

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/07551
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Oxleaze Business Park, Greenhill, Royal Wootton Bassett, SN4 8EH
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Development of Employment Land and Buildings
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site comprises an established employment site (Oxleaze Business Park) located within open countryside to the north of Greenhill, Royal Wootton Bassett. The site lies outside of any defined settlement boundary.

Notwithstanding its rural location, the site is identified within the Lydiard Millicent Neighbourhood Plan as a designated employment area (Blackfords Yard), where the retention and expansion of employment uses is supported in principle.

The site is previously developed and largely comprises buildings, yards and extensive areas of hardstanding associated with its established commercial use. Built form is varied in scale and appearance, reflecting its incremental development, and is contained by mature boundary vegetation which provides effective screening. Land levels rise towards the north of the site.



Aerial of site

The surrounding area is rural in character, with agricultural land and sporadic residential development. Matthew's Copse lies to the north. To the south-east is a paddock containing

two dwellings approximately 45 metres from the site, with a further dwelling adjoining the southern boundary. Additional residential properties and farm buildings are located to the south-west.

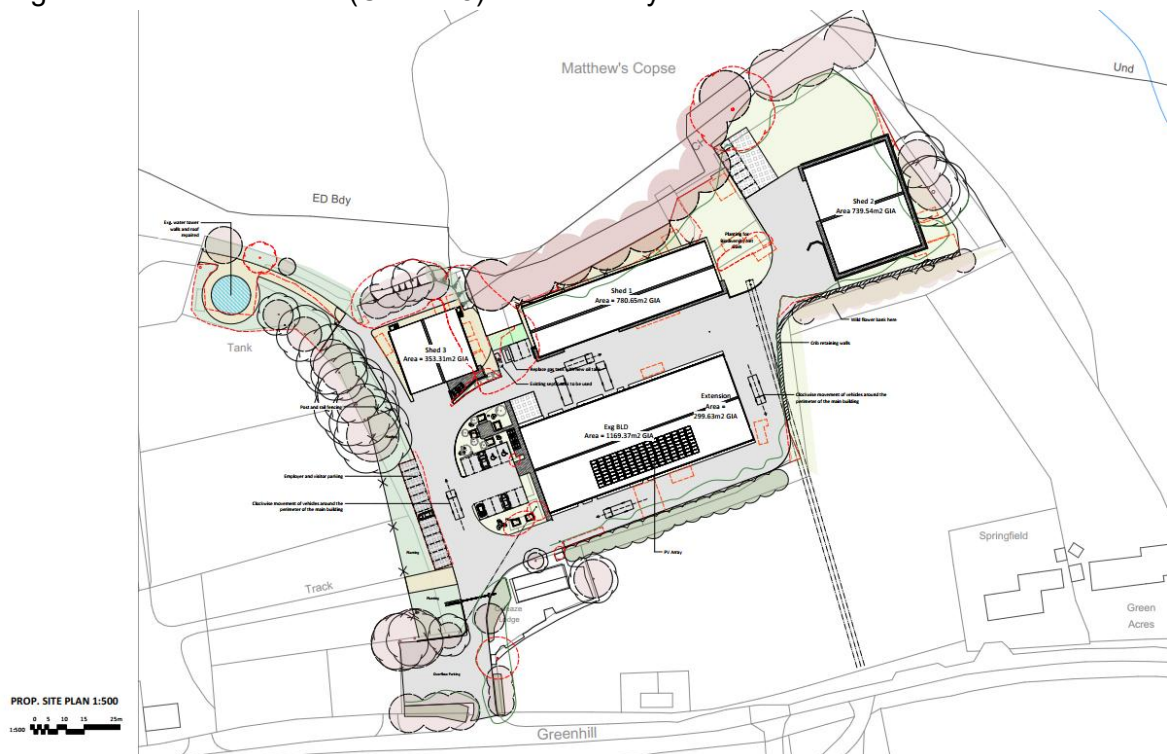
The site is subject to a number of environmental constraints. Parts of the site fall within areas at risk of surface water flooding (1 in 100 year event plus climate change allowance). Areas of the site are also identified as having potential groundwater emergence, with localised areas where groundwater levels are close to the surface, alongside areas of negligible groundwater risk. The site lies within Source Protection Zone 2c.

The site is also located within the 9.4km recreational buffer zone of the North Meadow SAC. Overall, the site is characterised as a visually contained, previously developed employment site within the open countryside, influenced by surrounding vegetation, nearby residential receptors and identified environmental constraints.

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the redevelopment of the existing employment site to provide upgraded employment land and buildings.

The development comprises the erection of three warehouse buildings, together with the extension, alteration and refurbishment of the existing main building, to provide primarily storage and distribution uses (Class B8) with ancillary office accommodation.



Proposed site layout

The proposals include the rationalisation of the existing layout, utilising the established access and hardstanding to provide a managed one-way circulation system, parking, servicing and associated infrastructure, including EV charging and cycle provision.

The buildings are of functional industrial design, incorporating metal cladding with limited stone detailing, alongside minor hard and soft landscaping works.

The submission includes detailed plans and elevations which define the scale and height of the proposed buildings.

Overall, the development results in an increase in employment floorspace and a more coherent and efficient use of the site.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
N/88/01239/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Refused Date: 27/6/1988 – CONSTRUCT NEW COMPOST/STORAGE BUILDING. USE OF EXISTING BUILDING IN CONNECTION WITH LANDSCAPE BUSINESS
14/05506/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 29/4/2015 – Change of Use to Part of Yard to Bus/Coach Yard (Retrospective)
N/81/00609/F - Historic apps 1974 to 1983 Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 1/6/1981 – ERECTION OF BUILDING FOR USE IN CONNECTION WITH TURF PRODUCTION, EXTENSION OF ACCESS ROAD AND OTHER ANCILLARY WORKS.
N/82/00230/F - Historic apps 1974 to 1983 Decision - Approve Date: 18/3/1982 – ERECTION OF CANOPY TO BUILDING TO PROVIDE COVERED BAY AREA

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- National Design Guide

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 3 Infrastructure Requirements;
- Core Policy 19 Spatial Strategy Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Community Area

- Core Policy 34 Additional Employment Land
- Core Policy 35 Existing Employment Land
- Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy;
- Core Policy 48 Supporting Rural Life
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 52 Green Infrastructure
- Core Policy 55 Air Quality;
- Core Policy 56 Contaminated Land;
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network;
- Core Policy 63 Transport Strategies
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk;
- Core Policy 68 Water Resources;

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan Policies

At Full Council on 19 May, the elected members of Wiltshire Council agreed to withdraw the emerging WLP. It will now be subject to a legal process to finalise its withdrawal – which is likely to happen in July or August (2026). The said Plan has no material weight for the purposes of the application.

Neighbourhood Plan:

LYDIARD MILLICENT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (2018 – 2036)

- LM6 – Local Shops and Employment Sites

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, adopted 2015 - including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy, adopted 2015
- Wiltshire Council's Waste Core Strategy, adopted July 2009
- Wiltshire Council's Waste Storage and Collection: Guidance for Developers Supplementary Planning Document, January 2017
- A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire: Wiltshire's Natural Environment Plan 2022-2030
- Wiltshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
 - Active travel infrastructure design standards 2022
 - Active travel parking standards and design guide 2022
- LTN1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design (July 2020)
- Air Quality SPD (July 2023)

ISSUES

The main issues that need to be addressed in this case include:

- Whether the proposal constitutes EIA development
- Whether the development is acceptable in principle (CP 1 and 2)
- Whether the scheme constitutes high quality design (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable impact upon the reasonable living conditions of the adjoining occupants (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would preserve or enhance the historic environment (CP 58)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable landscape impact (CP 51)
- Whether the proposal would have a negative effect upon highway safety, including if there is sufficient parking for the proposed development (CP 61 and 64)
- Whether the site can be adequately drained without increasing flood risk elsewhere (CP 67)
- Whether there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats (CP 50)
- Whether there will be any land contamination / air quality issues (CP 55)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Highways: No objection

WC Public Protection: No objection subject to conditions:

- The proposed uses (Classes B8, E(i) and E(ii)) are considered compatible with nearby residential receptors and therefore a full acoustic assessment is not required; restriction of any permission to these uses is supported.
- A condition is recommended to control noise from any plant and machinery, requiring a BS4142:2014 +A1:2019 assessment and demonstrating that noise levels achieve a rating level at least 5dB below background levels at the nearest residential receptor, with mitigation implemented prior to use.
- The proposed lighting scheme is acceptable, subject to a condition requiring validation by a suitably qualified ILP member to confirm compliance with Environmental Zone E2 standards.
- A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) condition is recommended to control impacts during construction, including site logistics, hours of working, noise and dust mitigation, and communication with residents. Standard restrictions on hours of work and a prohibition on burning on site are also advised.
- These measures are necessary to protect residential amenity in accordance with Core Policy 57.

WC Economic Development: Support

WC Drainage: No objection subject to condition

WC Arboriculture Officer: No objection subject to conditions

- The site is not within a Conservation Area and has no TPO-protected trees.
- Matthew's Copse adjacent to the site is identified as Priority Deciduous Woodland.
- No objection to the proposal in principle, as most trees are on site boundaries.
- Demolition near trees should follow a *top-down, pull-back* approach within the building footprint.
- An Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan should be secured by condition.

WC Ecologist: No objection subject to conditions. The site is largely developed, comprising existing commercial/industrial buildings and hardstanding, with only limited areas of low-value vegetation. Although the site adjoins the Restrop Farm and Brockhurst Wood SSSI and adjacent priority deciduous woodland, no direct impacts on these designated habitats are anticipated provided appropriate safeguards are secured. The Ecologist is satisfied that most previously requested Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) information has been addressed, although some clarification regarding the baseline habitat assessment remains and will need to be resolved through the Biodiversity Gain Plan process. Subject to a condition requiring a Construction Method Statement/Construction Ecological Management Plan to protect the adjacent SSSI, woodland and nesting birds during construction, the proposal is considered acceptable in biodiversity terms and compliant with relevant ecological policies.

Environment Agency: No objection subject to conditions

Highlights that the site's former landfill use and location on a shallow secondary aquifer present a potential risk to controlled waters, particularly during construction. It advises that the submitted reports demonstrate the risks can be managed, however further detailed information is required, and this should be secured via planning conditions. These include the submission and implementation of a phased contamination risk assessment, site investigation and remediation strategy, together with a verification report to confirm remediation has been completed. Additional safeguards are required in respect of unexpected contamination, borehole management, piling and foundation design to prevent groundwater pollution, and a foul drainage feasibility assessment to confirm an appropriate drainage solution. Without these controls, the Environment Agency advises it would maintain an objection on the basis of potential harm to groundwater in conflict with the NPPF.

WC Climate Team: No comments received at the time of drafting this report

WC Landscape: No comments received at the time of drafting this report

WC Waste: No comments received at the time of drafting this report

Wessex Water: No comments received at the time of drafting this report

Purton Parish Council: No objection

Lydiard Millicent Parish Council: No objection

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;
- An advertisement placed in the local press.

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

No third-party representations have been received at the time of drafting this report.

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.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended), the local planning authority has considered whether the proposed development constitutes EIA development.

No screening opinion was requested. However, the local planning authority has considered the scale and nature of the development as part of the application process and is satisfied that it does not constitute EIA development under the 2017 Regulations.

Principle of Development

Policy Context

Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy of the WCS establishes a hierarchy of settlements to guide where development should be focused. The policy prioritises growth in:

- Principal Settlements (e.g., Salisbury, Chippenham, Trowbridge) – main focus for strategic growth.
- Market Towns – support local services and employment; suitable for sustainable development.
- Local Service Centres – smaller towns and villages with a range of services; limited development supported.
- Large and Small Villages – development should be limited and respond to local needs.
- Outside the defined settlements – development is strictly controlled and generally not supported unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy of the WCS sets out how development will be distributed and delivered across Wiltshire. The policy emphasises:

- Sustainable patterns of growth, reducing the need to travel and supporting local services.
- Development should be plan-led, aligning with the settlement strategy and supported by infrastructure.
- Windfall development (not allocated in plans) must still comply with the principles of sustainable development.
- Development outside settlement boundaries is generally not permitted, unless it meets specific policy exceptions (as set out in paragraph 4.25 of the WCS).

Together, CP1 and CP2 ensure that new development is strategically located, sustainable, and supports the character and function of Wiltshire's communities.

Policy S5 of the NPPF relates to the principle of development outside of settlements and provides a list of developments which should be approved where the benefits of doing so would not be substantially outweighed by the adverse effects. This includes development for rural business S5(b), the redevelopment of previously developed land S5(d) and the development of land allocated for that purpose in the development plan S5(i).

Assessment

The application site lies within open countryside outside of any defined settlement boundary. As such, Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seek to strictly control new development in this location. However, the proposal relates to the redevelopment and intensification of an existing employment site, which is a material consideration in the assessment of principle.

Core Policy 34 supports the retention and expansion of existing employment uses, particularly where they contribute to the rural economy and are appropriately located. In this case, the development represents the consolidation and modernisation of an established business park, improving the quality and functionality of existing employment provision.

Furthermore, the site is specifically identified within the Lydiard Millicent Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 (Made - May 2021) as an established employment area (Blackfords Yard), where proposals to retain or expand employment uses are supported, subject to compliance with other policies of the development plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan confirms that, whilst Lydiard Millicent is defined as a "small village" where development is generally limited, support is given to employment uses that sustain the local economy and make effective use of existing sites. Development relating to employment is therefore considered acceptable in principle where it aligns with this objective.

The proposal has also received support from the Council's Economic Development team, who identify the scheme as enhancing local employment infrastructure and supporting business growth. There are no objections from the parish councils.

The site comprises an established employment area containing existing commercial buildings, hardstanding and associated infrastructure and therefore constitutes previously developed land. The proposal seeks to redevelop and intensify that existing employment site rather than introduce a new isolated commercial use into the countryside. In this regard, significant weight is afforded to the efficient use of previously developed land and the continued support of rural economic activity. The proposal would modernise and strengthen an established employment location whilst remaining within the existing developed envelope of the site. Accordingly, the development is consistent with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework relating to sustainable economic growth and the effective use of land.

Overall, whilst the site is located outside of a defined settlement, the proposal is not considered to represent inappropriate new development in the countryside. Instead, it constitutes the

redevelopment and enhancement of an existing, allocated employment site in accordance with both local and neighbourhood planning policy.

Conclusion

Although located outside of a defined settlement boundary where development is typically restricted under Core Policies 1 and 2, the proposal relates to the redevelopment and intensification of an established employment site.

The scheme is supported by Core Policy 34 and is consistent with the provisions of the Lydiard Millicent Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036 (Made - May 2021), which identifies the site as an existing employment area and supports the retention and expansion of such uses.

On balance, the principle of development is acceptable, representing a sustainable form of economic development that supports the rural economy, makes effective use of a previously developed site, and accords with the development plan when read as a whole.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy Context

Core Policy 57 of the WCS requires high-quality design that:

- Enhances local character.
- Responds to the natural, historic, and built environment.
- Retains important features (e.g., trees, hedges).
- Supports sustainable construction and compatibility with surrounding uses.
- Creates safe, legible, and accessible spaces.

The National Planning Policy Framework places significant emphasis on achieving well-designed places. Development should respond positively to local character and context, create attractive and functional environments, reinforce landscape and townscape character, and integrate opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, sustainable movement and climate resilience into the design process.

The Wiltshire Design Guide encourages sensitivity to local character, materials, and architectural styles and supports modern living standards while maintaining aesthetic and functional quality.

Building for a Healthy Life Framework promotes healthy, inclusive, and sustainable places. The document encourages:

- Walkability.
- Access to green space.
- Active design principles for well-being.

Assessment

The proposed development relates to an existing employment site and therefore does not represent a wholly new incursion into the countryside. The design approach reflects the site's established industrial character, with buildings adopting a simple, functional form typical of modern commercial development. The use of profiled metal cladding is appropriate to this

context, while the incorporation of Cotswold stone detailing provides a degree of visual interest and responds to the wider local vernacular.

The scale, massing and layout of the buildings are considered proportionate to the size of the site and its existing use. The proposals are arranged within the established built footprint, making effective use of previously developed land and avoiding encroachment into undeveloped areas. In this regard, the development maintains the overall spatial character of the site and respects its relationship with the surrounding landscape.

Existing hardstanding areas are largely retained and refurbished, thereby minimising the extent of new built form and reducing visual change. Limited additional landscaping is proposed, including boundary planting, which will assist in softening the appearance of the development and reinforcing existing screening, particularly along the site edges. This approach ensures that important landscape features, including boundary vegetation and adjacent woodland, are retained and protected.

The proposal would not adversely affect the character or appearance of the wider area, which is defined by a mix of rural and employment-related uses. The design is considered compatible with surrounding development and would not result in visual incongruity or harm.

In terms of wider design principles, the site layout remains legible and functional, supporting safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians within an established operational environment. Whilst the scheme is primarily industrial in nature, the retention of boundary vegetation and opportunities for additional planting contribute positively to visual amenity and the setting of the site. The proposals therefore align with the objectives of the Wiltshire Design Guide and Building for a Healthy Life, insofar as they promote a coherent, usable and well-integrated development within its context.

The development has been informed by the site's operational context, established employment function and surrounding landscape framework. The proposal retains and reinforces existing landscape structure, respects the established character of the business park and achieves an appropriate relationship with surrounding land uses. The scheme is therefore considered to contribute positively towards the creation of a well-designed place.

Overall, the proposals are considered to deliver an appropriate standard of design that is proportionate to the nature of the development and responsive to the site's characteristics, in accordance with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

The proposed development adopts a design approach that reflects the established industrial character of the site while incorporating elements that respond to the local context. The scale, form and materials are appropriate to the site's setting and would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the area.

The development makes effective use of previously developed land, retains important boundary features, and incorporates landscaping to soften visual impact and reinforce the

site's integration with its surroundings. The proposal is therefore considered to achieve an acceptable design outcome that is compatible with surrounding uses.

On this basis, the scheme is considered to comply with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, and relevant guidance within the Wiltshire Design Guide, and is therefore acceptable in respect of design and its impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Amenity

Policy Context

Core Policy 57 (Point vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future residents.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires planning decisions to secure a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and to ensure that development is appropriate to its location, taking into account the effects of pollution, noise, lighting and other impacts on health and quality of life.

These policies guide the assessment of amenity impacts, which will be considered in detail under the below headings.

Assessment

The proposed development comprises additional commercial units within an established commercial yard. The baseline context is therefore one of existing industrial activity, hardstanding and operational movements, rather than a quiet residential environment.

Overlooking / loss of privacy

The proposed buildings are commercial in nature and do not introduce openings or uses giving rise to overlooking of neighbouring residential properties. Given the established commercial yard context and separation distances to surrounding receptors, no material loss of privacy arises.

Loss of light / overshadowing

The proposals involve additional structures within an already developed yard area. Given the scale, disposition and orientation of the buildings in relation to neighbouring land (predominantly agricultural fields), there would be no unacceptable loss of light or material overshadowing impacts.

Overbearing impact / sense of enclosure

The site is not closely bordered by residential properties and is characterised by open land and existing commercial structures. The additional buildings would not introduce an overbearing relationship or harmful sense of enclosure to any sensitive receptors.

Noise

The site currently operates as a commercial/industrial yard and associated noise sources are therefore established. The submitted information confirms no significant noise concerns arising, and no additional impacts beyond the existing lawful use are anticipated. The relatively

modest scale of additional activity, together with the nature of B8 use, would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenity.

While Public Protection have not requested restrictions on hours of operation, the site lies in a rural location in close proximity to neighbouring residential properties. The previous permission for use of part of the site as a bus/coach yard established a pattern of activity, including vehicle movements, within defined hours. The proposed B8 use has the potential to result in noise and disturbance from vehicle movements and operational activity. It is therefore considered reasonable and necessary, in the interests of safeguarding residential amenity and ensuring that the impacts of the development do not exceed those associated with the existing lawful or permitted use of the site, to impose a condition restricting hours of operation.

Lighting

Advice from Public Protection indicates that external lighting arrangements are acceptable, and no adverse impacts are identified in this regard.

Overall, having regard to the site's established commercial use, separation to residential receptors and the nature of the proposed development, no adverse amenity impacts are identified.

Conclusion

The proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts in respect of overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light, overbearing impact, noise or lighting. The development therefore accords with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework's objectives relating to residential amenity, living conditions and environmental quality.

Highways Impacts and Parking

Policy Context

Transport implications are a key factor in assessing planning applications, especially for larger developments. Proposals must demonstrate:

- Safe and suitable access for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those with mobility impairments.
- No severe residual impacts on the surrounding highway network.
- Promotion of sustainable travel, reducing reliance on private vehicles.
- Adequate parking and cycle provision, in line with adopted standards.
- Protection and enhancement of public rights of way and active travel routes.

Relevant policies include Core Policies 60–64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, supported by the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan, Car Parking Strategy, and Cycling Strategy. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and LTN 1/20 (DfT) provide further design guidance for active travel infrastructure.

Proposals must also ensure safe access for refuse collection vehicles and comply with the Wiltshire Council Waste Storage and Collection SPD (2017).

Where necessary, Transport Assessments or Statements should be submitted to evaluate impacts and identify mitigation. Planning conditions or legal agreements may be used to

secure off-site improvements, travel plans, or contributions to sustainable transport infrastructure.

Assessment

The application is supported by a Transport Statement which assesses the impact of the proposed development on the local highway network. The site benefits from an established access which will be retained, and no alterations to the access arrangements are proposed.

The Highway Authority raises no objection to the proposal, confirming that the development would not result in a severe impact on the surrounding highway network. The site has an established history of B8 use and the proposed development is expected to result in only a modest increase in vehicle movements, comparable to existing or historical activity levels.

The internal layout provides adequate space for vehicle manoeuvring, servicing and parking within the site, ensuring safe and effective operation. Sufficient parking is proposed, in accordance with the Council's maximum parking standards for non-residential development. Whilst the level of provision is acceptable, it is recognised that future occupiers may require increased provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, which can be secured by condition.

The development does not adversely affect pedestrian or highway safety and utilises a previously developed and allocated employment site. Given the nature of the proposal, opportunities for sustainable transport are limited but proportionate, and the scheme does not prejudice the operation of the wider network.

The scheme also incorporates cycle parking and electric vehicle charging infrastructure which will assist in supporting more sustainable travel choices. Whilst the site's rural location inevitably limits opportunities for significant modal shift, the development makes reasonable provision for active travel and low-emission vehicle use having regard to its location and operational requirements. The proposal is therefore considered consistent with the sustainable transport objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Overall, the proposals provide safe and suitable access, adequate parking provision and would not result in unacceptable impacts on highway capacity or safety.

Conclusion

The Highway Authority has raised no objection and the proposal would not result in a severe impact on the highway network. The development makes use of an established access, provides adequate on-site parking and servicing, and reflects the site's existing commercial use.

Subject to conditions (including EV charging provision where appropriate), the development complies with Core Policies 60–64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF, and is therefore acceptable in highways and parking terms.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Policy Context

The ecological impact of development is a key planning consideration, especially for larger schemes. Proposals must assess and address potential effects on:

- Protected species
- Priority habitats
- Ecological networks
- Green and blue infrastructure

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to:

- Avoid harm to ecological assets.
- Support habitat restoration and connectivity.
- Integrate biodiversity into site design.

The Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) promotes nature recovery, ecosystem services, and habitat connectivity through development.

Unless exempt, National policy requires a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for major developments, demonstrated via:

- Biodiversity Metric calculations
- Ecological assessments (e.g. PEAs, Phase 1 surveys, protected species surveys)

Assessment

The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment prepared by Coyne Environmental Ltd (Biodiversity Net Gain Report) together with a completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Biodiversity Metric).

The site lies adjacent to Restrop Farm and Brockhurst Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and also adjoins an area of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland to the north. The submitted information confirms that no development is proposed within these designated habitats and no boundary trees associated with the SSSI are to be removed. The Council Ecologist advises that, subject to appropriate safeguards during construction, the proposal would not result in adverse effects on these ecological assets.

The submitted ecological information confirms that the site comprises predominantly developed land and areas of low ecological value, including sealed surfaces and small areas of ruderal/ephemeral vegetation, alongside existing native hedgerows. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identifies no protected species or habitats of particular ecological significance on site and concludes that no further detailed surveys are required.

In terms of statutory sites, the development lies approximately 9.4km from North Meadow Special Area of Conservation (SAC). At this separation distance, and having regard to the nature and scale of the proposal, the development is not considered likely to result in significant adverse effects on the SAC, including recreational pressure, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The proposal does not introduce residential use or associated visitor pressure and therefore falls outside the scope of the relevant recreational buffer.

A completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric and supporting Biodiversity Net Gain Report have been submitted demonstrating a predicted biodiversity uplift in excess of the statutory 10%

requirement through on-site habitat enhancement and creation measures. The Council Ecologist has reviewed the submitted information and confirms that much of the previously requested information has been satisfactorily addressed. However, some clarification relating to the BNG baseline remains outstanding and will need to be resolved through the Biodiversity Gain Plan process. The ecologist nevertheless concludes that, subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal is acceptable in biodiversity terms.

The biodiversity uplift is achieved through a combination of habitat creation and enhancement measures, including:

- Creation of mixed native scrub planting;
- Enhancement and infilling of existing hedgerows with native species;
- Provision of wildflower or tussocky grassland margins to increase ecological function and connectivity.

Collectively, these measures will improve habitat condition and increase site biodiversity, particularly for birds, invertebrates and small mammals, while maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure connections.

In addition to delivering measurable biodiversity net gain, the proposed habitat enhancements contribute towards wider nature recovery objectives through the strengthening of ecological corridors and improvement of habitat connectivity across the site. These measures support the National Planning Policy Framework's objective of securing biodiversity enhancements through development.

Subject to appropriate conditions securing the implementation, management and monitoring of the ecological enhancements (including a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan), the proposal is considered to comply with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the objectives of the Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy.

To safeguard the adjacent SSSI, Priority Habitat Woodland and nesting birds during construction, the Council Ecologist recommends a Construction Method Statement (or Construction Ecological Management Plan) securing appropriate ecological protection measures throughout the construction phase.

The proposals are therefore considered to accord with the mitigation hierarchy, avoiding significant harm to ecological receptors and securing measurable biodiversity enhancements through embedded design measures.

Conclusion

The site is predominantly developed land of limited ecological value and is not considered to support protected species or habitats of significant ecological importance. Whilst the site adjoins Restrop Farm and Brockhurst Wood SSSI and Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland, the Council Ecologist is satisfied that these assets can be adequately protected through the imposition of a Construction Method Statement condition. The submitted Biodiversity Metric demonstrates a predicted biodiversity net gain in excess of the statutory 10% requirement, although some clarification of baseline information remains necessary and can be addressed through the Biodiversity Gain Plan process. Subject to the recommended ecological

conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable in biodiversity terms and compliant with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Landscape and Visual Impact

Policy Context

Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to:

- Protect, conserve, and enhance landscape character and quality.
- Respect local distinctiveness, key views, and visual receptors.
- Give particular weight to impacts on National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) and locally valued landscapes.

The Wiltshire Design Guide SPD (2024) promotes a context-led approach, encouraging integration with natural features and settlement patterns while avoiding visual intrusion.

The Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) supports landscape protection through green infrastructure, habitat connectivity, and nature-based solutions.

The NPPF emphasises the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes, particularly those with scenic, historic, or ecological significance. Planning decisions should:

- Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
- Safeguard key views, local distinctiveness, and landscape settings.
- Ensure development is well-integrated into its surroundings and avoids visual intrusion, especially in sensitive or designated areas.

Landscape impact must be considered alongside biodiversity, heritage, and green infrastructure objectives, with mitigation measures encouraged where harm cannot be avoided.

Assessment

The site is not located within a designated landscape. It comprises an established employment use with existing built form and hardstanding, and is well contained by boundary vegetation and surrounding landform which limits wider visibility.

The proposal represents redevelopment within the existing site envelope and would not result in significant encroachment into the wider countryside. Built form is consistent with the established character of the site, and the retention of existing hardstanding further limits visual change. Additional planting will assist in reinforcing boundary screening.

Whilst there would be a degree of localised visual change within the site, this would be experienced in the context of the existing commercial use and would not result in wider landscape harm. Overall, effects are considered to be minor adverse at a local level, reducing to neutral in the wider landscape context.

Conclusion

The site is not subject to landscape designation and is visually contained. The development would not result in significant landscape or visual harm and would remain compatible with its surroundings.

On balance, the proposal is considered to have a minor adverse to neutral effect on landscape character and visual amenity and is compliant with Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy Context

Core Policy 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework require development to be directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding wherever possible, to avoid increasing flood risk elsewhere, and to incorporate appropriate surface water drainage measures and sustainable drainage systems. Development should remain safe for its lifetime whilst ensuring that flood risk is appropriately managed.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are required for all major developments and must:

- Manage runoff near its source.
- Improve water quality.
- Support biodiversity and amenity.
- Be integrated into the site layout and green infrastructure.

Assessment

The application is supported by a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding from fluvial sources.

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has reviewed the submitted information and raises no objection subject to conditions, confirming that the principle of the proposed drainage approach is acceptable.

The submitted strategy proposes to maintain the existing surface water drainage regime, with runoff directed to an existing ditch, and indicates that the development will not increase impermeable area or overall discharge rates from the site.

Surface water management measures include:

- Attenuation of roof runoff via above-ground storage tanks to allow controlled discharge;
- Use of sub-base storage beneath parking areas to provide attenuation; and
- Retention of existing drainage arrangements for the extended building where development occurs on existing hardstanding.

Whilst the general approach is accepted, the LLFA advises that the submitted details are not sufficiently developed to fully demonstrate compliance with national and local drainage standards. In particular:

- Discharge rates have been based on brownfield runoff rates rather than demonstrating that post-development runoff is reduced as close as reasonably practicable to greenfield rates;
- Further information is required to confirm greenfield runoff rates for all buildings;
- Detailed drainage layout information, hydraulic calculations and attenuation design details are currently lacking; and
- Clarification is required regarding the potential inclusion of rainwater harvesting.

The LLFA therefore recommends a pre-commencement condition requiring a comprehensive surface water drainage strategy, supported by detailed design information, to demonstrate no on-site flooding in the 1 in 30 year event and no risk to people or property in the 1 in 100 year plus climate change event.

In addition, the Environment Agency has reviewed the application in the context of the site's location over a secondary aquifer and former landfill, which presents a risk to controlled waters.

The Environment Agency confirms that, subject to appropriate safeguards, the development can proceed; however, it requires:

- A detailed phased contamination and remediation strategy;
- Measures to prevent mobilisation of contaminants into groundwater during construction; and
- Controls over drainage, foundations and any intrusive works that may affect groundwater pathways.

The Environment Agency also advises that foul drainage proposals (including any private treatment system) require further assessment and confirmation of compliance with relevant regulatory requirements.

Overall, whilst the submitted FRA demonstrates that the site is not at significant flood risk and establishes an acceptable high-level drainage approach, both consultees identify that further technical detail is required to fully demonstrate compliance with policy and best practice.

Conclusion

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is not at significant risk of flooding. The submitted FRA demonstrates that the development is appropriate in principle and would not increase flood risk elsewhere.

The Lead Local Flood Authority raises no objection to the development subject to conditions but confirms that the current submission does not provide sufficient detail to fully assess the proposed drainage system. A detailed surface water drainage scheme, including discharge rates, hydraulic modelling and full design details, is therefore required by condition.

The Environment Agency similarly raises no objection subject to conditions, identifying the need for robust controls to manage contamination risks to controlled waters, given the site's history and groundwater sensitivity.

Subject to conditions securing:

- A fully detailed and compliant surface water drainage strategy;
- Appropriate foul drainage arrangements; and
- Contamination and groundwater protection measures,

the development is considered capable of complying with Core Policy 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the NPPF and national SuDS standards.

On this basis, the proposal is acceptable in respect of flood risk and drainage, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

Environmental Considerations (Noise, Air Quality, Contaminated Land, etc.)

Policy Context

Core Policies 55 and 56 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy require:

- Development proposals to avoid unacceptable environmental impacts.
- To provide appropriate mitigation where risks are identified.

The NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) reinforce this by stating that proposals should:

- Prevent development that contributes to or is exposed to unacceptable pollution.
- Ensure developer responsibility for safe development on contaminated land.

Wiltshire Council's Air Quality SPD (2023) provides detailed guidance, especially near Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and encourages mitigation such as:

- EV charging infrastructure
- Green buffers
- Sustainable transport options

Assessment

The application is supported by a Preliminary Contamination Risk Assessment, Ground Investigation and Remediation Method Statement, which together provide a robust, staged assessment in accordance with Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM).

Contaminated land and ground conditions

The Preliminary Risk Assessment identifies potential risks associated with Made Ground, historical landfill activity and existing commercial uses, with a worst-case low to moderate contamination risk and potential pollutant linkages to human health and controlled waters.

Subsequent intrusive investigation confirms:

- Presence of Made Ground across the site, locally of significant depth.
- Localised exceedances of PAHs in a single location (WS02B).
- Low-level asbestos fibres identified in Made Ground at discrete locations (WS01 and WS04).
- No widespread exceedance of heavy metals or other contaminants.

The assessment demonstrates that:

- Areas of contamination beneath proposed buildings and hardstanding can be safely retained and encapsulated, with no complete source–pathway–receptor linkage.
- A potential linkage remains in areas of soft landscaping, particularly around WS04, requiring targeted remediation.

The submitted Remediation Method Statement sets out an appropriate strategy including:

- Removal of contaminated Made Ground in landscaped areas;
- Installation of clean cover systems (minimum 300mm);
- Use of marker membranes where residual contamination remains;

- Watching brief and validation reporting.

Subject to this mitigation and appropriate planning conditions securing remediation and validation, risks to human health and controlled waters can be satisfactorily managed.

Ground gas

Ground gas monitoring indicates elevated carbon dioxide levels, resulting in classification as Characteristic Situation 2 (CS2).

The submitted information confirms that:

- Gas protection measures (e.g. membrane and ventilation systems) are required; and
- These can be designed in accordance with BS8485 and secured by condition.

Air quality

No Air Quality Management Areas are identified in proximity to the site, and the development comprises intensification of an existing commercial use. The transport assessment confirms only a modest uplift in vehicle trips, which is unlikely to materially affect air quality.

Given the scale and nature of the proposal, air quality impacts are not considered significant. Opportunities for EV charging and sustainable travel are incorporated within the scheme.

Noise and other environmental factors

Noise effects have been considered under amenity and are not identified as significant. No evidence is provided of unacceptable impacts relating to vibration, odour or dust beyond those typical of construction, which can be managed through standard controls and conditions.

Conclusion

The submitted technical evidence demonstrates that environmental risks, particularly those relating to contaminated land and ground gas, have been appropriately identified, assessed and can be satisfactorily mitigated through a combination of design measures and planning conditions.

Subject to conditions securing:

- Remediation in accordance with the approved method statement;
- Gas protection measures; and
- Verification reporting,

the proposal accords with Core Policies 55 and 56 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the NPPF and associated PPG guidance.

Pre-commencement Condition Agreement

This recommendation includes pre-commencement planning condition(s) relating to land contamination, drainage, construction/amenity and trees and landscaping. In accordance with Section 100ZA of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Pre-commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018, the Local Planning Authority formally notified the applicant/agent of the proposed condition(s) and sought their agreement. Written confirmation of agreement was received from the applicant's agent.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan policies relevant to the proposal are up-to-date and provide a clear basis for decision-making. The application has therefore been assessed primarily against the Development Plan, whilst having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework as an important material consideration.

The site lies outside a defined settlement boundary where development is typically restricted under Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. This weighs against the proposal in principle. However, this conflict is materially reduced by the fact that the proposal relates to the redevelopment and intensification of an established employment site, which is specifically identified within the Lydiard Millicent Neighbourhood Plan as an existing employment area where expansion of employment uses is supported. The proposal falls to be considered under S5 of the NPPF which provides support for development of land allocated for that purpose, the redevelopment of previously developed land and development for rural businesses.

In this context, significant weight is afforded to:

- The provision of modernised and improved employment floorspace within an established site;
- The economic benefits associated with supporting existing businesses and attracting future occupiers, as confirmed by Economic Development support;
- The efficient use of previously developed land.

Additional positive weight is afforded to the proposal's consistency with national policy objectives which support sustainable economic growth, the retention and enhancement of employment opportunities, and the effective reuse and intensification of previously developed land. The proposal would modernise an established employment site and assist in maintaining the vitality and resilience of the local rural economy.

In addition, the proposal is assessed to be acceptable in respect of design, residential amenity, highways, ecology (subject to conditions and the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan process), drainage (subject to condition), and environmental considerations. The submitted Biodiversity Metric demonstrates a predicted biodiversity net gain in excess of 10%. These matters attract neutral to positive weight in the planning balance.

Identified adverse impacts are limited to:

- A degree of policy tension arising from the site's countryside location; and
- Minor adverse localised landscape effects.

These harms are, however, limited in scope and are not considered to substantially outweigh the benefits of the development, particularly given the established use of the site and policy support for employment growth in this location.

Overall, when assessed against the development plan as a whole, the benefits of the proposal outweigh the limited harm identified. The proposal is therefore considered to represent sustainable development.

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered acceptable in planning terms. It delivers clear economic benefits through the enhancement and consolidation of an existing employment site, whilst ensuring that impacts on amenity, landscape, highways, drainage, ecology and environmental matters are either avoided or adequately mitigated through planning conditions, including measures to protect the adjacent SSSI and Priority Habitat Woodland during construction.

On balance, the proposal accords with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Lydiard Millicent Neighbourhood Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework, and all other relevant material considerations. Planning permission is therefore recommended to be granted, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions: