

CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2026/04118
Application Type:	Prior Notification – Excavation/waste material
Site Address:	Little Langford Farm, Little Langford, Salisbury, SP3 4NP
Proposal:	An earthbank lagoon for storage of slurry manure from the dairy herd
Recommendation:	REFUSE

PROPOSAL POLICIES:

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (As Amended), Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A (GPDO).

ISSUES:

The issues for consideration within this application are the Permitted Development Criteria and if the development would constitute permitted development; and then whether the proposed siting, design and external appearance of the proposed slurry lagoon, are acceptable and do not need prior approval from the Local Planning Authority.

THE PROPOSAL:

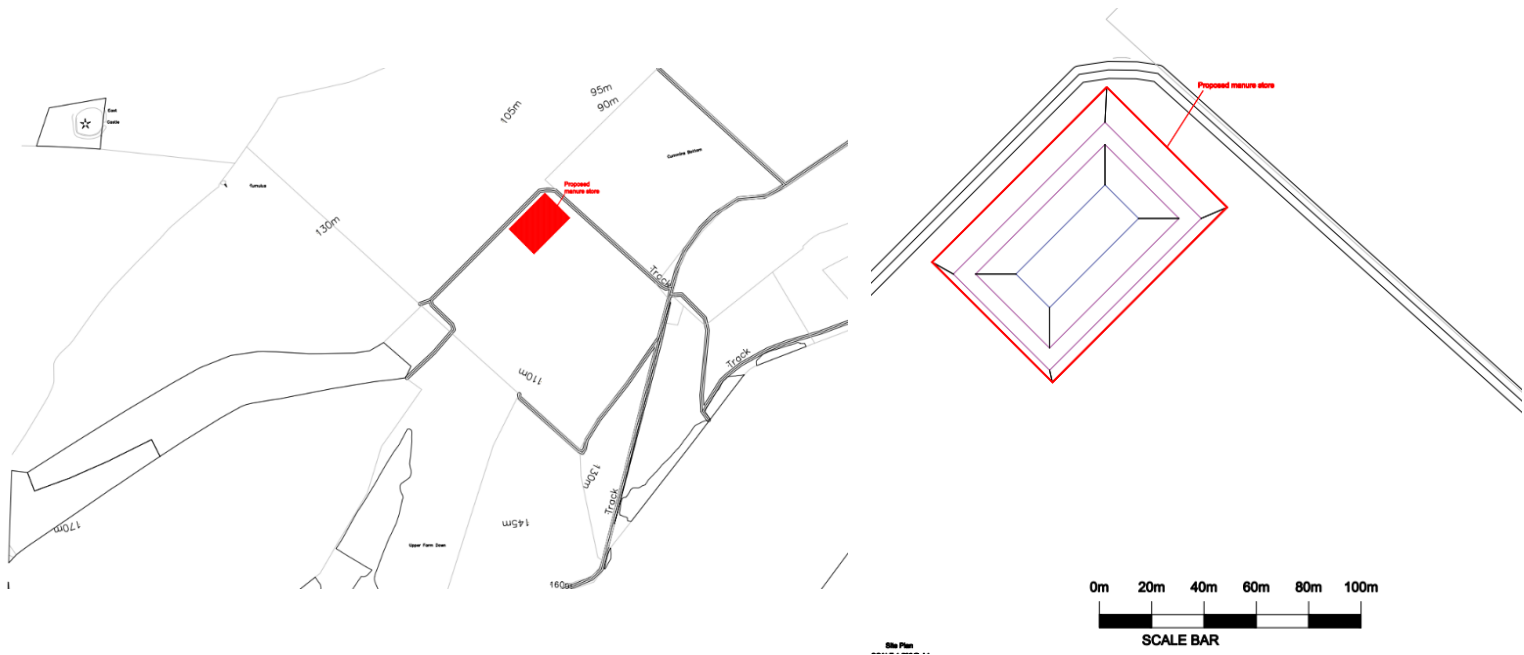
This is an application seeking to notify the Local Planning Authority (LPA) about a proposed earthbank lagoon for the storage of slurry manure produced by the dairy herd. The slurry stored will be used as fertiliser for adjacent arable fields within the agricultural unit. The proposed slurry lagoon would measure approximately 70 metres in length and 40 metres in width, resulting in a footprint of approximately 2,800 square metres. The application form states that the 'total area of the proposed works' is approximately 6,100 square metres. These figures reflect two different measurements of the same development.

The 2,800 square metre figure relates to the area covered by the lagoon itself, as agreed by the case officer and agent, whereas the 6,100 square metre figure stated within the application form includes the surrounding earth banks, safety fencing and associated works within the submitted site plan red line boundary. There is no dispute regarding the dimensions of the proposal; the different figures simply reflect different methods of measuring its extent.

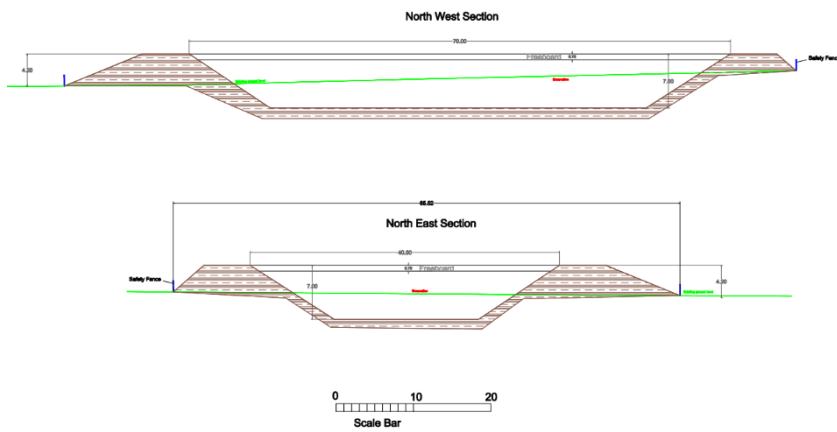
The slurry lagoon would comprise a substantial earth-banked structure. The surrounding earth banks would extend up to 4.2 metres above existing ground levels, and the lagoon would have a depth of approximately 7 metres. A 2 metre high safety fence would be provided around the perimeter. The submitted plans indicate that the lagoon would comprise a base, sides and a cover above, together with a concrete access ramp and pad. The area proposed for the lagoon is characterised by undulating countryside. As a consequence of the changing land levels across the site, sections of the lagoon are likely to appear more prominent than others, with some parts requiring greater earth banking than others. This is supported by the submitted cross-sectional drawings, which demonstrate a noticeable change in ground levels along the north-west section of the site.

This application follows the withdrawal of a previous full planning application for a slurry lagoon on an adjacent field known as 'Opposite 8 Acre'. Whilst similar in nature, the previously proposed lagoon was of a smaller scale and was positioned further upslope

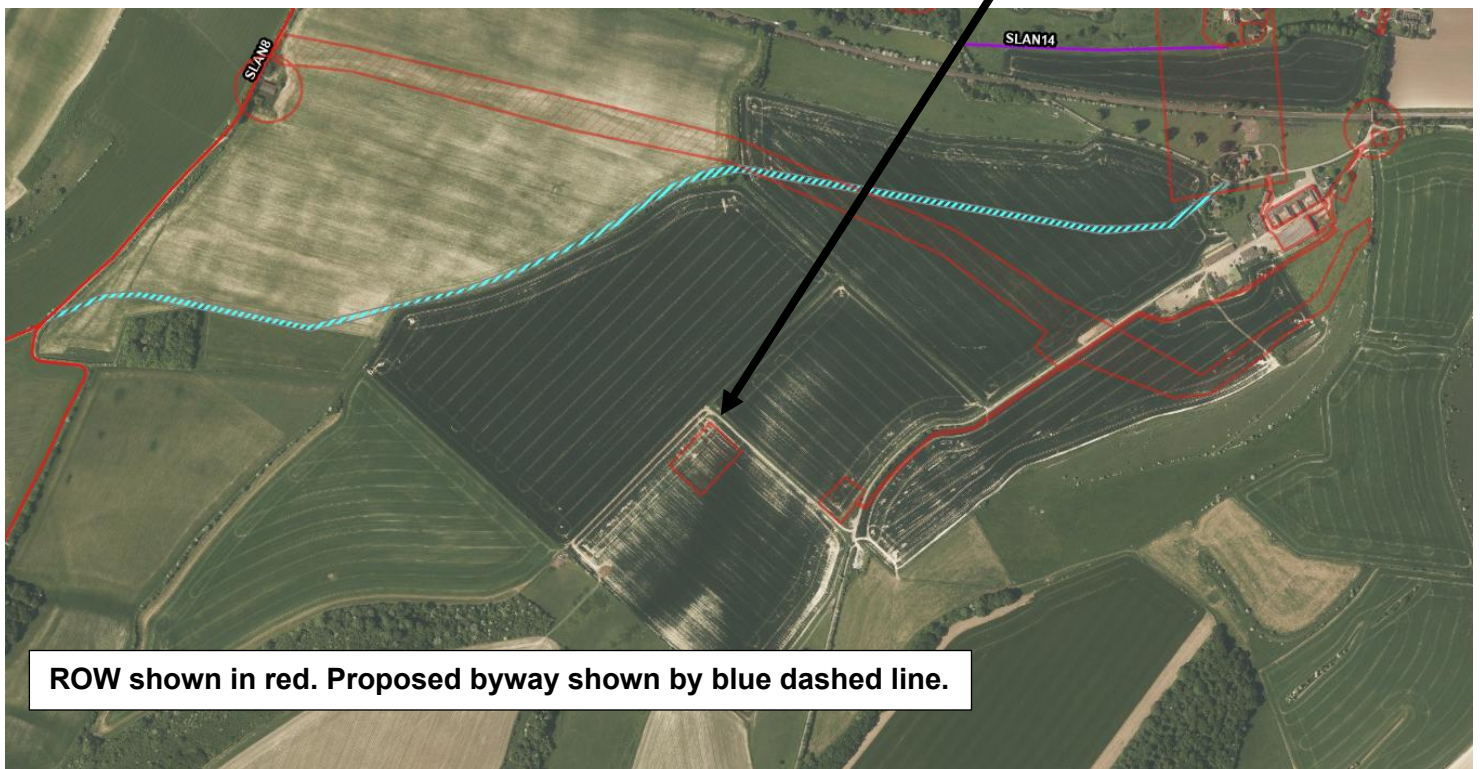
than the development currently under consideration.



Slurry lagoon sections



Proposed slurry lagoon



ROW shown in red. Proposed byway shown by blue dashed line.

SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS:

The site is situated to the south of the villages of Steeple Langford and Hanging Langford, both of which are defined as Small Villages with no settlement boundary by Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) policies CP1 (Settlement Strategy), CP2 (Delivery Strategy) and CP4 (Amesbury Community Area). The site is outside of any defined settlement boundary and is therefore in designated countryside. The site is surrounded on all sides by agricultural fields, all within the same agricultural unit. The site of the proposed slurry lagoon is specifically within a field known as 'Pennings' which is within a wider field network known as 'Cummins Bottom'. The surrounding landscape can be described as open and undulating land with notable wooded areas to the south west and south east.

The field in which the lagoon is proposed to be sited, known as Pennings, is characterised by undulating topography. Ground levels generally rise from west to east across the site, with two distinct undulations present along the southern part of the field.

The boundaries of the fields typically comprise of hedgerows and trees. Approximately 920 metres to the north east of the proposed slurry lagoon are the farm buildings associated with Little Langford Farm.

A Right of Way (ROW) (ref: SLAN8), which splinters into another ROW (ref: SLAN13) is located to the west of the proposed site. Immediately to the north of the site is a proposed restricted byway, this splinters off from SLAN8 to the west and continues east toward Little Langford Farm buildings. A view of the proposed lagoon is likely from certain vantage points along the proposed byway.

The site is located wholly within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and the catchment of the River Avon Special Area for Conservation (SAC). An archaeology monument line runs through the proposed location of the slurry lagoon.

The application site forms part of a wider agricultural unit of 561 hectares (Ha), as stated in the application form.

ASSESSMENT:

Need:

The proposed slurry lagoon would be located in the north corner of the arable field known as 'Pennings', which forms part of the wider agricultural unit extending to 561 hectares. The supporting information confirms that the agricultural unit comprises a dairy herd and arable land. The lagoon would be used to store slurry produced by the dairy herd before it is applied as fertiliser to fields within the same agricultural unit.

The supporting information states that the proposed location has been selected due to its proximity to arable fields within the holding where the stored slurry will be utilised.

Having regard to the scale and nature of the agricultural unit, and the intended use of the lagoon for the storage of slurry produced on the holding and subsequently applied to land within the same holding, the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture and would be used for agricultural purposes. The assessment therefore turns to whether the proposal complies with the limitations and conditions of Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO.

Permitted Development Criteria:

The applicant has confirmed that the agricultural unit within which the proposed slurry lagoon is to be located is a unit of 561 Ha in size. Therefore, the proposed development needs to be checked against the criteria of Class A of Part 6 of the GPDO, which allows

for excavation or engineering operations that are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within agricultural units of 5 Ha or more, subject to the following criteria:

Development would not be permitted under the following criteria:

- (a) the development would be carried out on a separate parcel of land forming part of the unit which is less than 1 hectare in area;***

The development would be carried out within the established agricultural unit of 561 Ha, and positioned in an arable field enclosed within a wider network of fields forming the agricultural unit. The site does not constitute a separate parcel of land and is an integral part of the agricultural unit. This criterion is therefore satisfied.

- (b) it would consist of the erection or extension of any agricultural building on an established agricultural unit (as defined in paragraph X of Part 3 of this Schedule) where development under Class Q or S of Part 3 (changes of use) of this Schedule has been carried out within a period of 10 years ending with the date on which development under Class A(a) begins;***

The agricultural unit has not been subject to any development under Class Q or S of Part 3 of the GPDO in the past 10 years. This criterion is therefore satisfied.

- (c) it would consist of, or include, the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling;***

The proposals involve the creation of a slurry lagoon which has been found to be necessary for the purposes of agriculture. The proposals do not involve the provision of, or works to a dwelling. This criterion is therefore satisfied.

- (d) it would involve the provision of a building, structure or works not designed for agricultural purposes;***

The LPA is satisfied that the proposed slurry lagoon is for agricultural purposes. Slurry manure generated by the dairy herd, within the same agricultural unit, will be stored and used to fertilise adjacent arable fields. This criterion is therefore satisfied.

- (e) the ground area which would be covered by—***

- (i) any works or structure (other than a fence) for accommodating livestock or any plant or machinery arising from engineering operations would exceed 1,000 square metres; or***
(ii) any building erected or extended or altered by virtue of Class A, would exceed 1,500 square metres, calculated as described in paragraph D.1(2)(a) of this Part;

Criterion (e) of Class A places limitations on the scale of development that may be undertaken under these permitted development rights. Under criterion (e)(i), the GPDO restricts the ground area which would be covered by any works arising from engineering operations to 1,000 square metres. Criterion (e)(ii) similarly limits the size of buildings erected, extended or altered under Class A to 1,500 square metres. The purpose of criterion (e) is therefore to limit the scale of development that can be undertaken under Class A before a full planning application is required. It is noted that the size limitations in this part are relatively generous.

The proposed slurry lagoon would measure approximately 70 metres in length and 40 metres in width, resulting in a footprint of approximately 2,800 square metres. The

application form alternatively states that the total area of the proposed works is approximately 6,100 square metres when the surrounding earth banks, safety fencing and associated works are included. Regardless of which measurement is applied, the proposal substantially exceeds both the 1,000 square metre threshold contained within criterion (e)(i) and the 1,500 square metre threshold contained within criterion (e)(ii).

The applicant has suggested that the proposal comprises an excavation and is therefore not subject to the size limitations contained within criterion (e). The Local Planning Authority does not agree with this interpretation. Criterion (e)(i) expressly refers to engineering operations. If excavations and engineering operations were not intended to be subject to any size limitation, there would be little purpose in the inclusion of criterion (e)(i) within Class A. Such an interpretation would otherwise allow engineering works of unlimited extent to be undertaken under permitted development rights provided they took the form of an excavation. Whilst it is acknowledged that the wording of criterion e as a whole is not very clear, the Local Planning Authority does not consider this to reflect either the purpose or the correct interpretation of this provision.

The proposed development comprises substantial engineering operations involving excavation together with the associated works required to create the slurry lagoon. The submitted plans indicate that these works would include extensive excavation, earth banking, a concrete access ramp and pad, and associated infrastructure. The Local Planning Authority therefore considers that the proposal falls within the scope of criterion (e)(i). Given that the ground area covered by the works arising from the engineering operations would significantly exceed 1,000 square metres, the Local Planning Authority thereby considers that the proposal fails to comply with criterion (e)(i) of the permitted development provisions.

Furthermore, the Local Planning Authority considers there to be a reasonable argument that the completed slurry lagoon could itself be regarded as a building for the purposes of Class A. The submitted plans show that the lagoon would comprise a permanent structure with a base, sides and a cover, together with associated infrastructure including a concrete access ramp and pad. Whilst the lagoon would be partially below existing ground level as a consequence of the excavation required to create it, planning legislation expressly contemplates development and building operations occurring in, on, over or under land. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 defines a building as including any structure or erection. In this case, the completed development would result in a substantial and permanent covered slurry storage facility with clearly defined structural components. The fact that part of the development would sit below existing ground level does not necessarily prevent it from being regarded as a building for the purposes of Class A.

Indeed, if the same structure were positioned wholly above ground level, it would readily display the physical characteristics commonly associated with a building. Were this interpretation to be applied however, the development would also exceed the 1,500 square metre limitation contained within criterion (e)(ii), given the lagoon footprint of approximately 2,800 square metres.

The Local Planning Authority therefore concludes that the proposal fails to comply with criterion (e) of Class A. Whether assessed under criterion (e)(i) as works arising from engineering operations, or under criterion (e)(ii) as the creation of a building, the scale of the proposed development far exceeds the limitations prescribed by this criterion in Class A. The proposal is not therefore considered to constitute permitted development and planning permission would be required for the proposed works.

(f) the height of any part of any building, structure or works within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 3 metres;

The proposed slurry lagoon is not within 3km of an aerodrome. This criterion is therefore satisfied.

(g) the height of any part of any building, structure or works not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 12 metres;

The earth bunds, these being the highest part of the slurry lagoon as a result of the works, are a maximum of 4.2 metres in height, this criterion is therefore satisfied.

(h) any part of the development would be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road;

The nearest classified road is the A36 and this is approximately 1.4km to the north of the site. This criterion is therefore met.

(i) it would consist of, or include, the erection or construction of, or the carrying out of any works to, a building, structure or an excavation used or to be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge where the building, structure or excavation is, or would be, within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building;

The proposals are for the storage of slurry. However, the nearest protected building is to the north of the site, this being the dwelling house known as Bilbury, which is approximately 750m from the site. This exceeds the minimum distance requirement of 400 metres. This criterion is therefore satisfied.

(j) it would involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2(4) land which are connected with fish farming;

The proposals do not involve works connected with a fish farm and therefore this criterion does not apply.

(k) any building for storing fuel for or waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system—

(i) would be used for storing waste not produced by that boiler or system or for storing fuel not produced on land within the unit; or

(ii) is or would be within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building; or

The proposed slurry lagoon does not seek to store fuel for or waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system. This criterion is therefore satisfied.

(l) the erection or extension of a building would be carried out on land or a building that is, or is within the curtilage of, a scheduled monument.

The site is not within a scheduled monument nor within the curtilage of a scheduled monument. This criterion is therefore satisfied.

Summary

Having assessed the proposal against the criteria set out within Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO, it is considered that the development would comply with all relevant criteria with the exception of criterion (e).

The proposed slurry lagoon is considered to be reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture and would be used for the storage of slurry produced by the existing dairy herd before being applied to land within the same agricultural unit. The Local Planning Authority is therefore satisfied that the proposal is for agricultural purposes and that the development would otherwise comply with the relevant limitations and conditions of Class A.

However, the proposed slurry lagoon would have a footprint of approximately 2,800 square metres, whilst the application form states that the total area of the proposed works is approximately 6,100 square metres. Regardless of which measurement is applied, the scale of the development substantially exceeds the thresholds contained within both parts of criterion (e) of Class A.

The Local Planning Authority considers that criterion (e) exists to limit the scale of development that may benefit from permitted development rights. The proposal comprises substantial engineering operations involving excavation together with associated works extending well beyond 1,000 square metres. As such, the development far exceeds the limitations prescribed by criterion (e)(i). Furthermore, there is a reasonable argument that the completed lagoon could also be regarded as a building for the purposes of Class A, in which case it could benefit from the greater size allowance set out in (e)(ii). However, the proposals would also far exceed the limitation contained within criterion (e)(ii).

The Local Planning Authority therefore concludes that the proposal fails to comply with criterion (e) of Class A. Whether assessed under criterion (e)(i) as works arising from engineering operations, or as the creation of a building under criterion (e)(ii), the scale of the proposed development exceeds the limitations prescribed by the GPDO. The proposal does not therefore constitute permitted development and cannot be approved under the prior notification procedure. Planning permission will therefore be required for the proposed works.

It is also worth noting at this point that this application follows a recent withdrawn scheme that involved an application for full planning permission for a new slurry lagoon on this agricultural holding. That slurry lagoon (considered under ref: PL/2025/00566) was for a smaller lagoon which was to be positioned elsewhere on the unit closer to the access track linking it to the existing farmyard, but still within the National Landscape. The fact that planning permission was previously applied for this structure however suggests that the applicant also previously considered it to require planning permission rather than constituting permitted development. It was withdrawn due to a lack of information and due to concerns raised about the potential landscape impact that required further assessment; not because there was any understanding that the development would constitute permitted development. The Local Planning Authority is therefore surprised that the resubmission has been made in the form of a prior notification application rather than a revised planning application or as a continuation of previous discussions.

Siting & Design:

Whilst the proposal is not considered to constitute permitted development under Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO, the application has been submitted to determine whether prior approval is required. It is therefore appropriate for the Local Planning Authority to

assess the siting, design and external appearance of the development in accordance with Condition A.2(2)(i) of the GPDO.

The proposed slurry lagoon, earth banks and safety fencing would have a total area of approximately 6,100 square metres. The proposal would involve substantial engineering operations to create a large earth-banked slurry storage lagoon with perimeter banks extending up to 4.2 metres above existing ground level and a 2 metre high safety fence around its perimeter. The scale of the development is therefore significant.

The Local Planning Authority considers that the size limitations contained within criterion (e) of Class A exist to restrict the scale of development that may proceed under permitted development rights without the scrutiny afforded through the full planning application process. In this instance, the scale of the proposed lagoon substantially exceeds those limitations. The requirement for a full planning application enables wider planning considerations, including landscape impact, to be properly assessed.

The site lies within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape where great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing natural beauty. Whilst the lagoon would not be readily visible from the public highway, there is a reasonable likelihood that it would be visible from the nearby proposed restricted byway and other elevated vantage points within the wider landscape. By reason of its scale, the extent of the engineering operations required, the 4.2 metre high earth banks, any associated regrading of land levels and the 2 metre high perimeter fence, the development would introduce a substantial engineered feature into what is presently an open and attractive rural landscape.

The Cranborne Chase National Landscape Planning Protocol identifies as major development, amongst other things, development with a floorspace exceeding 1,000 square metres. The proposed lagoon would have a footprint of approximately 2,800 square metres and is therefore of a scale that materially exceeds the benchmark commonly associated with major development. More importantly, having regard to its nature, scale, setting and potential impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape, the Local Planning Authority considers that the proposal raises issues that can only be appropriately assessed through a full planning application. As was originally going to be the case under the previously withdrawn application.

On the information submitted, it has not been demonstrated that a slurry lagoon of this scale, together with the associated earthworks, perimeter fencing and landscape intervention, would conserve the character and appearance of this part of the National Landscape. Prior approval is therefore required and would not be granted in respect of the siting and design of the development.

On the basis of the information currently before the Local Planning Authority, it has not been demonstrated that a slurry lagoon of this scale could be accommodated within this sensitive landscape without adverse effects on the character and appearance of the National Landscape. A full planning application, supported by an appropriate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or other suitable landscape evidence, would be required to properly assess the effects of the development and any mitigation measures proposed.

Accordingly, whilst the proposal falls outside the scope of permitted development, the Local Planning Authority considers that the scale of the development gives rise to significant landscape considerations which warrant full assessment through the planning application process. It is therefore considered that prior approval of the siting and design of the proposals should be refused in any event.

CONCLUSION

The proposed slurry lagoon, as described within the submitted application form and accompanying plans and documents received on 1 July 2026, has been assessed against the criteria set out within Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). Whilst the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture and would be used for agricultural purposes, it has been concluded that the development fails to comply with criterion (e) of Class A.

The proposed slurry lagoon would have a footprint of approximately 2,800 square metres, whilst the application form states that the total area of the proposed works is approximately 6,100 square metres. Regardless of which measurement is applied, the scale of the development substantially exceeds the size limitations contained within criterion (e). The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposal comprises substantial engineering operations involving excavation together with the creation of a permanent slurry storage structure. Accordingly, the ground area covered by the works arising from the engineering operations far exceeds the 1,000 square metre limitation prescribed by criterion (e)(i). Furthermore, there is a reasonable argument that the completed lagoon could also be regarded as a building for the purposes of Class A, and the additional provision of up to 1,500 square metres set out in criterion (e)(ii) could therefore be justified. However, the proposals would similarly far exceed the limitation contained within criterion (e)(ii) too.

The proposed lagoon would also represent a substantial engineered feature comprising extensive earthworks, earth banks of at least 4.2 metres in height and a 2 metre high perimeter fence. Given the scale of the development and its location within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, the Local Planning Authority considers that wider planning considerations, including landscape and visual impacts, would warrant detailed assessment and that if the scheme were found to constitute permitted development prior approval of the proposed siting and design of the lagoon should be refused in any event.

The Local Planning Authority therefore concludes that the proposal does not accord with all of the criteria required by Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO and do not benefit from permitted development rights. Prior approval cannot therefore be granted and it is recommended that the application be refused. Should the applicant wish to pursue the development, a full planning application would be required in order for the proposal to be fully assessed against the Development Plan and all other material considerations.

RECOMMENDATION:

Refusal:

- 1) The proposed development fails to comply with criterion (e) of Class A.1 of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). The proposed slurry lagoon would have a footprint of approximately 2,800 square metres, with the application form stating that the total area of the proposed works is approximately 6,100 square metres. The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposal comprises substantial engineering operations involving excavation together with associated works extending well beyond the size limitations set out in this criterion, which restrict the scale of development that may benefit from permitted development rights. Whether assessed under criterion (e)(i) as works arising from engineering operations, or under criterion (e)(ii) as the creation of a building, the proposal far exceeds the relevant 1,000/1,500 square metre size limitations prescribed by Class A. The development therefore fails to meet all the permitted development criteria set out in of Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO and planning permission is required.

- 2) The proposed development, by virtue of its siting, design, size and appearance would constitute major development which has potential to significantly impact the character, setting and visual amenities of the area, which is situated in a National Landscape. The siting, design and appearance of the proposals therefore need detailed approval in line with Condition A.2, criterion 2 (i) of Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (the GDPO).

Informative

The plans and documents considered in reaching the decision are as follows:

- Application form – date received: 01/07/2026
- Location plan – ref: (LLManureStore_001.dwg) – date received: 01/07/2026
- Location plan – showing extent of the agricultural unit – date received: 07/07/2026
- Site plan – ref: (LLManureStore_002.dwg) – date received: 01/07/2026
- Sections – ref: (LLManureStore_003.dwg) – date received: 01/07/2026
- Supporting statement – ref: (LLManureStore_002.dwg) – date received: 01/07/2026