



Wilts & Berks Canal Trust

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Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

Date 1st October 2026

Wiltshire Planning Department
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
BA14 8JN

Dear Sirs,

Consultation Response to PL/2026/04916 Land West of Semington Road

The Wilts and Berks Canal Trust makes the following comments on the outline planning application for the Land West of Semington Road, Melksham.

The Trust notes that it has been consulted in the formative stages of this application. The application documents show that the proposal recognises the existing application for the Melksham Link element of the restoration of the complete Wilts & Berks Canal which is the aim of the Trust and is widely supported. The route of the Wilts & Berks Canal including branches and diversions is safeguarded in the Local Plan.

The outline masterplans identify land intended to safeguard the canal route to be constructed in accordance with the Melksham Link proposal by integrating the route into the green space plan. It is proposed to use this space as a part of the site drainage proposals with storage ponds on the line of the canal. The Flood Risk Assessment anticipates the canal replacing some drainage features and providing storage and overflow. The proposed SuDS integration with the future canal is welcome in principle. The Trust seeks confirmation that this can work without compromising navigation, water quality or flood management, and with delivery and maintenance responsibilities clarified.

The submitted drawings do not include a masterplan drawing with any detail on the proposed road layout but in the Planning Statement an extract from an illustrative masterplan is shown at figure 3.1 while figure 5.2 shows an overlay of the canal route on the illustrative masterplan. The illustrative masterplan also appears in the Design and Access Statement. The plan shows a road crossing of the canal near the centre of the site while the Melksham Link plans show two bridges, on or near the eastern and western boundaries of the site respectively. The Trust seeks clarification on how the layout accommodates the canal crossings and intended connection towards Berryfield.

The location of any bridge will require consideration of the canal water level, the headroom for boats and the space for the construction of the bridge approaches and connections to them. These have not been sufficiently demonstrated.



The Trust will also be concerned that all services are located so as not to impede construction of the canal. Paths and cycleways should provide for suitable connections to the towpath.

While detailed design can follow, leading up to reserved matters applications, the Trust wishes to see that fundamental compatibility is established before outline consent is granted. The Trust is fully ready to assist in developing the details of the scheme to maximise the benefits of the canal to the community.

Yours sincerely

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