

APPLICATION FOR HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02762
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Lower Leaze, Nettleton, Chippenham, SN14 7NZ
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	The proposed development is the installation of a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array comprising 30 individual solar panels for residential use, arranged in three rows of ten panels, positioned within the private land associated with the dwelling.
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks planning permission for the installation of a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array comprising 30 individual solar panels for residential use, arranged in three rows of ten panels, positioned within the private land associated with the dwelling.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site comprises a residential property and associated private land in Chippenham, Wiltshire. The wider setting is characterised by a mix of residential and rural landscape features. The site benefits from open areas suitable for renewable energy generation, alongside existing and newly established planting & the adjacent paddocks, also owned by the Applicant, are grazed by the Applicants livestock

The applicants have undertaken significant land stewardship initiatives, including the planting of approximately 2,000 trees and whips, 600 flower bulbs & 1 acre of wildflower seeds to enhance biodiversity and strengthen landscape character.

The application site is subject to the following planning policy constraints:

- Cotswold National Landscape

PLANNING HISTORY

N/04/00652/FUL- Approved with conditions. ERECTION OF STABLES AND CONVERT OUTBUILDING TO ANNEXE AND ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING ACCESS

It is noted that the redline plan in this application covers the application site in this instance.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 58: Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment
- Core Policy 51: Landscape
- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 42: Standalone renewable energy installations

Wiltshire Design Guide: Appendix D – Design Guidance for Householder extensions

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Planning Practice Guidance

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Nettleton Parish Council: Objects

“The councillors discussed this application and Object it on the grounds that it is very large with a disproportionate impact on the rural landscape and village for what it delivers. the large heat pump they envisage, 30 panels are probably not excessive. The councillors also question whether such a large heat pump is really needed for a modest sized house. In any event, and even with the tesla batteries, it is likely that on dark winter days that some sort of feed in from the grid will still be needed. A smaller scheme may have a lesser impact on the community and not set such a precedent for other applications. If the new hedges are allowed to grow sufficiently to obscure the panels, then they may be less efficient, so in the future how will we ensure that these hedges are allowed to grow.

If approved, they would like to post that support the panels are not set into concrete. The panels to be closer to the hedge to reduce visibility,”

Wiltshire Council Landscape: No objection

“The site sits within the Cotswold National Landscape and therefore the following policies are relevant:

- CRoW Act 2000 Section 85 / LUR Act 2023 para 245
- NPPF (2026) para N4
- Wiltshire Core Strategy core Policy 51
- Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan
- Cotswold NL Renewables Position Statement

Of particular reference to this application is the Cotswold NL Renewables position statement which notes that installations of the size noted in this application are generally regarded as 'micro-scale'.

The position statement also notes the National Landscapes preference for small or micro scale schemes to be mounted on roofs rather than stand alone systems which is a particular concern

considering the closeness of the nearby PRow and the potential visual impact this might have on users of the path.

On raising this issue via the case officer, who in turn raised it with the applicant I am satisfied that a ground mounted solar array of the size indicated is the only workable solution technically to deliver solar power to the adjacent house and is of a small enough size not to adversely impact on the need to protect the natural beauty of the National Landscape while furthering its aims and objectives as captured under CC1.4 of the CNL Management Plan.

I therefore do not have a landscape objection to the proposed scheme.”

REPRESENTATIONS

One representation has been received, this comment is from the applicant in answer to the Parish Council’s objection. The comment is summarised below and available in full on the application’s webpage.

- Need for the scheme: The applicant states that the proposed 30-panel array is based on evidenced electricity demand, including a new heat pump requiring approximately 12,239 kWh per year. Roof space is insufficient to accommodate the required number of panels.
- Net-zero objectives: The solar array, battery storage and heat pump form part of a wider effort to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and move the smallholding towards net-zero operation.
- Landscape impact addressed: Revised plans place the panels directly alongside an existing hedge, with the applicant claiming they will be largely screened from the road and have very limited visual impact.
- Hedge management: The applicant confirms that existing and proposed planting will be actively maintained to provide screening while avoiding excessive shading of the panels. Around 2,000 trees and whips were reportedly planted on the site in January 2026 to enhance biodiversity.
- Construction method: Panels would be installed using ground screws rather than concrete foundations, reducing ground disturbance and allowing easier removal in future.
- Context of the site: The comment notes the presence of an existing electricity pylon in the paddock and argues the solar array would be less visually prominent because of the proposed screening.
- No precedent concern: The applicant argues the proposal should be distinguished from commercial solar farms because it serves existing buildings on the holding and is sized according to local energy requirements.
- Overall: The comment contends that the environmental benefits of renewable energy generation, reduced carbon emissions and biodiversity improvements outweigh any limited landscape impacts, particularly given the revised layout and proposed screening measures. The commenter asks that planning permission be granted.

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 adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans.

Principle of Development

In most householder applications, the principle of development is not a matter for detailed assessment, as the residential use of the site is already established and the proposal typically involves minor works within the curtilage of a lawful dwelling.

However, in this instance, it is necessary to consider whether the proposed development is acceptable in principle due to its location within the open countryside and in what would appear to be a neighbouring field.

Based on the 2004 application it appears that this field has been included within the redline boundary of the previous application. It is also noted that the proposal is in direct connection with the main dwelling. As the use of the land has been previously deemed part of the same planning unit the proposal in this instance is an ancillary element.

Furthermore, Core Policy 42 of the development plan concerns standalone renewable energy installations and sets out that they will be supported subject to satisfactory resolution of all site specific constraints. This includes taking account for landscape, particularly around National Landscapes, biodiversity, the historic environment, transport, residential amenity and best and most versatile agricultural land.

Policy W3 of the NPPF is also clear that in considering proposals for renewable and low-carbon development substantial weight should be given to the benefits of improving energy security, supporting economic development and/or the transition to a net zero future. The contribution that small-scale... projects can make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions should also be afforded substantial weight. Applicants should not be required to demonstrate the need for such proposals.

Furthermore, CC2 of the NPPF sets out that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings and/or drawing energy from district heat networks, renewable and low carbon sources (including through the installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights) where this would be achieved through proposals for development.

As such, the principle of development is considered acceptable, subject to the detailed assessment of design, amenity, and other material considerations set out below.

National Landscape

Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to protect, conserve, and where possible enhance the character and quality of Wiltshire's landscapes, giving particular weight to designated areas such as National Landscapes.

Policy N4 of the NPPF affords significant protection to Protected Landscapes, including National Landscapes. Development proposals within or affecting a National Landscape should conserve and enhance natural beauty and the special qualities of the designated area and avoid unacceptable harm to its landscape character and scenic quality.

Of particular reference to this application is the Cotswold NL Renewables position statement which notes that installations of the size noted in this application are generally regarded as 'micro-scale'.

The position statement also notes the National Landscapes preference for small or micro scale schemes to be mounted on roofs rather than stand alone systems which is a particular concern considering the closeness of the nearby PRoW and the potential visual impact this might have on users of the path.

On raising this issue with the applicant, it was explained that a ground mounted solar array of the size indicated is the only workable solution technically to deliver solar power to the adjacent house. It is also noted that the proposal in this instance is of a modest scale and form and is of a small enough size so as not to adversely impact on the need to protect the natural beauty of the National Landscape while furthering its aims and objectives as captured under CC1.4 of the CNL Management Plan. Weight is attributed to the technical advice received from the council's landscape specialist.

The proposal, by virtue of its scale, siting, and design, would not harm the special qualities or scenic character of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

The development therefore complies with Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Policy N4 of the NPPF in conserving and enhancing the National Landscape.

Design and Impact upon the character and context of the area including the setting of listed buildings

Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all new development is of high design quality, reflecting local context, character, and distinctiveness.

Core Policy 58 sets out that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

Policies DP3 and DP4 of the National Planning Policy Framework require development to achieve a high standard of design that responds positively to local character and context. In assessing design quality, regard should be had to matters including scale, siting, form, appearance, materials and the relationship of development to its surroundings.

Policy HE4 seeks to conserve heritage assets because they are an irreplaceable resource, and their significance should be conserved including their setting.

The proposal in this instance is a small-scale solar development. The comments from the Parish Council are noted. The scale of the proposal is sufficient to meet the requirements of the applicant. While the scale is noticeable the resulting benefits to net-zero and lowering carbon emissions outweigh the concerns in relation to scale.

Furthermore, due to the location of the proposed development and its set down location in this instance it is not considered that the site or wider area is being overdeveloped. In terms of scale the proposal is acceptable and does not detract from the wider area.

In terms of design the proposal in this instance is typical of a small scale free standing solar array. The proposal in this instance is an appropriate form of development and does not detract from the character or setting of the wider area. In terms of design the proposal is not an unacceptable form of development.

The proposal would be to the south of the Grade II listed 'The Old School'. Given the separation distances between the proposal and the listed building, and the intervening landscape features including hedges and roads then this proposals by virtue of its scale and nature would not result in any demonstrable harm to the setting of this listed building. The setting of the listed building is not considered to relate to the wider landscape or agricultural contact and as such there would be no harm to the significance of the asset here.

Having regard to the above, the proposal complies with the design principles set out in Core Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide and the NPPF.

Amenity

Point vii of Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that developments do not adversely affect neighbouring properties.

Policy P3 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires development to be appropriate for its location, taking account of its likely effects on health, living conditions and the environment. In particular, Policy P3(2)(b) requires development to avoid giving rise to unacceptable impacts on the living conditions of neighbouring residents and occupiers. In assessing amenity impacts, regard should be had to matters including daylight and sunlight, outlook, privacy, overbearing impacts and other effects on residential amenity.

The proposed development has been assessed in terms of its potential impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to loss of light, overshadowing, loss of privacy, and overbearing effects.

Due to the location and scale of development, the proposal in this instance is not considered to result in unacceptable amenity impacts in terms of overlooking, loss of light, overbearing impact or overshadowing.

While the potential for reflective glint and glare is noted, due to the location and significant distance between the application site and neighbouring properties it is considered that the scale of the potential glint would not be unacceptable.

The proposal therefore accords with Core Policy 57 point vii in respect of safeguarding residential amenity, Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide and the NPPF.

Right of Way

Due to the proposals location it is not considered that the proposed solar array would impinge or block the existing right of way which runs from north to south (NETT31).

Biodiversity Net Gain and biodiversity

The proposed development is not considered likely to cause any demonstrable harm to biodiversity interests and the proposals include additional landscaping that should provide an enhancement such as to satisfy the aims and ambitions of CP50 of the development plan.

The applicant has set out in their application form that the proposal that the biodiversity gain condition would not apply; but not explained the exemption that applies.

The applicant has then gone on to provide information in order to seek to address statutory biodiversity net gain. The BNG assessment and metric report has sought to provide a baseline and indicated positive outcome from additional planting. They have also indicated that the proposals may be considered exempt by virtue of the de minimis exemption. Critically the baseline appears to have been provided.

BNG is technically a post determination matter and the aim at this stage is to ensure that satisfactory baseline information is available and/or that the scheme would meet the exemptions set out within the relevant regulations. As above in the principle of development section it is considered that the site may be considered to be a householder development. Householder planning applications are exempt from the requirement to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain under Schedule 7A, Section 4(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021. However, this is a matter that can be further considered post determination as appropriate and necessary.

Other material considerations

Transport: Given the limited scale of the proposal it would not be likely to result in transport impacts at construction phase such as to merit particular control. Given its location and scale it would not result in a highway safety impact,.

Best and most versatile agricultural land: As set out in the principle section this is a proposal that may be considered to be of a householder nature. In any event the land is classified as 3 which may or may not be deemed best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV). Even if, through soil analysis it was deemed to be BMV it involves a modest loss of greenfield land and this would not outweigh the substantial weight to be afforded to the benefits of the scheme.

Flood risks: The proposal is considered to have some potential flood risks from groundwater sources. Furthermore, it is in very close proximity and potentially within the edges of fluvial flood risk and surface water flood risks based on Environment Agency data. However, given the nature of the proposals as solar arrays screwed into the ground then the risk to the development is not significant and moreover the risk of downstream impacts is negligible. An informative is considered sufficient here, noting that no flood risk assessment has been provided and not formed part of the consultation concerns either.

Air Source Heat Pump: Reference has been made in the application and responses to the solar array providing power to support an air source heat pump. For the avoidance of doubt this application has been assessed on the basis of the description developed which relates to a solar array only.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

In reaching this decision, due regard has been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This requires the Local Planning Authority to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal would not result in any unlawful discrimination and that any impacts on protected groups have been appropriately considered as part of this assessment.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its design, character and appearance, heritage, biodiversity, landscape, and highway; it would not result in any unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

Furthermore, the proposal would not result in any unacceptable impacts in respect of any other material planning considerations.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework and all other relevant material considerations. As such, the application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

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

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

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

Existing Site Plan and Cross Section 2026-01312-100
Location Plan 2026-01312-LOC-A
(Received by LPA 25th June 2026)

Proposed Site Plan and Cross Section 2026-01312-101B
(Received by LPA 24th July 2026)

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

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match in material, colour and texture those detailed on the approved drawings and application form.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

Informative:

The applicant is advised that the proposed development may be liable to elevated flood risks from one or more sources of flooding. For more information on fluvial and surface water flood risks you are advised to consult with the UK governments new National flood and coastal erosion risk information - [New national flood and coastal erosion risk information - GOV.UK](#). Based on Wiltshire Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2024 there is the possibility of groundwater emerging at the surface locally.