

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION OFFICER DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02788
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full Planning Permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Centre Of Pond 86m From 33 Greenway 54m From Greenway, Greenway, Tockenham, SN4 7PW
DESCRIPTION:	Change of use of land from agricultural to a mixed use of agriculture and equestrian
RECOMMENDATION:	APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

PROPOSAL

Changes to the red line were made 6 July 2026 and other additional information submitted during the life of the application; interested parties were notified of all new information.

The application seeks planning permission for the material change of use of 0.5 acres (0.2ha) of agricultural land to a mixed use of agriculture and equestrian. The applicant has confirmed that the equestrian use would be for their private use, for the keeping of up to three horses, rather than for a commercial nature. No operational development forms part of the development for which permission is sought, although temporary, moveable structures and buildings would be brought onto the land to facilitate the use and details/examples of which have been provided.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is part of a roughly L-shaped field, approx. 250m east of the hamlet of Tockenham. Its setting is characterised by its bucolic landscape surroundings. It is in the open countryside of Tockenham Parish. Relevant designations and constraints include public footpaths (TOCK7 and TOCK8) and Flood Zone 1 where groundwater levels are between 0.025m and 0.5m below the ground surface.

PLANNING HISTORY

PL/2025/09733 - Erection of agricultural building and associated engineering operations for private way, hardstanding and bund (PRIOR APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED 22/12/2025).

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS):

- Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy (CP1)
- Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy (CP2)
- Core Policy 19: Spatial Strategy for the Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Community Area (CP19)
- Core Policy 48: Supporting Rural Life (CP48)
- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity (CP50)
- Core Policy 51: Landscape (CP51)
- Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure (CP52)
- Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping (CP57)
- Core Policy 60: Sustainable Transport (CP60)
- Core Policy 61: Transport and new development (CP61)
- Core Policy 62: Development Impacts on the Transport Network (CP62)
- Core Policy 64: Demand Management (CP64)
- Core Policy 67: Flood Risk (CP67)

Saved policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 (NWLP)

- Policy NE14: Trees, site features and the control of new development

Tockenham Neighbourhood Plan – Made May 2021

- Policy 1: New and Existing Employment
- Policy 2: Farm and Equestrian Diversification
- Policy 6: Settlement Identity
- Policy 7: Special Areas and Views

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Design Guide (NDG)

Wiltshire Design Guide SPD

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The following consultees and interested parties were invited to comment on the application:

Tockenham Parish Council – No objection, commenting that the use should remain for the applicants' personal horses only and they raise concerns regarding an unauthorised office shed, insufficient details on the horse shelter (including height, visual impact, location and its effectively permanent nature), the lack of information on horse numbers, manure storage and water supply, and potential impacts on neighbouring properties from noise, odour and lighting. They also question the

relevance of NPPF business-related policy support and raises concerns about the associated barn application, reinforced track, potential heavy vehicle use, and suitability of access via the narrow C120 (12/06/2026).

Wiltshire Council's Highways Team – Comment, that the proposed use does not pose an in-principle objection on highways grounds, that access to the land needs to be clarified, that clarification of the intensity of the use is required to quantify the potential trip generation and need for improvements to the highway access, suggesting conditions in absence of further information to ensure the use is restricted to private equestrian use and to ensure improvements to the access, and an informative about highways licences (09/06/2026). Comment, deferring to earlier comment (29/07/2026).

REPRESENTATIONS

Immediate neighbouring dwellings were notified of the application, and a site notice was displayed on 27 May 2026. Four letters of representation were made by members of the public (1 x No objection – subject to condition, 1 x Support, 2 x Comment). The comments therein are summarised as follows:

- That the location of the portable stable and horse shelter would impair the views enjoyed from neighbouring back gardens;
- That it is misleading that the portable stable block is not a permanent structure as it would form a permanent feature of the land;
- That noise and light pollution may arise from the proposed stable building reducing the tranquillity enjoyed by neighbouring land;
- That the proposed location is at the furthest point from the access and new barn (qv PL/2025/09733) built for storage of hay;
- That the new barn (qv PL/2025/09733) would be used for machinery and hay in connection with keeping of horses and sheep and growing hay on the land;
- That keeping horses for personal recreational use is not a business or enterprise so the applicant's supporting statements are misleading;
- That a shed used as an office and not part of the application has been installed on site;
- That the access road (qv PL/2025/09733) being built is steeper than may be required;
- That the full dimension and location of the portable stable should be provided to understand the relationship to neighbours and surrounding landscape;
- That consideration be given to ongoing maintenance of drainage ditches and the management of surface water run off adjoining neighbouring land;
- That the development would benefit the area as the applicant supports the local agricultural community through their knowledge, experience and stewardship of the land;

- That the change of use is good, would support private recreation, food production and fits into the local environment;
- That neighbours understand why the location is suitable for keeping horses and that the applicant's reasonable management measures would minimise disruption for neighbours; and
- That the supporting documents make inaccurate assumptions about the visibility and visual impact of the moveable field shelter.

ASSESSMENT

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Preliminary matters

Representations have drawn attention to an access track and barn, being implemented on site following a prior approval process under reference PL/2025/09733, and an office/shed that has been placed on the land. The Local Planning Authority can be satisfied that neither matter is material to consideration of this application.

Principle of development

The application site is in Tockenham Parish and therefore Core Policy 1, 2 and 19 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) are relevant for setting out a spatial strategy for the location and distribution of development in the area.

The parish of Tockenham contains no settlements defined under CP19. Accordingly, the site is outside of the limits of development defined by CP1 and in open countryside, where development is strictly controlled.

CP2 states that, other than in circumstances as permitted by other policies within the development plan, as set out in paragraph 4.25, development will not be permitted outside defined limits of development.

Policy 1 of the Tockenham Neighbourhood Plan (TNP) supports development for the change of use of land to provide new local trade or employment opportunities subject to relevant criteria. Policy 2 supports new employment uses to diversity and support the continued use of a farm or equestrian business subject to criteria.

The proposed development consists in the material change of use of land from agriculture to a mixed use of equestrian and agriculture. The application clarifies that the equestrian use would be for the private keeping and grazing of the applicant's horses, rather than as part of a commercial operation.

Of the exception policies, only CP48 is of some relevance in so far as it provides support for development required to support rural life. However, the use of land for private equestrian purposes is not a type of development expressly supported by the policy.

Policy 1 and 2 of the TNP are aimed at supporting new employment uses or existing farm or equestrian businesses. As such, they are also of limited relevance.

On its merits, the proposed mixed use would be compatible with the rural character of the surrounding area; it would be of a nature one would reasonably expect to find in a countryside location, and it is largely dependent on such a location. Local residents suggest that supporting the applicant's use of the land would secure social and environmental benefits, albeit limited.

The applicant's supporting documents describe the need for the development in supporting their rural life. The scale of the equestrian use for private keeping of horses on the land is not excessive and is unlikely to generate a material increase in trips by private vehicles above the existing baseline.

Therefore, whilst the site lies outside any defined limits of development, the development comprises the introduction of modest private equestrian use to the existing agricultural use of land, the combination of which is intrinsically rural in nature and would not undermine the objectives of the settlement strategy. It is therefore considered acceptable in principle having regard to the development plan when read as a whole.

For these reasons, it would not conflict with the aims of CP1, CP2, CP19, CP57 (xiv), CP60 and CP61 of the WCS, nor with CP48 or Policy 1 and 2 of the TNP in so far as they are relevant. These policies together, and among other things, seek to ensure development is located strategically and sustainably to protect and support the character and function of Wiltshire's countryside and communities.

Local character and appearance

Core Policy 51 and 57 of the WCS seek to ensure all new development, including a change of use, responds positively to the character and appearance of Wiltshire's built environment and natural landscapes. Among other things, this means requiring a high standard of design by ensuring a positive response to the features of the site itself and its landscape or townscape setting.

Policy 6 of the TNP seeks to ensure new development is sensitive to the defining rural characteristics of the area, having regard to the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (NWLCA), and that they demonstrably maintain its character, natural environment and landscape setting.

For similar aims, Policy 7 of the TNP identifies area of land and features that contribute to the sense of place, character and community of the area and seeks to ensure development does not compromise their essential character.

The site forms part of a roughly L-shaped agricultural field southeast of the hamlet of Tockenham.

It lies within the Character Area 13 (Lyneham Hills) of the NWLCA, the main characteristics of which include its prominent scarp slope to north, occasional nucleated settlements and scattered rural dwellings, intact hedgerow systems, and expansive panoramas across lower lying land.

The field is within a special area and view protected by Policy 7 of the TNP, where it aims to protect the rural scenic views toward Clyffe Hanging from unsympathetic development.

A public footpath follows the northern border of the field, from which the expansive rural openness of the field, including the site, and scenic views across the lower lying land beyond, can be readily appreciated and reinforce the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

The use of the land for the grazing and keeping of horses would not materially alter the essential character of the field as agricultural land. Indeed, horses grazing in a rural landscape would be reasonably expected and not incongruous and particularly a maximum of three horses as intended by the applicant. Furthermore, this part of the wider field is relatively discrete and bordered by hedgerows on two sides.

Notwithstanding this, equestrian uses can result in visual clutter through the proliferation of shelters, stables, hardstandings and means of enclosure. This application does not, however, seek permission for any operational development.

The applicant has indicated that a modest level of ancillary infrastructure would be required to facilitate the proposed use. They have provided details of temporary means of enclosure and a moveable stable block that would be placed on the land, and an indicative layout is provided which would be cyclically reconfigured for grazing purposes.

The submitted details of the means of enclosure and stable block confirm their temporary and moveable nature. Given the sites' visibility from a public footpath and its location within a locally valued landscape area, it is reasonable and necessary to impose controls over the number of horses, moveable structures and the erection of permanent means of enclosure associated with the use. Such controls are necessary to ensure that the proposal does not give rise to visual harm through the gradual intensification of the use and proliferation of associated paraphernalia and built form.

Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the open and rural character of the field and would not compromise the landscape qualities of the Lyneham Hills Character Area or the special views identified by Policy 7 of the TNP. The proposal therefore accords with CP51 and CP57 of the WCS and Policies 6 and 7 of the TNP.

Residential amenity

Core Policy 57 (vii) of the WCS seeks to ensure that the design of new development has regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants and that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself.

The closest residential dwellings to the application site are Binall, Stables Binall, and Miracle Trees (all to southeast), and Drum Lane House (to northwest).

The site forms a corner of a larger agricultural field but borders neighbouring land to south and west sides. There is a considerable degree of separation between the application site and the neighbouring dwellinghouses and their curtilages, whereas the intervening land appears to be agricultural rather than domestic garden. Indeed, no evidence has been found that the adjoining neighbouring land is lawfully used for residential purposes.

The application site is already used for agriculture. The proposed equestrian use with which it would mix would be low level and intensity, for the keeping of up to three horses. No operational development is proposed, but the use would be facilitated by temporary and moveable means of enclosure and stable block.

Given the intensity and siting of the proposed use, being sufficiently distant from residential receptors the Council does not consider it necessary to condition details for the management of manure. Noise from the equestrian use would be low level on account of the number of horses and it being a private use. Vehicular movements would also be relatively few, ensuring noise and light intrusion is not detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring residential land. Odours would also be low level due to the limited number of horses and otherwise managed by the applicant as part of good horse keeping.

In any case, noises and smells from animals would not be incongruous with the rural surroundings within which they would be experienced from living areas of neighbouring dwellinghouses. Conditions can nonetheless control the intensity of the use by controlling the number of horses, in the interest of amenity.

Although representations have raised concerns in respect of the visual impact of the moveable stable block, planning legislation does not protect private views. The applicant has provided indicative plans but, as it would be moveable, its location cannot be controlled. Nonetheless, any deviation or introduction of a larger, more permanent building form may be development requiring planning permission.

Given the degree of separation between the application site and sensitive areas of neighbouring dwellinghouses, the potential visual impact would not cause an unacceptable loss of amenity. Conditions can be used to control the number of moveable structures in the interest of amenity.

Concerns are also raised in terms of light pollution. The development does not incorporate any lighting proposals, although the use may require some amount of lighting during darker months or hours. Such lighting is unlikely to be excessive; the moveable stable block would not have connection to utilities and vehicular headlights would be relatively low level and obscured by boundary foliage.

The nature of the use, and the absence of permanent built form, would ensure no detriment to the privacy, natural light or outlook enjoyed by neighbouring dwellinghouses, particularly on account of the considerable separation distances and intervening features and land.

The development would not harm the living conditions enjoyed by occupants of the site itself or neighbouring land now, particularly in terms of noise, smells, light intrusion, and privacy. Subject to recommended conditions, it would satisfy the expectations of adopted design guidance and the aims of CP57 (vii) of the WCS.

Highway matters

Wiltshire Council's Highways Team raised questions regarding the number of trips generated by the development and the suitability of the existing field access to accommodate those movements and ensure safe means of access to and from the highway. The Parish Council raised access as a concern.

As the equestrian use would be for the private enjoyment of the applicant, the number of vehicle movements to and from the site would be low. Conditions can be used to ensure the equestrian use serves only for private enjoyment, rather than a commercial

use, subject to which the existing access is considered to ensure safe means of access.

Furthermore, the development would not conflict with the aims of the development plan to reduce reliance on private vehicles due to its low intensity. For these reasons, the development would not conflict with CP57 (xiv), CP60, CP61 or CP62 of the WCS.

Drainage and flood risk

The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 and an area of medium risk for groundwater flooding. However, the proposed use of land would be of a similar vulnerability classification to its existing situation and there would be no permanent loss of site permeability as no operational development is proposed.

Although representations raise concerns around surface water run off and flooding to adjoining land, the Local Planning Authority has sufficient information on which to conclude that the site and adjoining land would not be put at materially greater risk of flooding by the development. Accordingly, the development would not conflict with CP67 of the WCS.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The applicant has claimed the de minimis exemption from the requirement to deliver 10% BNG, introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). The proposed use of land would cause no permanent loss of habitat and, on that basis, the Local Planning Authority can be satisfied the exemption applies in this case.

Other matters

The Parish Council have suggested that there is an absence of information in relation to how water will be supplied to horses. This matter will be for the applicant to manage as part of the proposed use of land.

Representations also raise questions about inaccurate assumptions in the applicant's supporting documents. Regard has been had to the areas of ambiguity identified by interested parties in carrying out the assessment.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The development would have acceptable effects in respect of matters of acknowledged importance to the public interest, subject to the recommended conditions. Furthermore, it would not conflict with the development plan, and other material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in

accordance with the development plan. The statutory requirements have therefore been fulfilled, and the application should be supported.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

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

Location Plan. Received 6 Jul 2026.

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

3. The site shall be used for agricultural purposes and/or private equestrian purposes comprising the keeping and grazing of horses on the land and for no other purpose. The land shall at no time be used for any commercial equestrian purpose whatsoever, including for livery, or in connection with equestrian tuition or leisure rides.

REASON: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, and highway safety.

4. No more than three [3] horses shall be kept on the land at any time.

REASON: The Local Planning Authority had regard to the low level and intensity of the use in concluding that its effect on the matters of acknowledged importance to the public interest were acceptable, including the character and appearance of the area, the amenities of adjoining land, and highway safety.

5. No more than one [1] mobile or temporary structure or building relating to the keeping of horses shall be placed, sited or stored on the land at any time.

REASON: The Local Planning Authority had regard to the low level and intensity of the use in concluding that its effect on the matters of acknowledged importance to the public interest were acceptable, including the character and appearance of the area, the amenities of adjoining land.

6. There shall be no parking of horse boxes, caravans, trailers or other vehicles during the hours between dusk and dawn on the site.

REASON: In order to protect the living conditions of nearby residents and/or the rural character of the area

7. No external lighting shall be installed within the application site unless and until details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any external lighting shall be fitted with passive infrared (PIR) motion sensors and shall only illuminate when activated by movement and shall not be continuously illuminated.

REASON: To protect residential amenity, the rural character of the area and biodiversity interests.

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking or reenacting or amending those Orders with or without modification), no

permanent fences, walls, gates or other means of enclosure shall be erected on the land the use of which is hereby permitted.

REASON: The site is located in a locally valued rural landscape where uncontrolled permanent means of enclosure could result in the harmful subdivision and urbanisation of the land.

Informatives to Applicant:

1. The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Wiltshire Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. For further information on exempt developments please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements is considered to apply.

2. The applicant is advised that any alterations or improvements to the public highway that may be necessary as part of the development hereby permitted will require a licence from the Highways Authority. The consent hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out works on the highway. The applicant is advised that a licence will be required from Wiltshire's Highway Authority before any works are carried out on any footway, footpath, carriageway, verge or other land forming part of the highway. Please contact our Vehicle Crossing Team on vehicleaccess@wiltshire.gov.uk and/or 01225 713352 or visit their website at <http://wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-streets> to make an application.