

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

Date of Meeting	16.09.2026
Application Number	PL/2026/02765
Site Address	Hullavington C of E Primary School, The Street, Hullavington, Chippenham, SN14 6EF
Proposal	The replacement of two mobile classroom buildings with a new, permanent three-classroom extension
Applicant	Wiltshire Council
Town/Parish Council	Hullavington Parish Council
Electoral Division	By Brook
Type of application	Full Planning Permission
Case Officer	Isobella Wise
Reason for the Application being reported to Planning Committee	2.1 of Part 3 Section D3 Scheme of Delegation Specific to Planning <i>Applications submitted by Wiltshire Council will not be dealt with under delegated powers where an objection has been received raising material planning considerations.</i>

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

Executive Summary

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and S70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 applies to the application. The recommendation made to aid the determination of this application is not being made by an Officer with responsibilities that include any aspect of the management of any land or buildings to which the application relates.

The application site is an existing primary school in Hullavington. The scheme proposes an extension of the school building, and associated works, to replace temporary classrooms which have been in situ for a significant period. The scheme represents a sustainable form of development which accords with the aims of the development plan and NPPF. Granting planning permission would support the continued provision of primary school services to the local community.

Revised plans, making some design changes and providing clear annotations to show where fencing will be located on and around the site, were received and accepted on 09.07.2026. The development proposes a design in keeping with the setting, landscaping to soften the appearance of the built form, and improved on-site parking and play-space provisions.

The development would not result in conditions prejudicial to highway safety, would not place unacceptable impacts on the capacity of the local road network, and would not result in an unacceptable impact to the amenity of the neighbouring residential occupants.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a way of creating and improving natural habitats and ensures that development has a measurably positive impact on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development. The provided application form indicates that the scheme requires the provision of BNG, indicating that the pre-development biodiversity value of on-site habitats was 1.75 on 13.03.2026

For these reasons set out in this report it is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the imposition of the conditions set out below.

Proposed Planning Conditions

1. Time Limit of Permission
2. Approved Plans
3. Strict Accordance Plans and Documents
4. Lighting
5. Surface Water Scheme
6. Construction Management Statement
7. Parking
8. Soft Landscaping
9. Removal of Temporary Classrooms
10. Construction Hours

Proposed Development, Site, and Context

Site Description

The application site is an existing Primary school in Hullavington, a large village part of the Chippenham community area which benefits from a made neighbourhood development plan (NDP) and defined framework boundary. The school is within the defined framework boundary.



Figure 1: aerial view (2024) of school site (blue)



Figure 2: map view of site (blue) in village context

Classified C road 'The Street' runs south-east of the school. The site is not listed, within a Conservation Area, or within a protected landscape. The application site is understood to be in Flood Zone 1, and not at high risk of surface or groundwater flooding.

Proposal

The scheme proposes the erection of an extension to the south-western part of the main school building, proposed to facilitate 3 classrooms – one of which will be a nursery classroom – as well as toilets, staff room, group rooms and storage areas.



Figure 3: partial extract of footprint of existing school building, temporary classrooms (blue), and nursery (purple)

The scheme proposes to remove temporary primary classrooms which are detached from the main school building at the north-eastern edge of the school site. A car park extension - increasing car parking provision from 6 spaces to 14 - and multi-use games area (MUGA) are proposed to be provided in a similar north-easterly location.



Figure 4: partial extract of proposed general arrangement plan

The existing nursery building, which is located at the south-western edge of the school site, is similarly proposed for removal and a relocated play trail is proposed to be developed in a similar south-western edge location.

In addition to new hard landscaping and timber fencing around the site, the scheme includes the provision of soft landscaping as well as minor changes to site levels to accommodate a swale and a mounded playscape. The following materials are proposed to be used on the extension:

- Buff colour brick and timber cladding
- Green PPC windows
- Concrete tiled roof and bitumen roof covering
- Green aluminium doors

The scheme further proposes the installation of solar PV panels to be affixed to the parts of the roof of the extension, and an external canopy between the north-west wall of the proposed extension and a new SEN play area.

Recent, Relevant Planning History at the Site: (inter alia)

- 16/07462/DP3 granted the *Retention of a school mobile classroom for a period of 5 years* on 23.09.2016
- 19/10875/DP3 granted the *retention of single mobile with toilets and single mobile classroom with toilets (attached to each other)* for a period of 5 years on 03.01.2020
- PL/2021/10188 granted the *Renewal of temporary planning permission (last granted under 16/07462/DP3) for the existing mobile classroom 275(72) for a further five-year period* on 02.12.2021
- PL/2025/00258 granted the *renewal of planning permission for two existing mobile classrooms with toilets [...]* on 28.02.2025

Recent, Relevant Planning History in the Wider Area (inter alia):

Land at the Street:

- 20/10972/OUT approved *Outline Planning Application for up to 71 Dwellings, Community Car Park, Land Reserved for Future Expansion of Hullavington CofE Primary School, Access, Open Space, Surface Water Attenuation Basin, Landscaping and Associated Works* on 07.02.2023

Relevant Legislation, Policies and Guidance

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 considered as a whole, applicable Development Plan policies are listed below along with relevant legislation and guidance.

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)

- CP41: Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy
- CP50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- CP51: Landscape
- CP57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- CP61: Transport and Development
- CP64: Demand Management
- CP67: Flood Risks

Saved Policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan (NWLP)

- NE14: Trees, Site Features and the Control of Development
- CF1: Local Community and Education Facilities

Hullavington Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

- Policy 3: Planning applications in the Parish, apart from site 690

Wiltshire Design Guide (WDG)

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4)

- Parking standards (LTP3)

Wiltshire Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)

The Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992

- Regulation 3

Summary of Consultation Responses and Representations Received

Hullavington Parish Council: Mixed

Hullavington Parish Council expressed strong support for the proposed new buildings at the school. However, councillors questioned the extent to which projected pupil numbers arising from potential new developments in the Parish had been considered, and how future expansion could be accommodated within the current plans.

Councils Arboricultural Team: No objection

No objection in relation to trees provided the works are carried out in compliance with the Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan.

Councils Drainage Team: No objection subject to condition

[Following review of the submitted Drainage Strategy and associated plans, the proposal is broadly acceptable from a surface water drainage perspective, subject to conditions.]

Key Drainage Considerations

Site Constraints

- *Ground investigation and BRE365 infiltration testing undertaken in April 2026 demonstrated that the site is underlain by Kellaways/Oxford Clay and infiltration is not feasible.*
- *The existing school drainage system comprises a combined private drainage network discharging ultimately to the Wessex Water sewer.*
- *The proposed development seeks to avoid additional discharge to the combined sewer and instead utilise a more sustainable discharge route to the watercourse located along the northern boundary of the site.*

Drainage Hierarchy

The applicant has demonstrated consideration of the drainage hierarchy:

- 1. Infiltration investigated and discounted due to impermeable clay soils.*
- 2. Discharge to surface water body proposed via the adjacent watercourse.*
- 3. Discharge to combined sewer avoided. This is considered consistent with national and local SuDS principles.*

Proposed Surface Water Strategy

The drainage strategy incorporates:

- *Permeable paving;*
- *Raingardens/swales;*
- *Attenuation storage within the permeable paving structure;*
- *Controlled discharge to the adjacent watercourse via a flow control chamber.*

The proposed discharge is restricted by a 60mm diameter orifice with maximum discharge rates stated as:

- *in 1 year: 1.7 l/s;*
- *1 in 30 year: 3.3 l/s;*
- *1 in 100 year +40% climate change: 3.9 l/s*

Exceedance Flows

The drainage strategy includes exceedance flow routing and states that exceedance flows will be directed away from buildings such that properties are not placed at risk of flooding during events exceeding the design standard.

Information Gaps

While the overall approach is acceptable, the submitted information appears relatively high-level for a full planning application. The drainage strategy references drainage calculations being included within appendices; however, these were not evident within the documentation reviewed. Prior to commencement, detailed drainage design should therefore be secured by condition, including:

- *Final drainage calculations;*
- *Detailed SuDS design;*
- *Hydraulic sizing of attenuation features;*
- *Flow control specifications;*
- *Sections and construction details for raingardens and permeable paving;*
- *Long-term maintenance arrangements;*
- *Outfall details to the receiving watercourse.*

Councils Education Team: No response at the time of writing

Councils Ecology Team:

23.07.2026 Objection

13.08.2026 No objection subject to condition

[...] The proposed site does not lie within or adjacent to any sites designated for conservation and there are no areas of significant ecological importance within a zone of influence, it is expected that any adverse impacts on protected species or habitats could be suitably mitigated through an appropriate design scheme and timing of works.

Protected Species

An ecological site survey was undertaken in March 2026 in support of the application. Although the survey was undertaken outside the optimal period for certain protected species survey work, given the nature of the site, the information provided is considered sufficient to inform the assessment in this instance. However, it is expected that any future protected species surveys are undertaken during the optimal survey window.

The Ecological Survey report identified the existing buildings as having low to negligible potential to support roosting bats. The site is assessed to offering suitability for foraging and commuting bats. The replacement of two mobile classroom buildings with a new, permanent three-classroom extension will not require the removal of vegetation considered to be functionally valuable for foraging or commuting bats. Subject to retention of key boundary features and implementation of a sensitive lighting strategy, it is likely that the functionality of the habitats within the site and their availability to bats will not be adversely affected. Should the proposals change such that trees or existing features with potential roosting features are affected, further survey work would be required and mitigation measures would need to be reviewed and updated accordingly.

The habitat within the proposed development site and the surrounding area is suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats. An increase in artificial lux levels can deter bats which could result in roost abandonment and/or the severance of key foraging areas. This will likely result in a significant negative impact upon the health of bat populations across the region. Artificial light at night can have a substantial adverse effect on biodiversity. Any new lighting should be for the purposes for safe access and security and be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institute of Lighting Engineers in their publication GN01:2021, 'Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light' (ILP, 2021), and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals. Suitable lighting to ensure dark foraging and commuting routes can be retained could be secured via condition.

Nesting Birds

Where possible, vegetation removal should be scheduled outside the bird breeding season (1st March–31st August) to avoid potential disturbance. If removal during this period is unavoidable, a pre-works nesting bird inspection must be conducted no more than two weeks before tree felling begins. The applicant is advised to check any structure

or vegetation capable of supporting breeding birds and delay removing or altering such features until after young birds have fledged. Damage to extensive areas that could contain nests/breeding birds should be undertaken outside the breeding season. [...] A proposed habitats plan has not been provided. Confirmation of how the development will achieve BNG is a post-determination matter however consideration should be given to how any proposed BNG will be secured. [...]

Councils Highways Team: No objection subject to condition

I refer to the above planning application dated 15/05/2026 seeking permission the replacement of two mobile classroom buildings with a new, permanent three-classroom extension. The site has existing access from The Street, a C Classified section of public highway subject to a speed limit of 30mph. There are no proposals to alter the existing access with the public highway. The proposals seek permission to replace the existing temporary classrooms and nursery which would not result in any additional trip generation. It is also proposed to provide 8 additional vehicle parking spaces, these along with the existing 6 spaces would ensure that the anticipated 14 staff are provided for within the site. It is therefore considered that no highways objection be raised to the proposals, subject to [a CMS] condition.

Councils Public Protection Team: No objection subject to condition

We have no concerns in respect of Contaminated Land, but if you are minded, please can I request that any pp granted is conditioned with our standard hours of activity which are 8am-6pm Monday to Friday, 8am-1pm on Saturdays and no construction or demolition to take place on Sundays, or Public Holidays. As I have concerns in respect of local amenity.

Public Representations: 2 in support and 1 in objection

At the time of writing, 3 public representations have been received including a comment from North Wiltshire Swifts. The objection received raised concerns around how the siting of the extension, near to neighbouring bungalows, may result in a change to amenity levels.

In addition, requests have been made for consideration around impact on slow worms, further consideration around enhancement for swifts, and whether the potential use of glyphosate is appropriate.

Planning Assessment

In accordance with Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, 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 relevant made, or emerging, Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the NPPF as a material consideration in the assessment.

Planning Matters

Taking into account the site context, and description of development, the main issues in the consideration of this application are:

- Principle / Sustainable Development
- Design, and Impact on Neighbouring Amenity
- Highway Safety and Parking
- Ecology, Biodiversity and Trees
- Flood Risk, and Drainage

Principle / Sustainable Development

The scheme is not proposing a change of use and operational development proposed will accommodate the existing school use of the site.

The principle of development to support the existing use as a school is accepted; however, the suitability of the proposal remains subject to further assessment discussed in the following sections of this report.

The Parish Council are broadly supportive of the scheme but raised how *councillors questioned the extent to which projected pupil numbers arising from potential new developments in the Parish had been considered, and how future expansion could be accommodated within the current plans.*

The scheme proposes to replace temporary accommodation with permanent facilities which would not increase the overall school capacity; however, the submission demonstrates how the strategic provision for future growth has been carefully considered in the following way:

The application is supported by a longer-term expansion strategy, showing how land on the adjacent development site is reserved for education purposes, capable of accommodating additional school facilities. The submitted Design and Access (D&A) statement further illustrates how the proposed building has been designed with flexibility in mind, enabling internal reconfiguration and potential conversion of nursery space to primary teaching accommodation, alongside relocation of the nursery to the reserved site as part of the phased expansion plan.

On this basis, future pupil growth has been appropriately anticipated, and it is considered that mechanisms are in place to accommodate any increased demand in a comprehensive manner.

Design and Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Context

Chapter 14 of the NPPF promotes high quality, healthy, inclusive and sustainable places, through setting clear expectations about design outcomes and the use of relevant tools and processes. National decision-making policy DP3, in particular, requires development proposals to integrate with and enhance their surroundings and, where relevant, support healthy communities, climate resilience, green infrastructure, sustainable movement, high-quality public spaces, and a strong sense of place.

Chapter 5 sets out the Government's objective to support the transition to net zero by 2050. National decision-making policies CC2 and CC3 include the requirements for development proposals, where relevant, to contribute to climate change mitigation, and to take account of current and future climate change impacts over the lifetime of the development, respectively.

WCS CP41 (Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy) encourages new development and extensions to incorporate design measures to reduce energy demand. CP57 (Ensuring High Quality Design) emphasises that all new developments, must demonstrate a high standard of design that enhances the local character of Wiltshire. (vii) of CP57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires new development to have regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, regard to the impact on the amenities of existing occupants and ensure that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself, including the consideration of privacy, overshadowing, vibration, and pollution (e.g. light intrusion, noise, smoke, fumes, effluent, waste or litter). CP51 (Landscape) expresses how development should protect, conserve, and where possible enhance landscape character.

Good design should be an integral part of the planning process and should ensure that developments complement their surroundings; the NDG also builds on these aims and the adopted WDG expands on the aims of WCS CP51 and CP57, providing a framework to ensure that development is sensitive to the distinctive character of Wiltshire's built and natural environment.

Assessment

The site is an established primary school and nursery, comprising a mix of permanent school buildings and temporary modular units set within hard and soft play areas. There are a mixture of two-storey dwellings and large single-storey bungalows finished in brick and stone in proximity to the school. The primary building materials on walls of nearby dwellings are finished in a buff colour, with some use of red brick and/or light render as accents; the existing permanent school building reflects that established character.

Whilst it is noted that the application was submitted without first engaging in meaningful pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority, the submission includes a D&A which demonstrates how several design iterations were explored during independent public consultation. The D&A expresses how 'Option 1' was selected as the preferred option as it enables the school to

operate during construction, maintains functional relationships, and seeks to minimise impacts on neighbouring properties.



Figure 5: indicative mock-up of extension (page 19, D&A)

The D&A and provided plans demonstrate how the extension is proposed to adopt a simple, compact form that draws on local architectural cues with materials reflecting both the existing school building and wider local vernacular. The proposed scheme is functional in design and of a scale that is sympathetic and subservient to the existing primary school building and site. The proposal includes internal space for the nursery to operate within in the short-term, with the D&A explaining that the space can be appropriately converted to a primary classroom when a new detached nursery is provided at the reserved 'future expansion' area on the adjacent residential development site (consented under 20/10972/OUT).

Design consideration relating to the proposed hard and soft landscaping has similarly been addressed within the D&A and appropriately shown on plans and other supporting detail. The D&A expresses that the existing hard play areas will be reconfigured, replacement hard play will be provided using permeable surfacing, play trail will be relocated, and limited tree removal will be mitigated through replanting and biodiversity enhancement. In addition to the general arrangement plan (extracted as figure 4 previously in this report) a planting plan and planting schedule have been provided which is sufficient to allow for assessment of visual impacts. The proposed layout and soft landscaping have been well considered and would result in some degree of visual softening to the extension.

Whilst originally provided plans indicated that boundary treatments would be a mixture of 1.2m high 'picket fences' and 2m high 'secure boundary', those plans showed limited detail on the design, materials or colours. Additional plans were requested and provided on 09.07.2026 which indicated that the 2m high fence will be a 'twin-wire rigid mesh' with a powder coated finish in green.

One area where the 2m secure boundary is proposed to be located is along the south-western boundary, in proximity to neighbouring bungalows '2 - 8 Mere Avenue'; these dwellings are those

which would have the closest spatial connection to the proposed school extension. Public representation of objection has been received, raising concerns that the siting of the extension would result in an overbearing impact on the neighbouring bungalows. Written confirmation has been received on 09.07.2026 that the existing neighbouring timber fences, to the other side of the alleyway, are circa 1.8m high.

The south elevation of the extension is proposed to have a pitched to flat roof, which would result in varied heights along the extended building with the highest point being a little less than 6m. These varied heights would provide visual interest and are a welcome design choice. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed development would extend the school building closer to the neighbouring residential units, the extension is proposed to be approximately 1.8m from the proposed 2m boundary fence which, in turn, is more than 15m from the rear wall of the closest bungalow.

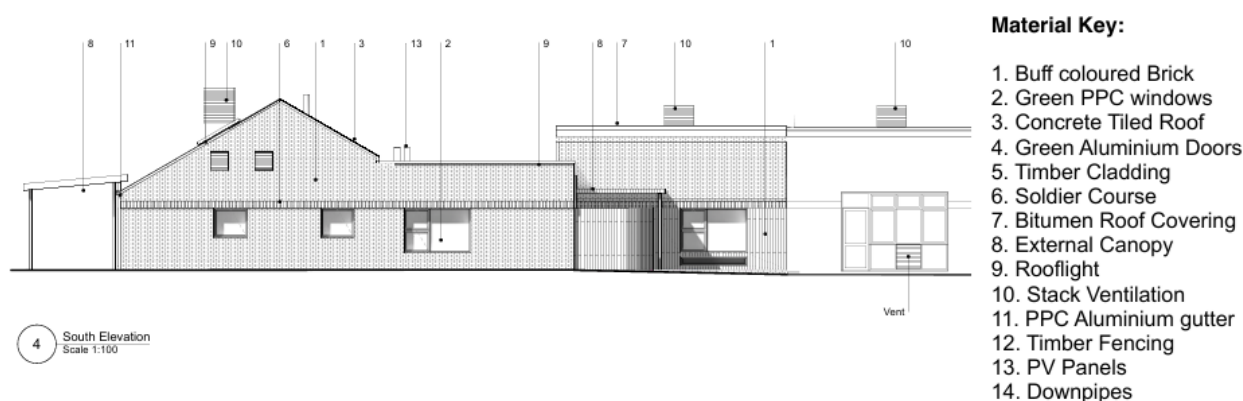


Figure 6: Partial extract of proposed south elevation and materials key

The school site is on a similar land level to the neighbouring bungalows, with the wider topography being relatively flat, and the proposed development is north of the residential units. The degree of separation and comparable ground levels is such that the extension is unlikely to appear unacceptably overbearing and any sense of enclosure to the neighbouring bungalows would be very limited. Furthermore, the siting of the extension, with the development being north of the neighbouring bungalows, when combined with the degree of separation, would mean that shadows cast from the extension would fall away from the neighbouring bungalows for most of the day; consequently, the proposed extension does not give rise to concerns that there would be an unacceptable loss of light.

It is acknowledged that there may be some perceived overlooking to a small number of properties along Mere Avenue; however, the separation distances and overall scale of the extension is such that it is not considered that the proposal would lead to a level of harm that would warrant refusal of planning permission.

Overall, the proposed development responds positively to the site and its surroundings, and the eventual removal of the temporary classrooms which have reached the end of their lifespan represents a welcomed improvement to the visual amenity. To minimise disruption for pupils, the proposal will allow for the school to operate whilst the extension is being constructed; however, in the interests of visual amenity and the long term operation of the school, it is necessary to include

a condition with any permission granted requiring the temporary buildings to be removed from the site within 3 months of the first use of the new classrooms.

Highway Safety and Parking

Context

The NPPF addresses transport, accessibility, highway safety and parking matters within Chapter 15. National decision-making policies TR3 and TR4 requires development to be located where it can support sustainable patterns of movement, and requires transport considerations to be integral to the design of development proposals, respectively.

Core Policies 60 to 64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) set out the overarching transport and accessibility framework for development across the county. These policies require that development proposals:

- Provide safe and suitable access for all users;
- Do not result in severe residual cumulative impacts on the transport network;
- Promote sustainable transport modes and reduce the need to travel by car;
- Include appropriate levels of car and cycle parking in accordance with adopted standards;
- Safeguard and enhance public rights of way and active travel routes.

The Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (2011–2026), including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy, provides further guidance on the design and provision of transport infrastructure. The Wiltshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and associated design standards (2022) set out expectations for the delivery of high-quality active travel infrastructure in new developments.

Proposals should also demonstrate compliance with national design guidance, including the National Design Guide and associated documents including LTN 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design (DfT, 2020), which sets out principles for safe, coherent, and inclusive cycling networks.

Assessment

The application site is accessed from classified C-road 'The Street' which is subject to a 30mph speed limit. The school benefits from established vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements from that highway and 6no marked on-site parking bays. No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular or pedestrian access arrangements; however, the scheme includes the provision of 8 additional parking space to include 1 accessible parking space and proposes improvements to internal circulation.

The provided D&A addresses the transport implications of the proposal; concluding that development is intended solely to replace existing temporary buildings and does not increase the school's mainstream capacity of 150 pupils or the 21-place nursery provision. Consequently, the proposal is not expected to generate additional or increased pupil-related traffic. The D&A further

advises that the additional on-site parking provision is intended to address the existing parking shortfall and improve operational arrangements at the school.

The Council's Highways team have been consulted for their comment; their representation resulted in no objection being raised and notes that there are no changes proposed to the existing access and that the development proposed will not result in additional trip generation. The representation concludes that the proposed increase in on-site parking provision from 6 to 14 spaces would adequately meet anticipated staff parking requirements but recommends that a condition requiring the submission and approval of a Construction Management Statement (CMS) be applied to any permission granted to control construction traffic, contractor parking, deliveries etc.

Overall, having regard to the nature of the proposal, the conclusions of the Highways Officer are agreed with. The scheme does not propose to increase the school's capacity and, whilst it is acknowledged that the school experiences peak-period activity associated with drop-off and collection times, it is not anticipated that the proposal would generate additional vehicle movements beyond those already associated with the lawful use of the site. The proposed provision of additional on-site parking is welcomed and expected to improve provisions for staff and assist in reducing existing off-site parking pressures associated with the school's operation. Subject to the inclusion of a CMS condition, it is not considered that the scheme would result in residual cumulative impact on the local highway network and is acceptable in highway safety and transport terms.

Ecology, Biodiversity and Trees

Context

The NPPF recognises the importance of protecting habitats and species of international, national, and local significance. Chapter 19 aims to influence the design and location of new development to help drive nature's recovery and contribute to wider environmental outcomes, safeguarding our most important habitats, species, and landscapes and recognising the centrality of natural capital to delivering sustainable growth. National decision-making policies N2 and N3 include the requirements for development proposals to contribute to the natural environment and support nature's recovery, and make provisions for the long-term maintenance of both existing and newly-planted trees which form part of the development, respectively.

Development proposals are required to comply with the statutory BNG requirements introduced through the Environment Act 2021.

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity across the county. It requires that development avoids harm to ecological assets and delivers some biodiversity net gain (BNG) improvement, in line with the statutory requirements of the Environment Act 2021.

The Council's Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) sets out a strategic framework for protecting and enhancing Wiltshire's natural capital. It identifies priorities for habitat connectivity, ecosystem services, and nature recovery, and encourages development that contributes positively to these objectives.

Assessment

The site grounds include areas of hard surfaces play, amenity grassland, a wildlife and vegetable garden, ornamental planting and a number of mature trees. The development footprint affects areas where existing temporary buildings are sited, existing hardstanding areas and a small area of species-poor amenity grassland.

The submission includes detail around how particular regard has been had to the potential impacts on existing habitats, protected species, mature trees and the ecological value of the school grounds. The provided detailed ecological assessment and arboricultural method statement include the following observations:

- No designated ecological sites, priority habitats or protected species populations would be adversely affected by the development
- No records of great crested newts were identified and habitats within the development footprint are considered unsuitable for amphibians
- No evidence of bat roosting within the buildings to be removed; two willow trees have low-risk potential to support occasional roosting bats and bat commuting activities have been previously recorded along the north-eastern tree line
- Potential impacts on nesting birds, bats, hedgehogs and retained trees can be satisfactorily mitigated through precautionary measures, ecological best practice and construction controls
- Biodiversity enhancements are proposed including native planting, bird boxes, bat boxes and invertebrate habitats, resulting in an overall net gain in biodiversity value.

Given the findings of the Ecological Assessment, the site is considered to have limited ecological value overall, although the wider school grounds provide habitat for common wildlife species and trees identified as having low-level bat roost potential. The Councils ecology team has been consulted for their specialist review and their initial representation (dated 23.07.2026) raised an objection on grounds that further BNG information is required for assessment prior to a decision being made. Following receipt of that necessary further information, their most recent representation (dated 13.08.2026) withdrew the objection, subject to conditions.

The Councils arboricultural team has also been consulted and raised no objection to the proposal subject to the development being carried out in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan. With the inclusion of that condition, the impacts on retained trees can be appropriately mitigated through protective fencing, no-dig construction techniques, arboricultural supervision and ongoing monitoring during construction.

The scheme proposes to retain the majority of existing ecological features within the wider school grounds, including mature boundary trees, the wildlife garden and associated habitats. Ecological mitigation measures are proposed to protect bats, nesting birds and hedgehogs during construction and biodiversity enhancement measures include habitat creation, bird boxes, bat boxes, bee hotels and additional planting. Subject to necessary condition(s) the scheme does not give rise to concerns on ecological or tree matters.

Flood Risk / Drainage

Policy Context

Chapter 18 of the NPPF aims to minimise risks to development arising from all sources of flooding and coastal change, taking into account the impacts of climate change, by steering development away from areas of risk, ensuring that development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and incorporating sustainable drainage systems, where appropriate. National decision-making policies F7 and F8 include the requirements for development proposals to not present a risk from flooding, and to incorporate sustainable drainage systems where the development proposals could affect drainage on or around the development site, respectively.

Core Policy 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), requires that development avoids increasing flood risk and incorporates appropriate mitigation measures. Development proposals located within Flood Zones 2 or 3 must be subject to the sequential test, and where necessary, the exception test, to ensure that more vulnerable uses are directed to areas of lowest flood risk.

Assessment

The application has been submitted with a site-specific drainage strategy which has been informed by site investigations, infiltration testing and CCTV surveys of the existing drainage network. The investigations confirm that the existing school currently drains to a combined surface water and foul drainage system which ultimately connects to the Wessex Water sewer network but that the proposed development would utilise a separate and more sustainable surface water management system

The Council's drainage team has been consulted and whilst there has been no formal consultation response received at the time of writing, given that the site is not located in an area identified as being at significant risk of flooding from fluvial sources, Officer review of the drainage strategy has been carried out. The drainage strategy demonstrates that surface water runoff from the proposed development would be managed using Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS), including permeable paving, swales and raingardens. There is a watercourse present along the northern boundary of the site and ground levels generally fall towards the watercourse which provides an appropriate discharge point for surface water runoff; the surface water will therefore discharge to the watercourse rather than the existing combined sewer system.

Overall, having regard to the submitted drainage information, the proposal adopts the drainage hierarchy by first considering infiltration before demonstrating that site ground conditions make this unfeasible. The strategy therefore, instead, provides a sustainable discharge to the adjacent watercourse and incorporates a range of SuDS measures to attenuate, treat, and control surface water runoff.

The implementation of the strategy as proposed would not likely increase flood risk on-site or elsewhere and is considered to provide an appropriate means of managing surface water arising from the development.

Planning balance and conclusion

At the heart of the NPPF, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development requiring local planning authorities to approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

This section of the report considers the overall planning balance, weighing the identified benefits of the proposal against any harm, in order to assess whether the development complies with the development plan when read as a whole, or whether other material considerations justify a departure.

The proposal seeks to replace existing temporary classroom accommodation with a permanent extension and associated works which includes additional parking provision, updated play facilities, landscaping and drainage infrastructure. The principle of supporting and improving an existing educational facility within the settlement boundary is consistent with saved policy CF1 of the NWLP and is in accordance with the WCS and NPPF aims to support community infrastructure and sustainable communities.

The proposal has been designed to provide flexibility, including how the teaching spaces can be updated should operational requirements change, and the submitted D&A demonstrates that future expansion requirements have been anticipated through a longer-term strategy whereby adjacent land would be safeguarded for future educational expansion. The proposal would deliver clear public benefits through the provision of modern, permanent educational accommodation, the removal of ageing temporary structures, improvements to the quality and functionality of the school environment and the incorporation of renewable energy generation through roof-mounted solar panels.

Particular regard has been had to the objection received from a neighbouring resident concerning the potential effects on residential amenity by virtue of the siting of the extension. The design, scale and appearance of the extension are appropriate to the character of the existing school and its surroundings, and whilst it is acknowledged that the development would bring built form closer to some neighbouring properties, the separation distances and overall height of the extension is such that it is not considered that granting permission would result in unacceptable harm through overlooking, overshadowing or an overbearing effect, when taking into account the existing situation.

The proposal would not give rise to an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the operation of the local highway network, and would not increase flood-risk on site or elsewhere. Furthermore, the proposal incorporates mitigation and enhancement measures for biodiversity and trees, and would be capable of delivering BNG.

On 18.08.2026 the applicant agreed to necessary pre-commencement conditions being applied; therefore, with the understanding that the recommended conditions would be included in any permission granted, the scheme meets the aims of the WCS and NPPF and there are no material considerations which would indicate that planning permission should be refused.