with regards the proposed site access strategy via the Charging Hub access junction from the A303. The applicant has subsequently amended their access strategy, and access to the development site is now to be served from the unnamed road located approximately 670 metres to the east of the development site, which forms an existing priority junction onto the A303 on the western edge of Chicklade.

Construction and Operational Traffic Management

The applicant has submitted a revised Construction and Operational Traffic Management Plan (COTMP), prepared by Evoke and dated 5 May 2026. We consider that this demonstrates that access for both construction and operational phases can be accommodated via the unnamed road and existing A303 junction to the east of the development site. The existing farm and adjacent land will provide the site compound for the storage of materials and parking and turning space for all construction related vehicles, with wheel washing facilities to be provided. National Highways is therefore recommending a planning condition to require the measures set out within the COTMP to be implemented in full for the duration of the works and subsequent use.

Temporary signage will also be implemented from the highway network to warn road users of construction traffic movements. For signing to be placed within the A303 highway boundary, the plan acknowledges that permission will need to be sought in advance from National Highways Network Occupancy team, prior to any signs being placed on our network. An informative has also therefore been provided in this regard, which should be appended to the planning authority's decision. National Highways will need to review the sign design and locations to satisfy themselves that the Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 8 requirements have been met, and will require the name of the traffic management contractor and evidence they are "Sector Approved" by National Highways for work on the SRN. This information will be required to allow a road space booking to be made and approved.

Glint and Glare Assessment/Screening Requirements

An updated Glint and Glare Assessment has been submitted, prepared by Pager Power and dated April 2026. National Highways will not accept any glint or glare impacts on highways safety grounds and all necessary screening mitigation will need to be provided by the developer, wholly within the development site. The developer cannot rely on National Highways estate to provide any screening mitigation for their development, in accordance with DfT Circular 01/2022 which states at para 57 that *"For reasons of safety, liability and maintenance, any physical infrastructure that is necessary to mitigate the environmental effects of or on development must be located outside of the highway boundary of the SRN."*

The Study identifies two sections of the A303 where solar reflections are geometrically possible within a road users primary field of vision. With regards to receptors 1-5, the Study considers that existing vegetation would obstruct views such that there should be no impact on road users in practice. With regards receptors 13-24, any screening that may be provided by existing vegetation will be supplemented by proposed vegetation along the east and south-east boundary of the site, such that views are unlikely to occur in practice. However, the applicant cannot place reliance for screening mitigation on vegetation which is located on land outside of their control as there is the risk that the vegetation may not remain in place or be maintained to provide a screening function for the development. We therefore expect the applicant to provide sufficient screening within the development site, or by a site boundary feature, to mitigate the identified impact on the A303

We note that a Landscape Framework Plan Rev P5 dated 21 May 2026 has been provided which proposes hedge planting along all boundaries of the site, with additional orchard planting to the south-west. Whilst this is generally acceptable, we still require the applicant to show how temporary screening will be provided whilst new planting becomes established. We would also continue to offer the applicant advice with regards to the inclusion of *prunus spinosa* (Blackthorn) in the planting mix. Due to the invasive nature of the species, it is not accepted for planting in proximity to the highway boundary (within 10 metres). Although the proposed planting locations are set back from our network, the applicant may nonetheless wish to consider the inclusion of an alternative species, particularly an evergreen species to provide year-round cover. We consider however that screening could be addressed by pre-commencement planning condition.

Summary

National Highways has reviewed the further information provided and considers that the development proposals can now be accepted subject to planning conditions to protect the safe and efficient operation of the A303.

Recommendation

National Highways recommends that planning conditions should be attached to any permission Wiltshire Council is minded to grant in respect of application reference PL/2026/00795 to the effect that:

1. Construction and operational traffic management measures, in accordance with the Construction and Operational Traffic Management Plan version 01A, prepared by Evoke and dated 5 May 2026, shall be implemented in full for the duration of construction works and subsequent use unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority (in consultation with the strategic highway authority).

Reason: in the interest of the safe and efficient operation of the A303 trunk road, in accordance with the requirements of DfT Circular 01/2022.

2. Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed Landscape Plan shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority (in consultation with the strategic highway authority). The Plan shall include measures to provide temporary screening until proposed landscape planting becomes established. Landscape screening shall be maintained as such for the duration of use.

Reason: in the interest of the safe and efficient operation of the A303 trunk road, to mitigate an otherwise unacceptable road safety risk, in accordance with the requirements of DfT Circular 01/2022.

Informative

The construction traffic management measures associated with this consent require advance warning signs to be placed within the A303 highway boundary, which is land over which the applicant has no control. It will therefore be necessary for the applicant to apply for roadspace prior to the placing of any signs within the highway and they should contact swnetworkoccupancy@nationalhighways.co.uk at an early stage. For a roadspace booking to be approved the applicant will need to provide sign details and location, in line with Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 8 requirements, and details of the traffic management contractor who shall be Sector Approved by National Highways for undertaking work on the strategic road network. Traffic management may also need to be timed to fit in with other road works on the strategic road network or local road network to ensure there are no unacceptable impacts on congestion and road safety.

Standing advice to the local planning authority

The Climate Change Committee's [2022 Report to Parliament](#) notes that for the UK to achieve net zero carbon status by 2050, action is needed to support a modal shift away from car travel. The NPPF supports this position, with paragraphs 77 and 110

prescribing that significant development should offer a genuine choice of transport modes, while paragraphs 109 and 115 advise that appropriate opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be taken up as part of a vision-led approach.

Moreover, the carbon reduction hierarchy (avoid-switch-improve) as set out in clause 4.3 of PAS2080:2023 promotes approaches and measures to minimise resource consumption and thereby reduce carbon emissions.

These considerations should be weighed alongside any relevant Local Plan policies to ensure that planning decisions are in line with the necessary transition to net zero carbon.