

PLANNING STATEMENT

IN RELATION TO EXCAVATION OF A DIRTY WATER LAGOON

FORMING PART OF:

WIDDENHAM FARM

COLERNE

CHIPPENHAM

WILTSHIRE

SN14 8EN

APPLICANT: MR JACK EVANS T/A PJ A EVANS AND SONS

PREPARED BY:

WEBBPATON

THE DAIRY

HOOK

ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT

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Regulated by
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to identify and report upon planning considerations in terms of the planning statement in respect of the above application.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is a prior approval application for the excavation of a dirty water lagoon.

BACKGROUND

PJ A Evans and Sons is the trading name of a family-run farming enterprise run by the Evans family. The applicants are currently farming approximately 478 acres of agricultural land with the main enterprise on the holding being a dairy farm. The applicants require additional dirty water storage for their holding. The applicants also want to ensure they have in excess of 6 months storage to meet the requirements of Farming Rules for Water.

USE

A dirty water lagoon used directly in conjunction with the dairy farming business.

The lagoon will provide the applicants with the necessary dirty water/slurry storage capacity which will advance current management of the dirty water, through enhanced farming techniques by applying dirty water to the crops at the optimum time. The dirty water will be pumped to the lagoon via a pipe from the reception pit, removing the need for tractor movements to and from the land and the dirty water will be spread using a tanker system across the farm.

This holding does not fall within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone at present. The proposal will ensure the applicant can target the application of dirty water at the optimum time for both better nutrient management and to further reduce both pollution risks from winter spreading and soil damage. The proposal will therefore provide infrastructure which will lead to enhanced farming practices, which will be of benefit to the environment and the neighbouring/local community with application on crops at the optimum time.

The proposal will be constructed in accordance with the SSAFO regulations which are monitored and regulated by the Environment Agency.

SIZE

The proposed excavation of a dirty water lagoon will be 961sqm, measuring 31m x 31m, creating approximately 2,750 cubic metres of capacity.

LAYOUT

The lagoon will be surrounded as an earth banked lagoon averaging 1.65m in height. The lagoon is located set back from the existing built form of the farmyard in order for the dirty water to be pumped to the lagoon which can then later be spread. The lagoon is located to the north-west of the farmyard.

The lagoon will have an impermeable surface of at least 5m deep and will be lined with clay and will meet the specifications as detailed within the SSAFO regulations.

SCALE

The scale, siting and access of the proposal are considered appropriate for the intended use. The proposal will be positioned on the edge of an existing farmyard. The existing farm access will remain unchanged by the proposal. The scale is in keeping with the applicants requirements, with the lagoon having been designed in accordance with the requirements and support of the requirements of Environment Agency and with the Storing Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil Regulations (1991).

LANDSCAPING:

Retain all existing landscaping features. A fence will be constructed around the lagoon to ensure that the lagoon is safe and secure. As the proposal will be position on the edge of an existing farmyard and will be excavated and constructed with clay, it will cause minimal impact to the local area as the site is already built upon.

ACCESS & TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS

The existing vehicular access to the farm will remain unchanged under this proposal, with access being via the existing farm drive which leads to the main farmyard. There is no requirement to amend the existing situation. It is anticipated that there will be no increase in traffic movements onto the public highway as a result of this development, as the agricultural business is long established, already operating a dairy cattle enterprise.

POLICY

The proposal is more than 400m from the curtilage of a protected building. This is defined under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 D.1 (1) as any permanent building which is normally occupied by people, but excludes an agricultural dwelling. The proposed agricultural building is more than 400m away from all permanent dwellings, any dwellings within this are part of the agricultural enterprise at Widdenham Farm. The lagoon is located in excess of 25m away from a highway.

The proposed development is located less than 3km from the redundant RAF Colerne aerodrome; however, the proposals surrounding soil bund is less than 3m in height.

The August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms support for this proposal under Policy E2: Meeting the need for business land and premises. Policy E2 Paragraph 1(b) confirms *to support business growth, substantial weight should be given to [...] benefits for domestic food production, animal welfare and/or the environment which can be demonstrated through for development for farm and agricultural modernisation*. The proposal is consistent with these objectives. The proposal allows both of the above to happen, through a well-designed new dirty water lagoon. It allows an existing rural business to develop and adhere Farming Rules for Water and SAFFO compliance. The proposal collectively protects local watercourses ensuring the safe storage of dirty water which in turn assists with controlling potential water pollution and benefits the environment as dirty water can be applied to the land at the optimum time for plant growth. Finally, the proposal supports a family-run business producing milk for domestic food production.

Policy E4: Rural business development, which states *the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas should be supported*. Paragraph 1(a) supports *the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings*. Paragraph 1(b) supports *the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses*. Finally, Paragraph 1(c) supports *development to maintain and enhance farm viability and sustainability*. The proposal is consistent with these objectives. The proposal allows a well-designed dirty water lagoon to provide essential dirty water storage for an existing agricultural business.

Wiltshire Core Strategy Adopted January 2015 supports the proposal. Core Policy 34 identifies *agriculture and land-based industries* as a target sector to be promoted towards a higher-value economy and states it will *support the rural way of life through the promotion of modern agricultural practices*. It states proposals will be supported which *support sustainable farming and food production through allowing development required to adapt to modern agricultural practices and diversification*. The proposal supports an existing farm business by providing a more practical agricultural dirty water lagoon solution to ensure the longevity of the business.

Core Policy 48 supports rural life through key objectives which include *protecting the countryside and maintaining its local distinctiveness*. The proposal allows this to happen through providing a well thought out dirty water lagoon system which has been designed to minimise impacts on the surrounding landscape.

CONCLUSION

The application is for the excavation of a dirty water lagoon. The proposal will support an existing agricultural business allowing future continuation, growth, and compliance with SSAFO regulations and Farming Rules for Water.

The application is considered compliant with local and national planning policies for proposals of this nature, ensuring the long-term growth and stability of an existing agricultural business. This will ensure a prosperous rural economy and agricultural development through a well-designed excavation of a dirty water lagoon.