

Planning Statement

Description of Development: Erection of an open-sided agricultural building to cover an existing dairy collection and feeding yard

Site: Down Dairy Farm, Hindon, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6FB

Date: 25 September 2026

Client:	Project number:	Project description:	Author:	Checked and authorised by:	Date:
SP & BJ Morant	576	Agricultural yard covering	AJO	SH	25/09/2026
Revision number:	Revision description:				Date:
01	Full planning application				25/09/2026

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Application Site and Context**
- 3.0 Proposed Development**
- 4.0 Planning History and Officer Comments**
- 5.0 Agricultural Need and Environmental Benefits**
- 6.0 Planning Policy**
- 7.0 Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain**
- 8.0 Landscape and Visual Impact**
- 9.0 Residential Amenity and the 400 Metre Issue**
- 10.0 Environmental Legislation and Compliance**
- 11.0 Conclusion**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 AssetSphere Ltd has prepared this Planning Statement in support of a full planning application for the erection of an open-sided agricultural building at Down Dairy Farm, Hindon.

1.2 The proposed steel portal framed structure would cover an existing concrete collection and feeding yard within the established dairy complex. The roof would be finished in grey fibre cement profile sheeting and would incorporate roof-mounted solar photovoltaic panels. The existing farm access would continue to be used, and no external lighting is proposed.

1.3 The application follows the refusal of Prior Notification Application PL/2026/03488. Wiltshire Council concluded that express planning permission was required because the proposal involved the accommodation of livestock within 400 metres of a protected building and therefore fell outside Class A.1(i) of Part 6 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended.

1.4 The officer nevertheless accepted that the building was reasonably necessary for agriculture and found its siting, scale, design, materials and external appearance acceptable. The officer also concluded that the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. The current full application enables the proposal to be considered on its planning merits.

2.0 Application Site and Context

2.1 Down Dairy Farm is an established dairy unit within an agricultural holding of approximately 285 hectares. The farmyard contains existing livestock accommodation and other buildings associated with dairy farming operations, including open-sided agricultural structures, hard standing and associated operational infrastructure.

2.2 The application site is an existing concrete yard used as a dairy cattle collection area before milking and as a feeding area during periods when ground conditions are unsuitable for grazing. It lies within the established farm complex and does not involve extending the operational yard onto agricultural land.

2.3 The site lies within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and the River Avon Special Area of Conservation catchment. Mature trees enclose the farmyard to the north, south and west, and it lies within an undulating dip in the landscape.

2.4 The application should be read alongside the separately submitted location plan, block plan, floor and roof plans, elevations and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1 The proposed building would measure approximately 24.5 metres by 15.8 metres, with an eaves height of approximately 4.6 metres and a ridge height of approximately 6.7 metres.

3.2 The building would comprise a steel portal frame with grey fibre cement profile roof sheeting and roof-mounted solar photovoltaic panels. It would remain open-sided to provide access and natural ventilation.

3.3 The existing access and internal circulation arrangements would remain unchanged. No external lighting or mechanical ventilation is proposed.

4.0 Planning History and Officer Comments

Prior Notification Application PL/2026/03488

4.1 Prior Notification Application PL/2026/03488 was refused because the proposed structure was considered to accommodate livestock within approximately 390 metres of the curtilage of Spring Gardens. The officer considered that the proposal therefore failed the fixed 400-metre limitation in Class A.1(i) of Part 6 of the GPDO.

4.2 The officer's report was otherwise supportive of the planning merits and concluded that:

- the building is reasonably necessary and would be used for agricultural purposes;
- the siting is logical within the established agricultural unit;
- the scale, height and agricultural materials are appropriate;
- the farmyard benefits from mature screening and its position within a natural dip;
- the building would be read within the context of the established farmyard; and
- the development would not cause unacceptable harm to the Cranborne Chase National Landscape.

4.3 The reason for refusal was therefore a limitation upon the availability of permitted development rights, rather than an identified planning harm. The present application provides the correct route for the Council to assess agricultural need, amenity, landscape, ecology and environmental benefits in the round.

5.0 Agricultural Need and Environmental Benefits

5.1 The building is required to improve the operation and environmental performance of the existing dairy enterprise. The yard is currently exposed to rainfall. Once clean rainfall lands on a livestock yard, it becomes contaminated and must be managed through the farm dirty-water and slurry system.

5.2 Covering the yard will intercept rainfall at source and direct clean roof water to the existing clean-water drainage arrangement. This will reduce the quantity of contaminated water requiring collection, storage, handling and subsequent management.

5.3 The project has secured support under the DEFRA Capital Grant Scheme, item Rp28, for roofing an existing livestock gathering area. The scheme is intended to reduce rainwater running through fouled yards and thereby reduce diffuse water pollution. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal also records support from the local Catchment Sensitive Farming adviser.

5.4 The proposal is therefore agricultural environmental infrastructure rather than simply an operational convenience. It will help the farm separate clean and dirty water more effectively, reduce pressure on slurry storage and lower the risk of contaminated runoff reaching the wider environment.

6.0 Planning Policy

Wiltshire Core Strategy

6.1 The relevant adopted development plan policies are:

- Core Policy 27: Spatial Strategy for the Tisbury Community Area.
- 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 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping.

- Core Policies 60 to 62: Sustainable Transport, Transport and Development, and Development Impacts on the Transport Network.
- Core Policies 68 and 69: Water Resources and Protection of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation.

6.2 The proposal supports investment in an established rural business, uses an appropriate agricultural design, retains the existing access, avoids ecological harm and improves clean- and dirty-water separation. The previous officer assessment found no unacceptable landscape impact.

National Planning Policy Framework, August 2026

6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework published in August 2026 is a material consideration of critical importance. The most relevant national decision-making policies are:

Policy S5: Development outside settlements - identifies agriculture as a form of development that should be approved outside settlements unless adverse effects substantially outweigh its benefits.

Policy E2: Meeting the need for business land and premises - requires substantial weight to be given to benefits for domestic food production, animal welfare and the environment demonstrated through farm and agricultural modernisation.

Policy E4: Rural business development - supports well-designed new buildings, agricultural businesses, farm viability, sustainability and domestic food production.

Policy P3: Living conditions and pollution - requires development to be appropriate for its location, avoid unacceptable pollution and take opportunities to reduce pollution affecting the wider area.

Policy N2: Improving the natural environment - supports protecting environmental qualities, minimising biodiversity effects, and improving surface-water and pollution management.

Policy N4: Protected Landscapes - requires development within Protected Landscapes to be limited in scale and extent and sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to their statutory purposes and special qualities.

6.4 Policies E2 and E4 provide particularly strong support. The proposal constitutes farm modernisation, supports domestic food production, and delivers identifiable environmental benefits while remaining within the existing operational farmstead.

7.0 Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

7.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken by Greenwood Ecology & Countryside Management following a site survey on 15 August 2026.

7.2 The appraisal records that the application site consists entirely of developed land and sealed concrete surface. No natural, semi-natural, priority or irreplaceable habitat was recorded on or immediately adjacent to the application site. The yard is washed and scraped daily and was assessed as having no potential to support protected or notable species.

7.3 The adjoining open-sided barn was inspected and no evidence of, or potential for, roosting bats was recorded. The appraisal concludes that there would be no negative effect on protected or notable species.

7.4 The appraisal concludes that the project is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain because the affected area is below the de minimis threshold and no priority habitat is affected. It also identifies a likely minor off-site benefit from reduced slurry and nutrient runoff.

8.0 Landscape and Visual Impact

8.1 The site lies within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. Substantial weight must therefore be given to conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

8.2 The proposed structure is contained within the existing farmyard, which is enclosed by mature trees and lies within a natural dip. Existing agricultural buildings provide further visual containment.

8.3 The previous officer assessment found that views would be limited; the building would be read in the context of the established farmstead and its height, open-sided design, and grey fibre cement roof would be characteristic of agricultural development. The officer concluded that the proposal would not harm the special qualities of the National Landscape.

8.4 The proposal therefore accords with Wiltshire Core Policy 51 and NPPF Policy N4.

9.0 Residential Amenity and the 400 Metre Issue

9.1 The previous refusal arose because the proposed roof was considered to accommodate livestock within approximately 390 metres of the curtilage of Spring Gardens. The officer therefore found that the proposal did not meet the fixed 400-metre limitation for agricultural permitted development.

9.2 That distance is a limitation upon the deemed planning permission granted by the GPDO. It is not a development plan policy and does not create an automatic prohibition against livestock-related development within 400 metres. The relevant issue for the full application is whether the proposal would cause unacceptable effects on living conditions.

9.3 Down Dairy Farm is a long-established dairy complex, and the application site is an existing collection and feeding yard. Livestock already use this area as part of normal dairy operations. The proposal does not relocate the activity closer to Spring Gardens or seek a change from the established agricultural use.

9.4 The proposal will not introduce external lighting, mechanical ventilation or other fixed plant. The existing access will continue to be used. The open-sided design will retain natural ventilation.

9.5 The roof is not expected to create a new or materially different source of noise or odour. Cattle collection and feeding already occur on the yard. The physical change is intercepting rainfall before it reaches a contaminated surface. This will reduce dirty-water production and the quantity of contaminated liquid requiring storage and handling.

9.6 The Council previously acknowledged that the wider farmyard already contains livestock buildings and associated slurry activity within 400 metres of Spring Gardens. When assessed on its actual effects, the proposal represents improved management of an existing agricultural activity rather than an intensification of that activity.

9.7 The proposal is therefore consistent with Wiltshire Core Policy 57 and NPPF Policy P3. If the Council considers it necessary, appropriate conditions could secure the absence of external lighting

10.0 Environmental Legislation and Compliance

10.1 The proposal is important to the farm's ability to respond to current environmental obligations concerning slurry, dirty water and agricultural diffuse pollution.

10.2 The Reduction and Prevention of Agricultural Diffuse Pollution (England) Regulations 2018, commonly referred to as the Farming Rules for Water, require land managers to take steps to prevent agricultural diffuse pollution. Government guidance identifies runoff and leaching as principal routes by which agricultural pollutants enter inland freshwaters and other water bodies.

10.3 The Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) (England) Regulations 2010 regulate slurry storage and place responsibility on farmers and land managers to avoid pollution. Where a holding is within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone, additional requirements may also apply.

10.4 Rainfall onto the existing uncovered cattle yard increases the quantity of contaminated water requiring management. Roofing the yard addresses that issue at source by keeping clean rainfall separate from the dirty-water system. This reduces pressure on storage, handling and land-spreading operations and lowers the risk of contaminated runoff.

10.5 The DEFRA grant approval and Catchment Sensitive Farming support demonstrate that the project responds to recognised water-quality and pollution-prevention objectives. These benefits should be afforded substantial positive weight under NPPF Policy E2 and positive weight under Policies E4, P3 and N2.

11.0 Conclusion

11.1 The proposal supports a productive agricultural enterprise and domestic food production while delivering practical environmental improvements. It will cover an existing sealed yard within an established farm complex rather than extend development onto open agricultural land.

11.2 Wiltshire Council has already accepted the agricultural need, logical siting, appropriate scale, design and materials, and absence of unacceptable landscape harm. The sole reason for refusal of the prior notification was the fixed 400-metre limitation within the GPDO.

11.3 The full application demonstrates that the proposal would not cause unacceptable effects on residential amenity. It does not introduce a new agricultural activity or move livestock operations closer to neighbouring dwellings. It introduces no lighting or mechanical ventilation and improves the management of contaminated runoff.

11.4 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identifies no habitat or protected-species harm and supports the claimed Biodiversity Net Gain exemption. The development will also help the farm comply with modern water-quality and pollution-control obligations.

11.5 Any identified adverse effects do not substantially outweigh the environmental, agricultural and economic benefits of the scheme. The proposal accords with the Wiltshire Core Strategy and with the national decision-making policies in the August 2026 NPPF. Planning permission should therefore be granted.