

Application No:	ENQ/2025/00735
Application Type	Pre-Application enquiry
Proposal:	Proposed Improvement of Facilities at Bevan Transport Limited Haulage Yard
Location:	DOWNFIELD FARM, THE PRY, PURTON, SWINDON, SN5 4JP
Case Officer:	Audrey Lo

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your pre-application enquiry received on 14 May 2025.

Please note that the advice below represents an officer's informal professional opinion based on the information provided at the time of writing. It is given without prejudice to any formal decision the Council may make on a subsequent planning application.

Any future application would be subject to full assessment, including site publicity and consultation, and other material considerations may emerge through that process. This advice is based on current adopted planning policies and guidance available at the time of writing.

Summary of Officer View

	Acceptable in principle. This response sets out areas to be addressed through any subsequent application.
	Unacceptable in principle. Submission of an application is not encouraged. Key reasons are outlined below.
x	Potentially acceptable, subject to resolution of key issues. This response identifies what needs addressing before the proposal could be supported.

Constraints:

The site is subject to the following relevant planning designations and constraints:

- Within North meadow SAC 9.4km recreational buffer
- Partially within Flood Zone 2
- Risk of surface water flooding at 1 in 30 to 1 in 1000 year extent
- Negligible risk from groundwater flooding
- Rolling Clay Lowland
- The site does not fall within or near any nationally designated heritage or landscape areas.

Relevant Planning History:

Proposal / Summary
N/91/02708/FUL - ERECTION OF BUILDING AND USE OF LAND AS TRANSPORT YARD – Approved 11 February 1992
N/03/01887/COU - RETENTION OF NEW BUILDING AND CHANGE OF USE FROM AGRICULTURE TO PART AGRICULTURE AND PART PRIVATE KENNELING OF GREYHOUNDS (RETROSPECTIVE) - Withdrawn
N/03/03158/FUL – Retention of Haulage Yard – Approved with Conditions 9 August 2004

N/04/03235/CLE - CERTIFICATE OF LAWFULNESS FOR THE KEEPING OF GREYHOUNDS – Approved with Conditions 15 December 2004
N/05/00776/S73 - Retention of Building for Part Agriculture and Part Kenneling of Greyhounds – Approved with Conditions 24 May 2005

Relevant Planning Policies:

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 pre-application enquiry 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 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 64 Demand Management
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk;

Made Neighbourhood Plans:

Purton Neighbourhood Plan 2017 to 2026 (made 2018)

- Purton Policy 1: To enhance the prospects for local employment
- Purton Policy 2: To improve road safety
- Purton Policy 4: Ecological Enhancements
- Purton Policy 7: Flooding

Draft Modified Purton Neighbourhood Plan referendum to be held in May 2026.

Supplementary Planning Document:

Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 20

Local Transport Plan 3 2011-2026 (including Car Parking Standards);

Local Transport Plan 4 2025 -2038

Assessment

Principle of Development

Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies CP1 (Settlement Strategy) and CP2 (Delivery Strategy) set out the spatial strategy for sustainable development across Wiltshire. These policies direct new development to the most sustainable locations, primarily within the limits of development of market towns, local service centres, and large villages. Proposals outside these limits are generally only supported in exceptional circumstances.

Core Policy 34 (CP34) supports additional employment land subject to it being an established business and adjacent to either Principal Settlements, Market Towns and Local Service Centres. In addition, the proposal is required to comply with the secondary requirements under Core Policy 34 in order to be acceptable in principle, these are as follows:

- a. Meet sustainable development objectives as set out in the policies of this Core Strategy;
- b. Are consistent in scale with their location, do not adversely affect nearby buildings and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity;
- c. Are supported by evidence that they are required to benefit the local economic and social needs;
- d. Would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations; and
- e. Are supported by adequate infrastructure.

The application site is situated outside of defined settlement boundary and designated employment areas; however, the site has an established B8 (Storage and Distribution) use under previous planning permission and is within the same ownership as the adjacent site for commercial haulage use operated by Bevan Transport Ltd. Furthermore, the site is in a reasonable distance from sustainable settlements such as Swindon to the east, and it is in close proximity to a network of Public Rights of Way routes which provides a footpath connection to Purton, a Large Village within the same Community Area. The B4553 is a national speed limit road with no cycle lanes or footpath, however, there is sufficient width for cars to overtake safely should users walk along the road. The closest shops are at least 1.5 miles to the west in Purton, which is equivalent to a 4-minute drive or a 10-minute cycle. Given the site is of B8 use and the proposal seeks to further support the existing business, it is considered that there is reasonable access to services and that the proposal is considered to comply with criterion (a) of CP34.

Whilst a block plan and some details of approximate dimensions of the proposed building has been submitted, no elevation or flood plans have been provided as part of this pre-application enquiry. In the absence of detailed plans, the Local Planning Authority is unable to provide a detailed assessment on the proposal's impact on the character and appearance of the local area. Nevertheless, the overall footprint as indicated would be larger than the existing buildings on the adjacent site, however, it's scale is not considered so excessive that it would not be capable of being designed to be sensitive to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The closest residential dwelling is approximately 155 metres to the north. The submitted Planning Statement states that there is no intention to increase the number of lorries operating from the yard and further clarifies that the proposal does not seek to intensify the use of the established employment site but rather to improve the existing facilities for overall efficiency of the business.

The proposal has indicated through the submitted details that the existing building and facilities on the adjacent site operated by Bevan Transport Ltd are no longer suitable for modern day standards and require expanding and updating to accommodate the needs of the current business. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate the need. It is possible that the proposal would provide a benefit to the local economy by the improving upon the existing site, the retention of the business and retaining its employees in the local area. However, no evidence has been provided to demonstrate the need as required by criterion (c) of CP34.

In consideration of the submitted details noting that the proposed building and additional space would effectively support the continuation of the existing business, and given the nature of the proposal, it is not considered that the proposed building would undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations. As such, the proposal would be considered to meet criterion (d) of CP34.

The submitted details do not demonstrate how access would be created for the application site. However, given the site's proximity to the B4553 and the existing access to the adjacent haulage site operated by the applicant, it is considered that there is reasonable assumption that the application site can be supported by adequate infrastructure subject to the creation of a suitable access likely to be taken via the existing haulage yard.

The proposal seeks to erect a new building in association with Bevan Transport Ltd which would support and improve upon the existing rural business. The principle of development is established and there would be no change in land use. Only the erection of a new building and its associated facilities are proposed. However, in the absence of sufficient details and evidence, the proposal as it stands is unable to meet all of the requirements set out under CP34. Should the proposal be submitted to the LPA via a formal full planning application, it should be supported by detailed elevations, floor plans and evidence to justify the need for the proposed warehouse.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy CP57 of the WCS seeks to ensure that all development proposals are of a high standard of design that responds positively to the local context and contributes to a sense of place. This includes consideration of layout, form, materials, scale, and relationship to the surroundings. Proposals should reinforce local distinctiveness, protect the character of settlements, and promote inclusive and attractive environments.

CP51 of the WCS seeks to protect, conserve and enhance Wiltshire's distinctive landscape character.

The Council's Landscape Team has been consulted and notes that the site sits within the Minety Rolling Clay Lowland (11B) of the Wiltshire County Landscape Character assessment that is noted as being in 'Good' condition, has a 'moderate' strength of character, with a strategy to 'conserve and strengthen'. It is noted that a substantial area proposed for mitigating landscaping on the proposed site plan is within Flood Zone 2. There is the opportunity to introduce alder and willow planting in this area which can cope with the wetter conditions along with the potential for planting black poplar (*Populus nigra*) which is becoming increasingly rare in the UK to the extent that a specialist planting programme is being developed in the nearby Cotswold Water Park.

In the absence of elevations and detailed plans of the proposed building/site, the Landscape Officer advises that any formal planning application would need to be accompanied by a review of the visual implications of the development on local PRoW including PURT 31B / 35 / 66 via an LVA study.

Whilst the site does not fall within the draft Purton Neighbourhood Plan policy PUR7 'Local Gaps' there is still a risk from such development causing potential feeling of coalescence between urban settlements in the countryside, whether visually, or due to the noise, motion and light pollution they can create impacting on rural tranquillity (Wiltshire Core Policy 51). Any formal application would need to demonstrate how these issues have been successfully mitigated against.

Residential Amenity

Policy CP57 also includes a requirement that development should ensure a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants (point vii). This includes safeguarding privacy, outlook, natural light, and protection from noise, disturbance, and overbearing effects.

The Environmental Health team has been consulted and it is advised that there are residential receptors 0.14 miles away and therefore a Construction Management Plan would be required as part of any formal planning application. This should set out the following:

- i. An introduction consisting of construction phase environmental management plan, definitions and abbreviations and project description and location;
- ii. A description of management responsibilities;
- iii. A description of the construction programme;
- iv. Site working hours and a named person for residents to contact- Construction hours shall be limited to 0800 to 1800 hrs Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1300 hrs Saturday and no working on Sundays or Bank Holidays;
- v. Detailed Site logistics arrangements;
- vi. Details regarding parking, deliveries, and storage;
- vii. Details regarding dust and noise mitigation;
- viii. Details of the hours of works and other measures to mitigate the impact of construction on the amenity of the area and safety of the highway network; and
- ix. Communication procedures with the LPA and local community regarding key construction issues – newsletters, fliers etc.

Furthermore, it is advised that a noise impact assessment addressing the noise levels arising from the car garage is submitted as part of any formal planning application.

Subject to the sufficient demonstration of the above, it is considered that that the proposal is capable of being designed to be respectful of the neighbouring amenities.

Highway Safety and Parking

Policies CP60 to CP64 set the transport and accessibility framework for development in Wiltshire. Proposals must provide safe and suitable access for all users and should not have a severe impact on the transport network. Adequate parking, turning space, cycle storage, and accessibility for waste collection should be incorporated in line with Wiltshire's adopted car parking strategy.

Based on the submitted details, it is noted that the existing vehicle access is not proposed to be altered and the number of vehicular movements is not anticipated to increase as a result of the development. The Highway Authority has been consulted and has noted no objections would be anticipated at a formal planning application on the basis of the above.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Policy CP50 seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity across Wiltshire. Development should avoid harm to protected species and habitats, and provide net gains in biodiversity wherever possible. The Council has a statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021 to secure 10% measurable biodiversity net gain (BNG).

Purton Policy 4 of the Purton Neighbourhood Plan further supports CP50 above and the ecological objectives of the NPPF.

The Council's Ecology Team has been consulted and has noted that the site lies within the outer zone of influence (4.2 – 9.4km) for the North Meadow National Nature Reserve (NNR)/Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) component of North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC, notified as an exceptional example of lowland meadow with a very high proportion of the surviving UK population of snake's head fritillary. The development is screened into Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended) on account of its potential to cause adverse effects through increased recreational pressure, which may occur alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The proposal does not involve any increase in the number of residential units within the catchment of North Meadow SAC, there is no mechanism by which it would contribute to an increase in recreational use of the site. This proposal would therefore be screened out of Appropriate Assessment within the planning process.

It is also acknowledged that Purton and Berriman's Wood lies 740m southeast of the site. Wiltshire Core Policy 50 requires that CWSs are protected from the effects of development and should be enhanced where possible. Assessment of impacts to the CWS, together with proposals for mitigation and enhancement will be required to support any planning application at this site.

It has been identified that there is a recorded bat roost 1.2km north of the site, which suggests the potential for bat activity on site. Sufficient survey of the enquiry site must be undertaken in order to identify any key flight lines potentially used by bats from this roost and to enable mitigation, such that functionally linked habitat can be retained and enhanced.

There is a pond within 400m to the southwest of the site. There is therefore potential for destruction and disturbance of Great Crested Newts and their habitat. GCN are a European Protected Species and if found to be present within 500m of the site, may require significant mitigation. However, Wiltshire operates the Natural England GCN District Level Licensing Scheme and the applicant may wish to apply for certification under this scheme. The consultant ecologist can advise on the merits of the scheme in relation to any application made at this site.

There are existing records for protected species within the local area, including Lapwing, Cuckoo, Tawny Owl, Otter, Water Vole, Great Crested Newt, Common Pipistrelle Bat, Noctule Bat, Scots Pine, Badger (some listed as being of national importance). Any proposal for development at this site will be required to demonstrate no net loss of functional habitat for biodiversity, within the local area, in line with Wiltshire Core Policy 50 (CP50) and NPPF, through provision of ecological survey reports.

In carrying out its statutory function, the Local Planning Authority must be reasonably sure that protected habitats and species are not adversely affected by development. It is therefore vital that sufficient information is submitted in support of an application, to enable this. Information is expected to include report of comprehensive survey together with appropriate and sufficient mitigation to remove or at least substantially reduce any adverse effects that could occur as a result of implementing the proposal.

Given the siting and proposed footprint of the proposed warehouse, it is considered that the proposal would be subject to the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements in a formal planning application as no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate otherwise. Any formal planning application must therefore be supported by details to demonstrate that no net loss of biodiversity would result from the proposal and a minimum of 10% BNG can be achieved.

Please note that any Habitats Regulations Assessment required under Section 63 of the Habitats Regulations must be carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (the LPA), must be concluded favourably by the LPA and endorsed by Natural England in order for an application to be lawfully approved. This process must therefore be completed before a favourable determination of the application can be made.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy CP67 aligns with national policy (NPPF, para 159–169) and requires that development avoids increasing flood risk on-site or elsewhere. Development within Flood Zones 2 or 3 should be subject to the sequential and (if necessary) exception tests. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) should be incorporated for all major developments.

Based on the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, it is indicated that the application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and Flood Zone 2. In addition, a portion of the site has a risk of surface water flooding at 1 in 30 to 1 in 1,000 years extent. The Council's Drainage consultant notes that the site is shown to be at high cumulative risk of flooding in the future from all sources and that a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment would be required as part of any formal planning application.

The Drainage Engineer's full response has been issued to the applicant.

Suggested Additional Consultees

Referral to the Environment Agency

The Environment Agency offers its own dedicated pre-application advice service, particularly for proposals that may have implications for flood risk, water quality, biodiversity, waste, or land contamination. Given the nature and location of this proposal, you are advised to seek advice from the Environment Agency at an early stage to help identify and address any potential issues they may raise as part of a formal planning application.

You can find more information and request advice via the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-planning-application-enquiry-form-preliminary-opinion>

Alternatively, they can be contacted via email at:

swx.sp@environment-agency.gov.uk

(This address covers Wiltshire and the wider Southwest region.)

Referral to Natural England

Natural England provides its own discretionary pre-application advice service for developments that may impact designated sites such as SSSIs, SACs, SPAs, Ramsar sites, or involve protected species, ancient woodland, priority habitats, or nutrient neutrality implications.

Given the potential for ecological or landscape impacts from your proposal, you are encouraged to seek pre-application input from Natural England, especially if your site lies within or near environmentally sensitive locations.

More information about the service and how to request advice is available via the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/developers-get-environmental-advice-on-your-planning-proposals>

You can also contact them directly at:

consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

(For development in Wiltshire and the wider Southwest, this address is appropriate for all planning and casework queries.)

Supporting Information Required for Future Application

When preparing to submit a planning application, it is important to ensure that all the necessary plans, documents, and supporting information are included to meet both national and local validation requirements. Failure to provide the required information may result in delays or your application being declared invalid.

Wiltshire Council has adopted local validation checklists which set out the supporting documents required for different types of development, in addition to those set out by national guidance.

You can access both the National Requirements and Wiltshire Council's Local Validation Checklists here: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-validation-checklists>

We recommend you review the relevant checklist for your proposal type and use it as a guide when preparing your submission.

For your information, should you wish to proceed with a planning application based on the advice provided above, it is recommended that the following documents are submitted in support of your application.

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (mandatory under the Environment Act 2021)
- Flood Risk Assessment / Drainage Strategy
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Noise Assessment
- Site Local Plan
- Block Plan/Site Plan
- Existing and Proposed Plans, Elevations, Sections and Roof Plans
- Construction Traffic Management Plan

Procedural Advice and Consultation Expectations

Applicants should be advised of the Council's procedures for submitting a planning application, including relevant validation requirements and public consultation processes. For major proposals — particularly residential development — it is strongly recommended that applicants engage early with key stakeholders, including:

- The relevant Town or Parish Council
- The local Division Member
- Local residents, where appropriate, via public engagement or community events

Early engagement can help to identify and resolve issues at an early stage, potentially improving outcomes and reducing delays during the formal application process.

Advice regarding Building Regulations

It is likely that your proposal will require separate approval under the Building Regulations. The Surveyor who deals with your area can be contacted on 0300 456 0113. They are happy to provide you with free Building Regulation advice on this proposal and discuss this project further. This will help to ensure that the final decisions are compliant with the Building Regulations and may help save you time and money.

Closing Summary

This advice is offered in good faith based on current policy and guidance. While it provides a helpful steer, it cannot prejudice the outcome of any future planning application. Please ensure that any submission is fully supported by the required information and that material considerations identified above are addressed.

Should you require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

Head of Development Management

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