

To:	Sarah Hill	From:	Drainage Team (Arun Govind T)
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Planning App Ref:	PL/2026/00795
Service Ref:	Drainage
Date:	29/07/2026

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission

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

SITE LOCATION

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

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTEE POSITION

Object	
Holding Objection: Further information required	
Support	
No comment	
No objection	
No objection subject to conditions	X
Consultation not required	

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- Application Form (*Feb 2026*)
- Flood Risk Assessment & Surface Water Strategy (*Jul 2026*)
- Planning Design and Access Statement (*Jul 2026*)
- Planning Layout (*Jul 2026*)
- Site Location Plan (*Jul 2026*)

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

Context

In planning terms, flood risk refers to the potential for development to increase the likelihood or severity of flooding on-site or elsewhere, while drainage considerations relate to the capacity of the site and surrounding infrastructure to manage surface water runoff in a sustainable and effective manner.

The local planning authority must be satisfied that the proposed development will not increase flood risk, either on-site or elsewhere, and that surface water will be managed in a sustainable and coordinated manner.

Where necessary, planning conditions or legal agreements may be used to secure the implementation, maintenance, and monitoring of SuDS and other drainage infrastructure.

Assessment

The application has been supported with a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). It should be noted that our comments below are reliant on the accuracy and completeness of the FRA and we do not take any responsibility for incorrect data or interpretation made by the authors.

The Flood Risk Assessment states that the proposed solar farm lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk from all sources of flooding, with permeable chalk enabling an infiltration-led drainage regime. No watercourses or drainage infrastructure affect the site, greenfield runoff rates remain very low, and the development introduces negligible impermeable area. The strategy maintains natural infiltration through managed grass cover, construction-phase soil protection and a small precautionary interception swale, ensuring no increase in runoff or flood risk on- or off-site.

The applicant further states that the proposed new access route to the east of the site will be used for construction, decommissioning and maintenance access, as well as a permissive footpath. Wiltshire Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, [SFRA Data Explorer](#), indicates that part of the proposed access route has a moderate risk of surface water and ground water flooding.

The applicant advises that no new hardstanding is proposed as part of the new access route and, consequently, no drainage infrastructure is required, with the access route comprising a rolled vegetated surface or compacted gravel. However, it is considered that the proposed surface treatment may reduce permeability relative to existing greenfield conditions and could result in an increase in surface water runoff. Further clarification is therefore required regarding any proposed changes to infiltration potential, site levels and the potential impact on existing overland flow routes. Where adverse changes are anticipated, the applicant should demonstrate how any resulting increase in flood risk will be appropriately mitigated.

RECOMMENDATION

No objection subject to the following conditions

- 1. No development shall take place until a surface water drainage strategy, complying with Wiltshire Council requirements, NPPF, PPG and the National Standards for SuDS has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

In order to discharge the above drainage condition the following additional information must be provided:

- While noting the applicant has proposed a cut-off swale to limit exceedance from the development, the applicant must still provide an overland exceedance drawing that outlines the flow routes for the 1 in 100 year plus climate change rainfall event to demonstrate there is no increase in flood risk elsewhere.

Reason: runoff from solar panels will create a sheet flow which could erode channels at the toe of the panels. This channelised flow could increase SW flood risk.

- The applicant should demonstrate that the proposed access route will not result in a significant reduction in permeability relative to existing greenfield conditions. Where a major reduction in permeability is anticipated, the applicant should demonstrate how any additional surface water runoff will be managed to ensure no increase in flood risk on-site or elsewhere.
- It is noted that groundwater monitoring and BRE365 infiltration testing have been carried out on an adjacent site. The applicant is requested to submit the raw test results and supporting information for LLFA review. Should the evidence confirm that infiltration is feasible and capable of safely managing surface water runoff from the development, this may resolve the outstanding requirements of Condition 2 referenced in our response dated 06/03/2026.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [NPPF December 2024 Link](#)
Planning and Flood Risk (Paras 170–182)

Wiltshire Core Strategy – Adopted January 2015 [Wiltshire Core Strategy Link](#)
Core Policy 67 requires that all new development must address flood risk from all sources and not increase flood risk elsewhere. It supports the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and requires that developments demonstrate how surface water will be managed sustainably.

Wiltshire Local Plan (emerging) [Local Plan Review Link](#)
Development must avoid high flood risk areas using the sequential approach. Proposals require a Flood Risk Assessment, Surface Water Drainage Strategy, and Groundwater Assessment where relevant. All schemes must include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), with major developments achieving a 30% reduction in runoff compared to greenfield rates, following the surface water discharge hierarchy.

Culverting and building over watercourses is discouraged, and natural drainage features should be retained or restored. Drainage strategies must ensure safety during extreme flood events (1-in-100-year + climate change) and provide safe access/egress. SuDS should also deliver biodiversity, amenity, and water quality benefits.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Wiltshire Council Drainage Betterment Strategy (2024) [SPD Link](#)
This technical guidance outlines expectations for surface water discharge hierarchy, attenuation, exceedance routes, water quality, and post-development monitoring.

Wiltshire Design Guide (March 2024) [SPD Link](#)
Includes principles of good design, including integration of SuDS and flood resilience.

Other Relevant Policies and Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) – Flood Risk and Drainage [Guidance Link](#)
Covers detailed expectations for flood risk assessments, SuDS design, discharge hierarchy, sequential testing and climate change allowances.

Wiltshire SFRA (2024) [SFRA Link](#)
This document underpins the Sequential and Exception Test application and provides site screening evidence.

Section 19 Flood Investigation Reports [Section 19 Reports Link](#)
These documents summarise investigations into significant local flood incidents and establish what caused the flooding, how authorities responded, and actions needed to prevent future floods.

National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) June 2025 [Guidance Link](#)
Establishes mandatory criteria for runoff destination hierarchy, interception, flood resilience, water quality, amenity, biodiversity, and long-term maintenance for all new developments in England.

SuDS Manual (CIRIA C753)
This document set outs design principles, especially where attenuation, exceedance routing, and water quality are discussed.

Infiltration drainage design must be supported by ground investigations, including infiltration testing in accordance with *British Research Establishment (BRE) Digest 365 – Soakaway Design*, and groundwater level monitoring that accounts for seasonal variation.