

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/03055
APPLICATION TYPE:	Permission in Principle
SITE ADDRESS:	Land along Potters Hill, Crockerton, Warminster, BA12 8AB
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Permission in Principle for 1 single storey dwelling
RECOMMENDATION:	Refuse

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The site comprises part of a larger agricultural field located to the north of Potters Hill, Crockerton, as shown in the extract of the location plan and aerial mapping below.



Crockerton is designated as a small village settlement without settlement limits as defined by the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy. The eastern boundary the site is bordered by a public right of way (LDEV15). Whilst there is one dwelling located further to the east of the site, beyond the PROW, the site is otherwise surrounding by open countryside located in the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (formerly AONB).

The site also lies within the River Avon SAC catchment and the Salisbury Plain SPA 6400m buffer zone.

The site is mapped as being in Flood Zone 1 and is not shown to be at risk from surface water flooding. In terms of groundwater, the Council's strategic Flood Risk Assessment indicates that levels are between 0.025m and 0.5m below the ground surface, within this zone there is a risk of groundwater flooding to surface and subsurface assets and possibility of groundwater emerging at the surface locally.

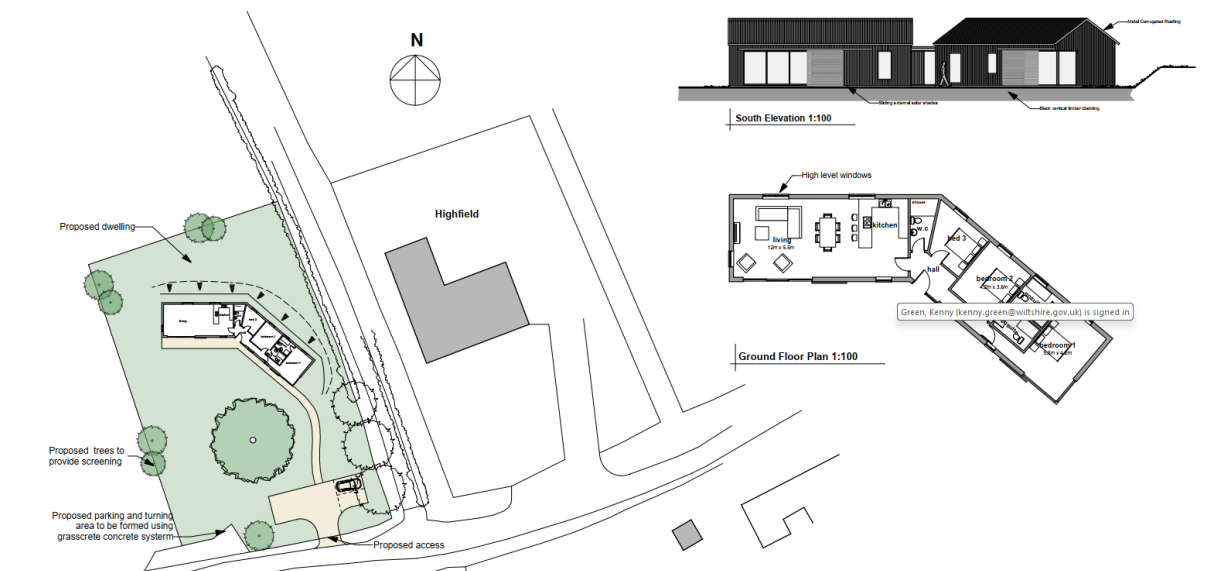
PROPOSAL

The application seeks Stage 1 Permission in Principle under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for residential development comprising the construction of a single dwelling.

As submitted, it is proposed that the site of the dwelling would be sub-divided from the remainder of the agricultural field to provide a site area of 0.19 hectares.

The applicant describes the proposal on the completed application form as a single storey dwelling and the design and access statement indicates that it is intended to design the dwelling to be “of a scale that replicates two small agricultural buildings that could have been converted in this location”.

A sketch plan has been provided for illustrative purposes – as shown below.



The details of the design and scale of a dwelling (if approved at stage 1 of a PIP) would be subject to consideration at the stage 2 technical details in the event of the grant of permission in principle. Detailed matters of layout, scale, appearance, access, landscaping or drainage are not considered as part of the assessment of a Permission in Principle application.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is no identified planning history for the site.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

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 31 Spatial Strategy for the Warminster Community Area
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk;

Emerging Wiltshire Local Plan

At Full Council on 19 May 2026, the elected members of Wiltshire Council agreed to withdraw the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan. The said Plan has no material weight for the purposes of the application.

In accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, on 30th June 2026 Wiltshire Council published a notice of intention to prepare a new local plan for Wiltshire. The next stage is a Scoping Consultation which commences on 2nd September 2026.

This plan is at a very early stage and currently carries no weight for decision making.

Neighbourhood Plan:

There is no adopted neighbourhood plan for the site location.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Longbridge Deverill Parish Council: Objects on the following grounds:

This development would be on a sensitive AONB location, on agricultural land frequented by all types of wildlife and would be a loss of a valued agricultural site within the Cranbourne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Natural Beauty. The site also lies within the area covered by the Cranbourne Chase International Dark Skies Reserve, where the maintained absence of artificial lighting is a key landscape attribute.

We do not believe that the site is suitable for the proposed land use, it is in a rural area and does not respect the existing character and form of the settlement. The proposal will start development into open countryside beyond a clear boundary of the development along Potters Hill. It would introduce built form where there are currently wide-ranging views of open fields and destroy the nature of this sensitive landscape area.

Core Policy 51 states that harm to landscape character should be avoided. The proposal does not preserve or enhance the landscape; the site is on open sloped pastureland in a visually prominent area. Building on the site would extend built form into undeveloped countryside. The applicant claims that there were two former agricultural buildings on site, this is speculative. No buildings/trace of buildings currently exist. The AONB Management Plan emphasises avoiding incremental suburbanisation. This proposal would contribute to exactly that. The NPPF paragraph 189 places great weight on conserving and enhancing landscape

and scenic beauty in National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

The small village of Crockerton is not a sustainable, accessible location for residential development and the development would be in conflict with Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport. The village lies 1 mile from the nearest shop, the access is along the busy A350, and the shop is not stocked in order to provide sufficient options to support family life. There is an absence of public transport and footway links to Warminster which is the nearest settlement with shops that could support family life. Future occupants would need to rely on private vehicles to access day-to-day services and commute to work.

Core Policy CP50 (WCS) outlines our natural environment as one of Wiltshire's greatest assets and identifies the protection measures required for consideration when assessing the impact of development. The site is frequented by local wildlife including bats, birds of prey, deer, fox, badger, otters and much more. Development would disturb the sensitive wildlife species and habitats.

Core Policy 57 – Harm to Settlement Pattern and Rural Character. Potters Hill is characterised by sporadic, low-density dwellings. Building on the site will erode the rural gap between properties, creating incremental ribbon development and conflicting CP57. The proposal is not infill; it is encroachment into open fully farmed agricultural land.

The site does not lie within the settlement boundary of Crockerton, Crockerton has no settlement boundary (Appendix F of the Core Strategy), removal of the former village policy limit means development must be assessed strictly against rural policies.

Core Policy 1 allows modest development to meet local needs. There is no local housing need. The development is not affordable housing nor tied to any rural development and it is not infill within a built-up frontage.

The Parish Plan identified limited housing requirements to be built on existing brownfield sites with no development on agricultural land.

Housing Land Supply Shortfall. A shortfall does not override AONB protections. The NPPF states that ANOBs are areas where development should be restricted.

Ecology and Biodiversity Concerns about whether or not the site is capable of delivering Biodiversity Net Gain due to the fact it is on pastureland with mature hedgerows and trees, adjacent to a public footpath and within a nationally protected landscape.

Highways. Potters Hill is a narrow, unlit road without pavements frequently used by walkers and horse riders accessing Shear Water. Additional vehicle movements raise high safety concerns, contrary to CP57 and the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan.

There is no precedent within the local area that justifies expansion into undeveloped countryside. Approving this proposal would set a harmful precedent for further erosion of the AONB.

WC Highways: *The provision of a new dwelling on currently undeveloped land in the open countryside and outside of the existing village policy boundary raises concerns with regards to the sustainability of the site for residential development due to the likely reliance upon the private car for any residents and visitors. This proposal therefore appears to be contrary to the sustainability policies contained in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and National Planning Policy Framework which aim to reduce the need to travel particularly by private car and encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives. Any future submissions must include details of the access arrangements, including that of adequate visibility splays and sufficient on-site car parking, to avoid a Highway objection.*

WC Rights of Way: No comments made

WC Ecology: No comments made

Cranborne Chase National Landscape: *The submitted application is a PiP, and... that such proposals test out the policy situation and the appropriateness of a site for housing development. Although the technical details are dealt with at the next stage, if approved, quite a lot of details are submitted, apparently to support the case for development in principle. The planning policies for the locality do, therefore, seem to be quite important. However, the reference to housing land supply appears to diverge from the matters to be dealt with in relation to a PiP as NPPF 11 footnote 7 is clear that environmental policies in the NPPF protecting assets such as national landscapes are not negated by a shortage of housing land supply. The proposal appears to extend the developed area of the village, reaching into open countryside and extending a ribbon of development. It is not infill development within the village.*

There is also a misunderstanding in relation to light pollution in the DAS, section 7. In this International Dark Sky Reserve there is an obligation to reduce light pollution year on year and not merely to minimise or reduce potential light pollution. The LPA has also to consider its duty under s85 of CRow Act 2000 where it must seek to conserve and enhance natural beauty in decisions it makes affecting land within the national landscape. S84 of that Act also empowers the LPA to take actions to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

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.

- Outside the settlement boundary of Crockerton
- Conflict with Core Policies 1, 2 and 51

- Unsustainable location
- Harm to settlement pattern
- Harmful precedent
- Impact on character and appearance of the area
- Harm to Cranborne Chase National Landscape/International Dark Sky Reserve
- Traffic and highway safety concerns
- Loss of agricultural land
- Impact on wildlife/biodiversity
- Impact on trees
- Surface water flooding from run-off
- Reliance on screening and planting
- No surviving evidence of historic development

PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE – PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF ASSESSMENT

Permission in Principle (PiP) is an alternative route to obtaining planning permission, introduced by the Housing and Planning Act 2016. It is intended to provide an early and proportionate decision on whether a site is suitable for development, before detailed design work is undertaken.

The PiP process operates as a two-stage planning permission route for housing-led development:

- *Stage 1 – Permission in Principle:*
Establishes whether the principle of development on a site is acceptable.
- *Stage 2 – Technical Details Consent:*
If PiP is granted, a subsequent application is required to consider the detailed proposals, including layout, scale, appearance, access, landscaping, drainage and infrastructure.

At the Permission in Principle stage, the assessment is deliberately high-level and limited in scope. The purpose of a PiP is not to approve detailed plans, but to provide certainty at an early stage about whether development of a particular type is acceptable in principle at a given location. This approach is intended to help streamline the planning process by allowing developers and communities to understand development potential before significant time and expense is committed to detailed designs.

Importantly, the grant of Permission in Principle does not authorise development to commence. Development can only proceed once Technical Details Consent has been granted.

Planning conditions cannot be imposed on the grant of PiP, however, conditions can be applied in the usual way at the technical details consent stage. Any PiP, if approved, for residential development must be expressed indicating the minimum and maximum net number of dwellings which are, in principle, permitted. For a valid PiP application only a plan to identify the land to which the application relates is required.

Matters that Can Be Considered at the PiP Stage

Legislation restricts the assessment of a PiP application to the following matters only:

- The location of the development
- The proposed land use(s)
- The amount of development proposed

These are the only issues that can lawfully be taken into account when determining whether Permission in Principle should be granted or refused.

Matters Excluded from Consideration at the PiP Stage

Detailed matters, including (but not limited to) the following, are not considered as part of a PiP application:

- Detailed design and appearance
- Site layout and internal arrangements
- Access arrangements and parking
- Landscaping and boundary treatments
- Drainage and flood mitigation measures
- Utilities and other technical infrastructure

Such matters are reserved entirely for consideration at the Technical Details Consent stage, should Permission in Principle be granted.

KEY ISSUES FOR ASSESSMENT

In determining this application for Permission in Principle, the Local Planning Authority must consider the following key issues:

1. **Whether the location of the site is suitable** for the proposed form of development, having regard to the spatial strategy set out in the development plan and relevant national policy.
2. **Whether the proposed land use is acceptable in principle** at this location, taking into account the character and role of the settlement and surrounding area.
3. **Whether the amount of development proposed is appropriate**, assessed at a high-level and in broad terms only.
4. **Whether there are any overriding constraints** which would clearly and demonstrably prevent the site from being developed in principle, even allowing for detailed matters to be addressed at the Technical Details Consent stage.

A Permission in Principle application should therefore only be refused where it is clearly demonstrated that the principle of the proposed development is unacceptable, and that such concerns could not reasonably be addressed through a subsequent Technical Details Consent 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 – Location, Land Use and Amount

The site is located in the countryside outside of any defined settlement boundary. It is noted there is a loose knit form of development at Potters Hill further to the east of the site. The proposal is for 1 residential dwelling.

The development plan establishes a spatial strategy which seeks to direct new residential development towards defined settlements where residents have reasonable access to services, facilities and sustainable transport options.

Development beyond these locations is generally more restricted in order to protect the countryside and promote sustainable patterns of growth.

The National Planning Policy Framework supports the delivery of new homes in appropriate locations, whilst seeking to ensure development is well related to existing settlements and does not result in unsustainable patterns of development.

Both the development plan and national planning policy recognise that sites may be subject to environmental, physical or policy constraints.

At the Permission in Principle stage, the key consideration is whether any such constraints are of a nature or severity that they would clearly and demonstrably prevent development from coming forward in principle, even allowing for detailed matters to be addressed at the Technical Details Consent stage.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that planning decisions should be proportionate, and that early-stage permissions should not seek to resolve detailed technical matters prematurely.

Crockerton is designated as a Small Village under Core Policy 31. Core Policy 1 identifies that Small Villages have a low level of services and facilities, and few employment opportunities.

Core Policy 2 states that at Small Villages development will be limited to infill within the existing built area. Proposals for development at the Small Villages will be supported where they seek to meet housing needs of settlements or provide employment, services and facilities provided that the development:

- i) Respects the existing character and form of the settlement
- ii) Does not elongate the village or impose development in sensitive landscape areas
- iii) Does not consolidate an existing sporadic loose knit areas of development related to the settlement.

Core Policy 2 is also clear that only in certain circumstances would development be permitted in the open countryside (where an exception listed in paragraph 4.25 applies or other such policy exceptions exist), otherwise new housing should not be permitted outside settlement boundaries as a matter of principle.

Core Policies 60 and 61 of the WCS seek to promote sustainable development through the reduction on the reliance on private car use and encouraging the sustainable and safe movement of people within Wiltshire.

The policies above set out two key issues for considering the location of development for the proposed land use and amount of development proposed, that of how the proposed site/development relates to the existing built form and that of sustainability.

In addition, the site is located within the National Landscape and within the catchment of the River Avon SAC, both of which are relevant to the consideration of the location for the land use/quantum of development proposed.

Principle in terms of Character:

The site forms part of an undulating agricultural field and whilst officers note that the eastern site boundary is close to a residential property further to the east and adjacent to a PRow (public right of way) which separates the property to the east and the application site, the application site is detached from any built form and is inherently rural in character. It would not close off a gap and would not be considered an infill development.

Given the site's location and the pre-existing open character of the wider countryside, the proposed development would be seen from all vantage points as sporadic development in the countryside rather than as part of the cluster of low-density buildings which make up the built form in Potters Hill.

In visual terms, the proposed residential development and the likely associated changes to the site boundary to create an access, landscaping to form parking and garden areas and associated domestic paraphernalia would be significantly and demonstrably harm the character and appearance of the landscape setting (which has very significant protected status being in the National Landscape) irrespective of the scheme presented at technical details stage. A subsequent section of this report deals specifically with the impact on the protected landscape.

Principle in terms of Sustainability

In sustainability terms, whilst Crockerton is defined as a small village within the adopted Core Strategy, the pattern of the settlement is dispersed and accessibility to a range of services and facilities from the site is severely limited. Whilst it would be possible to access the primary school on foot (approx. 300 metres), doing so would involve walking along a narrow unlit rural highway, and future occupiers of the proposed dwelling would likely be heavily reliant on private motorised vehicles for almost all trips to access employment, services and facilities.

Conclusion

The site is located outside of defined settlement limits and is located in a protected landscape – the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. The circumstances whereby unplanned

residential development can be supported in small villages, or the open countryside is set out within Core Policy 2 in terms of its visual impact and functional relationship to the village. The proposed location and land use would represent a fundamental conflict with the established character and function of the area. This harm relates to the principle of development and could not reasonably be addressed through the submission of detailed proposals at the Technical Details Consent stage.

Having regard to the spatial strategy set out in the development plan and relevant national policy, it is considered that the location of the site is unacceptable in principle for the proposed land use having regard to access to services and facilities. The site's location, being insufficiently related to the settlement and its services, represents a fundamental conflict with the development plan's spatial strategy. This concern relates to the principle of development and could not reasonably be resolved through a subsequent Technical Details Consent application. The weight to be afforded the policy conflict is set out in the planning balance.

In this case, the proposed quantum of development of one dwelling would represent the minimum level of housing. No detailed conclusions are drawn at this stage regarding layout, or the precise form of development, as these matters fall to be considered through a subsequent Technical Details Consent application. The assessment at this stage is limited to whether the amount of development proposed could reasonably be accommodated in principle on the site.

Clearly as the site comprises a 0.19 ha section of an open field, the siting of a single dwelling could be physically accommodated in principle, but the 1-house development would be fundamentally at odds with the Council's adopted spatial strategy, which merits significant weight. The development would encroach into the countryside and harm the protected national landscape and would comprise a development with limited access to services and facilities. These concerns relate to the principle of a single dwelling and therefore could not reasonably be resolved through the submission of detailed proposals at a later stage for a lesser number of dwellings. Having regard to the development plan and relevant national policy, it is considered that the amount of development proposed is unacceptable in principle taking into account location and land use.

Impact on the National Landscape

Core Policy 51 of the adopted Core Strategy outlines that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character. The policy requires applications to demonstrate how development proposals conserve and where possible enhance landscape character through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures. Core Policy 57 requires a high standard of design in all new developments and states that development should respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape.

Further to this, NPPF Paragraph 187 b) states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing

landscape and scenic beauty in, amongst others, National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection. The paragraph continues by stressing that:

'The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.'

The National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) are designated primarily for the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. Natural beauty is defined broadly and includes not only scenic quality, but also wildlife, geology, landform, cultural heritage, historic features, tranquillity, and dark night skies.

Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, as amended by Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, the local planning authority (LPA) has a statutory duty to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty when exercising any function affecting land within a National Landscape.

The proposal would be visible across open fields and the construction of a dwelling at the site identified along with the expected residential paraphernalia and associated development (e.g. bin storage, access drive, car parking, would lead to landscape harm. The proposed development would have an urbanising impact through the introduction of a new dwelling at this rural location, which would result in the diminution of the protected landscape. Rather than seeking to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing, this development would result in harm.

Conclusion

The proposal would not conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape, and the development fails to comply with local and national policy and s85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. This manifests as a strong reason for refusing the application when tested against NPPF para 11 d i).

Impact on Ecology/Protected Sites

The site comprises an area of grassland with trees and hedges, connected to a wider field to the north and west, and neighboured by dwellings to the east.

Certain types of development are excluded from the grant of permission in principle. Habitat development is one such exclusion which is defined by Article 5B(5) of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the Order) as including development, which discounting mitigation measures, is likely to have a significant effect on a qualifying European site under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the Habitats Regulations).

River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Hampshire Catchment

This development falls within the catchment of the River Avon SAC and has potential to cause adverse effects alone or in combination with other developments through discharge of phosphorus in wastewater. Appropriate Assessment must be carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (the LPA) to determine the potential significant effects, and the suitability of any measures proposed to avoid or mitigate those effects.

Paragraph 1A of regulation 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 states that the assessment provisions apply to “granting permission in principle under section 59A of the TCPA 1990 (Development orders: permission in principle)”. This makes it clear that the LPA must make an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the implications of the proposal before any Permission in Principle is authorised. Further information can be found within the Government’s guidance for applications for permission in principle.

A positive conclusion to the Habitats Regulations Assessment requires certainty that the development proposals will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site. The submitted nutrient budget (Natural England Nutrient Neutrality budget calculator for the River Avon SAC, uploaded 11/05/2026) calculates a total phosphorus budget of 0.66 kg TP/year.

However, the following issues must be addressed:

- PTP:
 - The location and PIA certificate of this PTP have not been provided.
 - When considering the feasibility of a PTP, we also need to know whether the PTP will discharge into a watercourse or drainage field, and, if the latter, whether a suitable drainage field can be installed. This is because there can be no built structure on top of a drainage field, and the drainage field must be located a certain distance from the proposed dwelling and any neighbouring dwellings.
 - The PTP itself must also be a set distance away from the dwellings. These requirements are set out in the Building Regulations 2010 ‘Drainage and waste disposal’. Demonstration that it will be possible to achieve this is needed, and it is advised that the LPA also consults Drainage on this matter.
- Land use:
 - The current land use is entered as “lowland”. As per the government’s guidance page for nutrient calculators (Using the nutrient neutrality calculators - GOV.UK), the “lowland” land type comprises “Agricultural areas on which cattle, sheep and other grazing livestock are farmed. A holding is classified as lowland if 50% or more of its area is classified as a lowland grazing area”. It is unclear whether the site is used for farming livestock. Clarification is required.

Irrespective of the above, the nutrient calculator indicates that mitigation would be required to achieve nutrient neutrality (as there is a surplus currently calculated as 0.66 kg TP/year), alongside the installation of a PTP.

At this stage, it is unclear whether the applicant would seek to use the Council’s scheme for phosphorus credits, or if they intend to implement / confirm bespoke mitigation.

Overall, the application does not demonstrate how the impacts of an increase in phosphorus would be mitigated, and, therefore, Appropriate Assessment cannot be finalised with a positive conclusion.

On this basis, as the HRA is not capable of concluding no adverse effects on the integrity of the protected site, the grant of permission through the Permission in Principle route cannot be given.

This concern relates to the principle of development and could not reasonably be resolved through a subsequent Technical Details Consent application. Neither could it be addressed by a legal agreement given the uncertainty of measures needed to secure mitigation.

Protected species and habitats

The site and surrounding area may be suitable for use by bats, badgers, nesting birds, amphibians and reptiles. Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate:

- i. No net loss of local biodiversity resource and
- ii. Secure the integrity of local ecological networks

The scope of permission in principle is generally limited to location, land use and amount of development. At the technical details consent stage, evidence to demonstrate that there will be no net loss of local biodiversity resource, and that the integrity of ecological networks will be maintained, must be submitted for review by the LPA's ecology team. Information submitted at that stage should include a preliminary ecological assessment and, ideally, a biodiversity enhancement plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The grant of permission in principle is not a grant of planning permission, and so the mandatory biodiversity gain requirement does not apply at this stage. The subsequent technical details consent may be subject to the biodiversity gain condition. Please note that applications subject to the biodiversity gain condition must be accompanied by minimum information set out in Article 7 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, which includes:

- the completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations of the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat on the date of application (or proposed earlier date) including the publication date of the biodiversity metric used to calculate that value;
 - a description of any irreplaceable habitat (as set out in column 1 of the Schedule to the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) on the land to which the application relates, that exists on the date of application, (or an earlier date);
- and
- plan(s), drawn to an identified scale and showing the direction of North, showing onsite habitat existing on the date of application (or earlier proposed date), including any irreplaceable habitat (if applicable).

Note: this is a summary, please refer to Paragraph: 011 Biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK for full details.

If the applicant considers that the development would not be subject to the biodiversity gain condition, Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the applicant must provide a statement as part of the planning application setting out the reasons why they believe this is

the case. Submission of a completed metric calculation tool may be necessary to evidence the statement.

Conclusion

Whilst matters relating to protected species and BNG could be addressed by submissions at Technical Details stage, the impact on a Protected Site and lack of certainty in terms of mitigation cannot be dealt with through the stage 1 Permission in Principle route.

5 Year Housing Land Supply

The December 2024 issued NPPF confirms that the Council needs to provide a five-year Housing Land Supply (HLS). As a result of changes to the way housing need is calculated, following changes made by the Government in late 2024, the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

Currently the Council's published data (with a baseline date of April 2025) confirms that the Council can demonstrate a 2.8-year HLS.

As a result of this housing land supply shortfall, NPPF paragraph 11 is engaged and local plan policies which seek to restrict the supply of housing whilst there is a supply deficit should be considered 'out of-date' and full weight cannot be afforded to these restrictive policies.

As set out within the NPPF, the presumption in favour of sustainable development (the 'tilted balance') set out in paragraph 11d) ii. states that permission should be granted for (new housing) development proposals unless "*any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits*" or the 'protection policies' detailed in Footnote 7 of the Framework apply.

In this particular case, multiple protections are engaged, namely habitat sites and the National Landscape in addition to conflict with housing and sustainability policies. The implications of the current housing land supply position, and in particular the weight to be attributed to the development plan policies, must be taken into account when determining applications for new housing. The weight to be attributed to such policies is a matter of judgment for the decision maker and it is considered that weight should still be afforded to the spatial strategy policies of the development plan as detailed in the section 'Planning Balance' below.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The application seeks Permission in Principle for development of one single-storey dwelling on the site.

In determining a Permission in Principle application, the Local Planning Authority is required to assess only the location of the development, the proposed land use, the amount of development, and whether there are any overriding constraints which would clearly and demonstrably prevent development from coming forward in principle.

Having considered the application against the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, it is concluded that the proposed development is not acceptable in principle. The concerns identified go to the fundamental suitability of the site for development,

rather than to matters that could reasonably be resolved through the submission of detailed proposals at a later stage.

The Local Planning Authority is currently unable to demonstrate a deliverable five-year supply of housing land. In such circumstances, national planning policy confirms that the delivery of new housing attracts significant weight as a material consideration.

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless one of the exceptions in paragraph 11(d) applies.

In this case, it is acknowledged that the absence of a five-year housing land supply would ordinarily engage the tilted balance under paragraph 11(d). However, paragraph 11(d)(i) provides that the presumption does not automatically apply where the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance, as defined in footnote 7, provide a strong reason for refusing the development.

The PIP proposal would deliver a very modest level of public benefit through the provision of one new dwelling, which, would if approved and ultimately led to the erection of a house, make a small contribution to addressing the shortfall in housing supply. In addition, some economic benefits would arise during the construction phase and through the subsequent occupation of the dwellings, including potential support for local services and businesses. Overall, these benefits can be given moderate weight in the planning balance.

However, and fundamentally, the proposal would affect a Protected Habitat Site, and it has not been demonstrated that the development would not have, either alone, or in combination with other development, likely significant adverse effects on the SAC and its qualifying features. As there is uncertainty regarding the delivery of on-site mitigation through a PTP and there is no mechanism to secure credits for off-site mitigation to offset the effects, the Permission in Principle route is not considered appropriate.

Furthermore, the proposal would result in harm to the National Landscape which is identified in footnote 7 of the Framework as an area or asset of importance. The relevant protective policies of the Framework are fully engaged and carry full and very significant weight.

The scheme would result in the urbanisation of the open countryside with the loss of rural character within the rural landscape and the proposed development would neither conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape (and thus fail to satisfy the duty imposed by s85 of the CROW Act) and no would it protect the rural character of the area. This harm must be given significant weight in the planning balance.

Accordingly, the Council, whilst appreciating the HLS deficit, has concluded that for the purposes of determining this PIP application, the presumption in favour of sustainable development, including the tilted balance, as set out within the NPPF is not engaged.

The identified harm to the National Landscape and absence of mitigation in respect of the integrity of a Habitat site both provide strong reasons for refusing the development, notwithstanding the absence of a five-year housing land supply.

Additionally, the location of the site, being somewhat remote from the majority of service and facilities, is contrary to the aims of sustainability embodied in the Framework and Wiltshire Core Strategies in conflict with settlement strategy and moderate weight is also given in the overall planning balance to such harm.

The modest benefits to housing land supply are demonstrably and significantly outweighed by the harm which would result from the principle of granting a new residential dwelling in this location.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposal conflicts with the development plan and NPPF when assessed against the statutory framework for Permission in Principle. The harm identified relates to the principle of development and could not reasonably be addressed or overcome through the submission of a subsequent application for Technical Details Consent. Permission in Principle should therefore be refused. There are no material considerations, including housing land supply, that indicate a decision other than refusal should be made.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Permission in Principle be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. The application site lies within the open countryside, outside any defined settlement boundary. The proposed dwelling would be sited in an unsustainable location with limited access to services, facilities and employment opportunities. Having regard to the rural nature of the surrounding highway network, which is unlit and lacks pedestrian footways, and limited services and facilities within the small village settlement of Crockerton, the site is unlikely to be readily accessible by public transport, walking or cycling and would therefore be heavily reliant on the private motor car to meet day-to-day needs. As a result, the proposal would fail to promote sustainable patterns of development and would conflict with local and national planning objectives that seek to reduce the need to travel, minimise reliance on private motor vehicles and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Core Policies 2, 31, 60 and 61 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (January 2015) and would fail to achieve sustainable development when assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework, with particular regard to paragraphs 109, 110 and 111.
2. The proposed development would introduce a new dwelling into an undeveloped area of the open countryside within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). By reason of the undeveloped rural location, the proposal residential land use comprising a single new domestic building and associated residential curtilage and paraphernalia would urbanise and erode the rural character and appearance of the site and its immediate surroundings, resulting in harm to the natural beauty, scenic quality and special landscape character of this nationally protected landscape. The proposal therefore fails to conserve and enhance the

National Landscape and would conflict with Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular paragraphs 187 and 189, which require great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty within National Landscapes. In addition, the proposal would be contrary to the statutory duty under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act to seek to further the purposes of protected landscapes as amended by Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.

3. The site is situated within the River Avon SAC catchment. Advice from Natural England indicates that every permission that results in a net increase in foul water entering the catchment as a result of residential development could result in increased nutrients entering the European Protected Site causing further deterioration to it. In the absence of detailed proposals to mitigate the impact of these increased nutrients or mechanism to secure such mitigation the Council as a competent authority cannot conclude that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of this European Site as a result of the development. The proposal would therefore conflict with Wiltshire Core Strategy policies CP50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and CP69 (Protection of the River Avon SAC); and paragraphs 192-195 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.